From:	Kirk Weir
To:	comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us
Subject:	Chattooga River Project Comments
Date:	08/07/2008 10:06 PM

U.S. Forest Service
Chattooga River Project
4931 Broad River Road
Columbia, SC 29212.
comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us

August 8, 2008

RE: Chattooga River Project Comments

Dear Sumter National Forest,

I am a 43 year old avid whitewater kayaker from Columbia, South Carolina. The Chattooga River is my favorite run having logged numerous trips on it in my relatively short paddling career. Unfortunately, due to this continuing drought I haven't had the opportunity to paddle the Chattooga as much in the past 2 years and I sorely miss it. I would characterize my paddling skills as intermediate and may never run the headwaters section of the Chattooga. However, I believe the decisions made here are of utmost importance and could have a significant ripple effect on other designated Wild and Scenic Areas.

I have reviewed the Environmental Assessment regarding the recreational management of the Chattooga River. I disagree with your analysis and your proposal. Both treat me and my community of river enthusiasts unfairly and your proposal would not meet my interests. Please consider the following concerns I have regarding this issue:

- All aspects of the "Outstanding Remarkable Values" of Wild and Scenic Rivers should be protected on the entire river, not just in some areas.

- The public should have the right to float on public Wild and Scenic Rivers regardless of who owns the land along the river.
- The USFS has spent thirteen years searching for a reason to limit paddling on the Chattooga and has found *none*. It is time to open the river to boating.
- As a tax paying citizen I am appalled at the waste of tax payer money trying to justify this illegal ban.

Additionally, you have NOT completed all the requirements set forth in previous proceeding to reach this ridiculous proposal!!!

- The EA is not a user capacity analysis and does not reference one. The AW appeal decision required a user capacity analysis. Where is it?
- The EA offers no basis for the boating bans and limits
    - The USFS hired qualified consultants and then ignored their input

Even if you make this proposal official, the waste of my tax dollars will continue. I fully support American Whitewater's continuing legal efforts to revoke this illegal ban.

Thank you for considering these comments. Please consider conducting a real user capacity analysis and immediately allowing boating in the same numbers, places, and seasons that you allow existing users. Paddling should be allowed in a similar manner to your alternative number 8, except on the *entire* Upper Chattooga River and its tributaries.

Thank you for considering these comments,

Sincerely

Kirk Weir
335 Bayside Road
Columbia, SC 29212

CC:

US Senator Lindsay Graham

US Senator Jim DeMint

US Rep Joe Wilson

SC Governor Mark Sanford