From: ldbf
Reply To: ldbf@yahoo.com
To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us
cc: president@whitehouse.gov; kevin@americanwhitewater.org
Subject: Chattooga River Project comments
Date: 08/08/2008 03:38 PM

August 8, 2009

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

RE: Chattooga River Project Comments

Dear Sumter National Forest supervisors,

My name is Lois Newton. I'm a Georgia resident. I am a whitewater paddler as well as being a general appreciator and user of the great outdoors. I have been to the Chattooga area many times, hiking, camping, and paddling. It is indeed an awesome river, as its designation as a Wild and Scenic River signifies.

Having reviewed the Environmental Assessment regarding the recreational management of the Chattooga River I have to disagree with your analysis and your proposal. They denigrate paddlers as a recreational group by restricting and/or limiting access without a reasonable basis while not restricting other user groups who would have the same or greater impact on the area.

There does not seem to be a user capacity analysis, which the American Whitewater appeal decision required. Why not? If one was done, where is it? The Environmental Analysis is NOT a user capacity analysis.

While I will never paddle all the sections of the Chattooga as I don't feel my skills measure up to the requirements of some of them, there are many paddlers who do have those skills and I believe that all the sections of the Chattooga, as a Wild and Scenic River, should be open to paddling. There are limits for the sections that are open to paddlers and paddlers have respected these limits, and I believe paddlers have demonstrated that they are, for the most part, low impact users respectful of the environment. Paddlers do not deserve to be treated as second class citizens as a user group of the area and should have the entire river system open for their use.

Though no alternatives suggested are acceptable as they all include boating bans on the upper Chattooga Cliffs reach and on tributaries (without any justification), paddlers do believe that an

alternative similar to alternative 8 would be the most preferable, one that 1) fully allows boating on the entire Chattooga River below Grimshawes Bridge, 2) allows paddling on tributaries, 3) includes encounter standards based on a real user capacity analysis, 4) will *equitably* limit *total* use only when encounter standards are consistently exceeded, and 5) will do so using all available indirect measures first.

Millions of dollars in tax payer money have been wasted already. The USFS hired qualified consultants and then ignored their input. It is time to just open it up and see what happens. I believe you all will be pleasantly surprised when you find that there are no issues, but should there be some issues, those can be dealt with as they come up.

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,

Lois Newton
905 Plum Nelly Rd.
Rising Fawn GA 30738

cc: George W. Bush
Saxby Chambliss
Johnny Isakson
Nathan Deal
Barack Obama
Kevin Coburn