From:	George Custer
To:	comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us
Subject:	Upper Chattooga River
Date:	08/06/2008 08:04 AM

To Whom it may Concern:

I am a whitewater boater and a fly-fisherman, I am a resident of Rabun County, I am involved at the management level of the local Swift-water rescue, High angle rescue, and the backcountry Search and Rescue Teams. I have a great love for wild lands and specifically the Chattooga and Tallulah River watersheds. They both begin in Wilderness and end in impoundment lakes before making their combined journey to the Sea.

Not all people are whitewater boaters, not all people are fishermen, and just as all people are diverse in their interests until now these watersheds have provided all people with diverse areas of recreation that have been managed in a very fair way so that many different interests can be experienced along the banks and boulders of these two streams.

I believe that most people like myself want to be able to have the experience of wilderness and backcountry without the technology and boldness of mans "civilization". The upper Chattooga provides that, IT SHOULD BE PRESERVED!

I understand that the Forest Service is under great pressure from the American Whitewater Association to open the upper river, I also know and have experienced this organizations bold and bullying tactics to access this stream and many others. I respect the fact that the Forest Service must attempt to accommodate these people. But I do not agree with the concept of opening up the upper Chattooga at all. My preferred alternative is alternative 3. I will accept Alternative 4 if there must be some kind of compromise.

I want to remind the Forest Service that if and when (because it will happen) there is a whitewater accident that requires rescue there will be problems the access for this area is limited at best and if you even think about access into the rock gorge section of the river you better have a lot of help and funding.

I also would like to remind You that all local and State officials have spoken out against the "lifting of the boating band" and my feeling is that if you are going to open up the upper river for boating then we should have equal days on the lower river that are boat free. Anything less than alternative four regarding the upper Chattooga should include equal access for Mountain Bikers, and off road vehicle enthusiasts as well as probably just paving an access road along the full length of the river so Americans with Disabilities can see the beautiful upper Chattooga and its environs, oh but wait if we allow all this access .... guess what it won't be special anymore!

People including my child have a right to have wild places that they can choose to go to and have wilderness experiences free from plastic boats and woops and screams and green and blue and red and yellow scuff marks on the rocks.

Please preserve the Upper Chattooga as it is.

Stewardship is not a popularity contest.

Thank You
George W Custer