From: Nan Huffman
Reply To: Nan Huffman
To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us
Subject: EA, Limits on Accessing Chattooga
Date: 08/08/2008 10:06 AM

To Whom this Concerns:

I am an avid paddler that enjoys canoeing and kayaking many of this nation's rivers and waterways. I am concerned about losing and the loss of accessibility to the waterways that grew this nation into what it is today. Though I live in Illinois, I have also paddled waterways in Arkansas, Missouri, Florida, Tennessee, Indiana, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, North Carolina, Virginia & Montana, many of which are overseen by federal and/or state entities.

It has been brought to my attention that USFS is trying to limit (or has limited) access to the Chattooga River. There has been an Environmental Assessment regarding the recreational management of the Chattooga River. The proposed management action on the Chattooga will influence the management of rivers across the country and would create a precedent that would negatively impact rivers and the people who what to explore this country by canoe. Private landowners are seeking a monopoly on a Wild and Scenic public river, the Forest Service is seeking to strip basic protections from Wild and Scenic Rivers, and other stakeholders claiming zero-tolerance of paddlers are seeking to have paddling prohibited. Boaters are irrationally being singled out for adverse treatment, even while the Chief of the Forest Service directed that all users be treated equitably.
I disagree with the analysis and proposal of the Environmental Assessment of the Chattooga River; Both treat river enthusiasts unfairly. Please consider the following concerns I have regarding this issue:

- 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.
- No alternative is acceptable because they all include boating bans on the upper Chattooga Cliffs reach and on tributaries – without any justification.
- The USFS preferred alternative includes a total ban on 2/3 of the upper river, a ban on tributary boating, and allows only 0-6 days of limited boating on the remaining reach – while allowing all other wilderness conforming existing uses in unlimited numbers. This is not equitable and not acceptable!
- The EA offers no basis for the boating bans and limits.
- The EA is no better or different than the last one, is at least a year late and has wasted millions in tax payer money.
- The public should have the right to float on rivers regardless of who owns the land along the river.

- All aspects of the “Outstanding Remarkable Values” of Wild and Scenic Rivers should be protected on the entire river, not just in some areas.
- We should have the right to explore this country just like our forefathers explored this country.

Thank you for considering these comments. Please ensure that our beautiful, life-sustaining waterways remain open, clean and accessible for future generations.

Sincerely,
Nannette Huffman
Wildwood, IL 60030

“We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children.”
--Native American Proverb--