

Alternative 1: Maintains current management on all three national forests.

Alternative 2: Increases solitude by managing encounters through a permit system and reducing user-created features.

- Greatly reduces user-created trails and campsite densities
- Camping is allowed only in designated sites
- Eliminates roadside parking within ¼ mile of Burrells Ford Bridge.
- Maintains a “boat-free” recreation experience as a substantive component of the upper river’s uniqueness compared to other rivers in the south and east.
- Requires all users to register.
- Provides a unique opportunity for enhanced solitude in the upper river corridor by establishing encounter levels lower than current estimates.

Alternative 3: Emphasizes, protects and enhances exceptional, year-round, high-quality trout fishing.

- Maintains current estimated encounter levels.
- Reduces campsites and trails but not to the levels of Alternative 2.
- Responds to the potential impacts of boating on what has been described by many as “one of the unique, premier trout fisheries for backcountry anglers seeking remoteness and solitude in the southeast” by not providing additional boating opportunities on the Chattooga.
- Restricts parking the same as in Alternative 2.

Alternative 4: Adds additional boating opportunities while continuing to emphasize, protect and enhance optimal, year-round, high-quality trout fishing

- Provides boating opportunities from County Line Road Trail in North Carolina south to Burrells Ford Bridge at a mean daily flow level of 450 cubic feet per second (cfs) and above from December 1 – March 1.
- Minimizes conflict between boaters and anglers by establishing flow and season restrictions for boating.
- Requires boaters to take out at Burrells Ford to minimize conflict between boaters and other users, especially in the popular delayed-harvest area.
- Prohibits removal of large woody debris (LWD) to accommodate boating.
- Addresses biological and physical resource concerns by applying the same campsite, trail and parking actions as Alternative 3.

Alternative 5: Adds boating outside the Chattooga Cliffs reach and the delayed-harvest area to address a combination of biological and social concerns.

- Responds directly to concerns that boating should be an approved recreation use above Highway 28 while also taking into consideration the unique characteristics of the more remote, less-visited, less-impacted Chattooga Cliffs section.
- Allows boating between Bull Pen bridge and Lick Log Creek when the mean daily flow is 350 cfs or higher.

Alternative 5 (continued):

- Maintains the popular delayed-harvest area as a boat-free zone.
- Provides more boatable days than Alternative 4, but less than the other boating alternatives that do not have flow or season restrictions.
- Addresses biological and physical resource concerns by applying the same trail, campsite, parking and LWD actions as Alternative 4.

Alternative 8: Provides boating opportunities with no zone, season or flow restrictions.

- Responds directly to the concern that the Forest Service should allow boating without any restrictions.
- Allows boating from County Line Trail just below private land to Highway 28.
- Allows the use of rafts, a craft type not considered in any other alternative.
- Takes an adaptive management approach to managing carrying capacity by applying limits to all users through indirect and direct measures over a five-year period.
- Addresses biological and physical resource concerns by applying the same trail, campsite, parking and LWD actions as Alternative 4.

Alternative 9: Adds a boating zone in the stretch of river most highly rated for creek boating with season and flow restrictions. Excludes boating from areas with the highest volume of existing users.

- Provides floating opportunities in the two highest-ranked sections of the river for boating – the Chattooga Cliffs reach (top 10 best runs) just below private land and the Ellicott Rock reach (top 5 best runs) terminating at the East Fork Trail at a mean daily flow of 350 cfs or higher November 1 – March 31.
- Responds to potential conflicts between boaters and other users near Burrells Ford Bridge, in the delayed-harvest area and in the wilderness by requiring boaters to take out at either Bull Pen Bridge or East Fork Trail.
- Addresses biological and physical resource concerns by applying the same trail, campsite, parking and LWD actions as Alternative 4.

Alternative 10: Opens the upper Chattooga River to boating with season and flow restrictions.

- Permits boating from just below private property to the Highway 28 Bridge at a mean daily flow of 350 cfs or higher November 1 – March 1 to mitigate conflict.
- Addresses biological and physical resource concerns by applying the same trail, campsite, parking and LWD actions as Alternative 4.