

William B Denton
119 River Oaks Road
Greer, South Carolina 29650

August 16, 2007

Mr. John Cleeves
U. S. Forest Service
4931 Broad River Road
Columbia, South Carolina 29212

Dear Mr. Cleeves:

In response to your request for comments regarding managing recreation uses on the Chattooga River, the following is submitted for your review.

I would support any one of the first three alternatives with, perhaps, a preference of number 3; therefore, I respectfully request that the U. S. Forest Service choose one of the first three alternatives to implement and enforce above the Hwy 28 Bridge on the Chattooga River. I base my preference on the following review of the boater vs. the upper Chattooga River issue which should not be considered a boater vs. angler matter.

In reviewing the six preliminary alternatives, we should use the understanding that has been gained during the Forest Service's public process – "the public has expressed agreement on their desire to protect and enhance the outstanding remarkable values of the Chattooga River (geology, biology, scenery, recreation, and history); maintain a sense of solitude away from modern life; offer a remote wilderness experience; preserve the spectacular scenery and setting; and protect the natural resources of the upper section of the Chattooga Wild and Scenic River that make this area a special and unique place. In the NEPA process, these goals collectively are called a "desired condition."

To answer the four basic questions, the above public desire should be used to achieve this "desired condition."

1. Should there be new standards limiting trailheads, trails and/or campsites? **Yes.**
2. Should there be new standards limiting group sizes, encounters between user groups and/or access? **Yes.**
3. Should there be new boating opportunities on the Chattooga River? **No.**
4. **No.** (There is not a question to answer since question number 3 was No.)

I have not heard one reasonable argument nor can I understand how lifting the ban on boating north of the 28 Bridge would enhance or support the "desired condition" as detailed above. The question to answer is how would limited boating, if that is possible,

Page Two

“preserve the spectacular scenery and setting; and protect the natural resources of the upper section.” The real answer is that boating or floating will never work under a self-regulation system and will unfortunately bring a new part of modern life to the wilderness and diminish the sense of solitude. On the other hand, limiting trailheads, trails, and improving campsites could make a grand improvement to the scenery, setting, and wilderness experience.

The limited resources of the Forest Service certainly could have been better used controlling and enforcing the Current Management Plan or the alternatives two and three; however, the Forest Service has been forced to spend a vast amount of their funds (taxpayer’s money) to fight the Whitewater Association. If the Whitewater group is successful in forcing a legal change to the policy that has been in place for 30 years, what group will be next, to demand their legal right to destroy the solitude of the Wild and Scenic River, the four wheelers, horseback riders, dirt bikes riders, or whatever. Not exactly the “desired condition.”

Right now, everyone can walk in and enjoy all of the “outstanding remarkable values of the Chattooga River” above the 28 Bridge. Contrast the current situation with the self serving position of the Whitewater group in that they demand more rights than the anglers, hikers, bird watchers, campers, swimmers, photographers, and all others who come to take pleasure in the remote wilderness experience. At the last public meeting, it was said only a very small number of paddlers and floaters want to do “Their Thing” but where is the fairness in that demand if it is at the expense of all other users? Especially when you consider that the boaters currently have over two thirds, some 36 miles, of the river for their own use now.

I request you consider that a very limited number of people, with the backing of a large national organization with deep pockets, are trying to force their will on the majority of current and future users of the “upper section of the Chattooga Wild and Scenic River a special and unique place.” The boaters want to make it specially and uniquely theirs; again, I ask where is the fairness and how will the “desired condition” be maintained?

I know the Forest Service leaders are under a great deal of pressure and they have tough decisions to make, but they should remember that the status quo has worked for over 30 years. Sure the “Current Management Standards/Actions” could be improved with some new rules to limit trailheads, trails and campsites as well as limiting group sizes and encounters between user groups. Either alternatives # 2 or 3 could be used to enhance the “desired condition” although alternative # 3 may be more effective when the values of the Chattooga River such as geology, biology, scenery, recreation, and history are considered.

Thank you for considering my letters and for all of the time and hard work that the Service has put forth on this issue.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "W. B. Denton". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

William B. Denton

Mr. John Cleeves
4931 Broad River Road
Columbia, SC 29219

September 5, 2007

Dear Mr. Cleeves,

The Chattooga Wild and Scenic River is one of the last wilderness river areas in the eastern United States and a lot of us would like to keep it that way.

As a paddler, whitewater river guide who was N.O.C. trained on the middle and lower Chattooga and as a rescue swimmer, my position is neither for the commercial interests of American Whitewater or opposed to the anglers.

I would like to address the Wild and Scenic River (W.S.R.) Wilderness Act where the Chattooga became the 12th river to join the system in 1974 and specifically the Wilderness Act where Congress designated the area to have "outstanding opportunities for SOLITUDE and PRIMITIVE and unconfined type of recreation."

Yes, I understand that Congress did not hold authority over the W.S.R., but relinquished same and I also understand the Limits of Acceptable Change (L.A.C.) allow for "acceptable" change, but that would never allow to change the intent or mind of congress. Congress has shown it is very capable of doing that for itself.

So why haven't there been "Outstanding Opportunities for solitude," along the Chattooga River pursuant to the Wilderness Act being enacted? Where are the solitude area(s)?

In Whittaker and Shelby report of June 2007 on Page 9, Paragraph 3, it states, "However, it does not further define these terms." "Solitude" needs to be defined?" After perusing through 113 pages of their 6-2007 report and too much other background on this subject matter it wasn't difficult to pick up a dictionary to help define these words, although I believe congress was not amiss in how these words should be interpreted, because these terms are self-defining, self evident and self-explanatory.

But for sake of reference I will give Webster's New World Dictionary definition of the word SOLITUDE: 1. State of being solitary or alone; seclusion; remoteness. 2: A lonely or secluded place. e.g. "Jesus went into the wilderness to seek solitude."

As a former government employee I understand the Forest Service is under-budgeted, overburdened and understaffed. But, there is little burden to the First Service from those seeking solitude. They would be seeking out the most primitive and isolated areas. Where the saying is just leave "footprints," I can assure you that we wouldn't even leave that. One

footprint shows a path, a path leads to a trail - you get the picture.

Solitude seekers leave the least impact on the environment. Most are in tune with nature as most Park or Forest Rangers can attest to. They leave the least burden upon staff. Staff probably wouldn't even see them unless there was a check-in system.

They could act as the eyes and ears for Forest Rangers in remote areas of solitude. Most would not oppose a back country fee to "designated" solitary area(s) to offset any loss of revenue because of set-aside solitude area(s) or zones.

Like the Berger Group Report the W/S Report mentions the solitude issue but fails to single it out as a stand alone issue.

On Page 9 of the W/S Report they give attention to SOLITUDE and PRIMITIVE as terms that aren't "defined."

This puzzle me, because through their June, 2007 report they articulate and use specific choice words and combinations of words themselves, thus impressing myself and others with their didactic and academic use of the English language.

I have looked at the term, "Outstanding opportunities for solitude," and I can't see where it needs to be further defined as the W/S consultants suggest.

Congress saw the need for "SOLITUDE," the "OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE" and they said it needs to "be OUTSTANDING."

Outstanding is defined as, Prominent, noticeable, etc. Areas zoned for "solitude" do not appear "outstanding" anywhere in this W.S.R. Wilderness. It doesn't need "further" defining, or stalling. "Further defining" can be mis-used. Example of that is the similarity of the Professor and the student driving in the country and the student says to the professor, "Isn't that a beautiful brown cow out there?" The professor looked and thought for a few moments and said, "That is a beautiful brown cow out there, at least on this side anyway."

We don't need anybody to "Further define" what Congress wrote. Let solitude be "solitude" without speculation.

With all due respect to all the consultants, the position to water craft planning on using the upper Chattooga River watershed, maybe this solitude argument appears new and frivolous to their own interest and views, but the disparity and discrimination to those persons seeking solitude along this river dates back to the origin of the Wilderness Act. We were given that right, but the Forest Service never implemented it.

It wasn't like they closed those remote primitive areas for solitude, like they closed the upper river to watercraft, they just never opened them up as areas for solitude as Congress had intended from the very beginning, it just never happened.

Now a voice cries out from the wilderness, "Give us our wilderness, give us our solitude."

We are only asking for what was promised, no more. We are not asking for anything new, we are finally asking for what was given to us, bestowed to all of us.

But it is not ours it belongs to America, all of America. As we oppose no part or fraction thereof and our request neither harms or disadvantages anyone seeking the overall good for all interests we ask all citizens and interested parties to join us in our pursuit to have the Forest Service to open up and designate remote and primitive areas for solitude pursuant to the congressional dictates as spelled out in the Wilderness Act for all persons to enjoy now and forever.

Sincerely,



James P. McCarthy, Chairman

Coalition for Save Our Solitude (S.O.S.)

P.O. Box 905

Dillsboro, NC 28725

828-631-1416

email: iobstce@hotmail.com

Copy to:

Carl Iobst, Vice Chairman

Thomas Rain Crowe

American Whitewater, Nantahala Outdoor Center

Paul V. Nolan Esq., Washington, D.C.

All Political, Governmental, Environmental and media interests

At: Mr. Mitchell Burnett 11-13-07

The Chattooga River is a beautiful free flowing river that runs for 57 miles through three states starting in the mountains of North Carolina.

The "National Wild and Scenic River System" act passed by the U.S. Congress in October of 1968, (Public Law 90-542) governs this river.

Since 1976 the upper section has been closed to water craft by the U.S. Forest Service who has jurisdiction over the river and surrounding areas.

In 2005 American Whitewater filed an appeal that subsequently has led to ongoing approaches and studies as to the opening or closing in whole or in part of the upper river to boating.

This basically was a conflict between boaters and anglers — that is until we of the Chattooga Coalition for Save our Solitude (S.O.S.) jumped in.

What was our beef?

We believed that the Forest Service split the pie between the anglers and boaters and left out a lot of people and subsequently failed to follow the dictates of Congress not only in the Chattooga River "Wild and Scenic River System." act, but the more restrictive "National Wilderness Preservation System" act, Public law 88-577, that Congress passed in September of 1964 for people seeking privacy, remoteness and solitude in the Ellicott Rock Wilderness along the Chattooga River.

No one was addressing this act and this act covers the Ellicott Rock Wilderness area which is embedded into the Chattooga River corridor for several miles. Paddlers would have to go through this very restrictive area, if they were allowed to at all, that is designated for remote, primitive solitude.

This act, aka, as the "Wilderness Act," has special provisions distinct and distant from all other acts that are being focused on at this time by the U.S.F.S.

The Ellicott Rock is a monumental landmark very sacred and considered a power place by Native Americans. it is not to be desecrated by people who want to play in its vicinity.

The Ellicott Wilderness area is to, "retain it's primeval charter and influence," "has Outstanding OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION. Remember the key word here is primitive recreation, not modern.

First and foremost Ellicott Rock Wilderness is a "preserve." That's not our view, that what

the U.S. Congress has passed into law.

Solitude is a state of being solitary or alone; seclusion; remoteness; a lonely or secluded place, e.g.: "Jesus went into the wilderness alone to seek solitude." He didn't bring a camel, kayak, rifle, bow or shot-gun. Yes, the Forest Service allows hunting not only in and around the Ellicott Rock monument, but along the banks of the river where people hike or blend in with nature.

I have no problem with guns I was in the Army, but is this the best place for guns, in a place for solitude?

There are many reasons people seek out the most remote and primitive areas of a forest, that's why Congress set these "Wilderness Areas" aside, not to be disturbed forever.

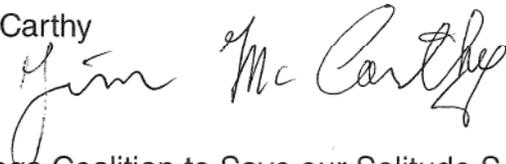
Going back to the "National Wild and Scenic River System" act, Sec. 10(b); without reading the entire section, it states that when one act crosses into the other's turf "the more restrictive provisions shall apply!"

Again it states the same in section (c).

So when American Whitewater and the anglers are considering splitting the river among themselves they should be considerate of others who have an equal and fair right to its use, especially in the Ellicott Rock Wilderness area. And why not, the anglers have use of the whole 57 miles of river right now, the paddlers have 36 miles of river zoned for them and for solitude seekers who are looking for that quiet set-aside remote area there is no area in the entire 57 miles corridor for them, not even in the Ellicott Rock Wilderness area that was designated by Congress to have OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE.

Before one paddler or one angler gets another inch of the Chattooga River for themselves we the solitude seekers want our own zoned area in the Ellicott Rock Wilderness area as Congress had intended. Because once these primitive remote areas are gone they are gone forever.

Jim McCarthy



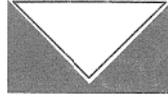
Chattooga Coalition to Save our Solitude S.O.S.

P.O. Box 905

Dillsboro, NC 28725

828-631-1416

MITCHELL & COMPANY
CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS



Member
American Institute of Certified Public Accountants
Florida Institute of Certified Public Accountants

JOSEPH D. MITCHELL, CPA
C. GUY FARMER, CPA

TELEPHONE 850/386-2522
FAX 850/386-6955

Dr. Jerome Thomas
Attention: John Cleaves
4391 Broad River Rd.
Columbia, SC 29212-6090

September 6, 2007

Re: Boating Regulations on the Chattooga River in Georgia

Dear Dr. Jerome Thomas,

I'm writing to inform you of my support of maintaining the waterways of the Scenic Chattooga River in their present condition, **and not opening them to further traffic**. I am asking you on behalf of The U.S. forest service to join me in the effort to preserve a part of our waterways and wildlife in the North Georgia area. Please send a letter of concern to our U.S. Forest Service stating that you agree with the preservation of this area for the following reasons:

- The Forest Service ban should stay in effect to truly maintain the wild nature and clean waters of the Upper Chattooga.
- A well-funded lobby group should not be able to dictate the use of a precious natural resource.
- Boaters already cover 36 miles of the Chattooga River, a mere 21 is still accessible just not in use for boating.
- We want to protect Slide Rock and let it remain a family-friendly swimming hole and The Iron Bridge a remote picnic area for both safety and environmental reasons.

Please join me in the effort to protect our natural enviroment and the way of life we so love in these mountains. A deadline of September 13, 2007 is set by the U.S. Forest Service to receive comment on the issue.

The Honorable Elizabeth Dole
Page 2
September 6, 2007.

I thank you for your time to preserving the Chatooga River and keeping our waterways fresh, clean and reproductive.

The address to send your letters of concern is listed below:

Forest Supervisor's Office
Francis Marion and Sumter National Forests
4931 Broad River Road
Columbia, SC 29212-6090
webmaster@fs.fed.us

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Guy Farmer".

Guy Farmer

GF:hf
Enclosure

cc: Forest Supervisor's Office
Francis Marion and Sumter National Forests