

Chattooga River Corridor Public Use Data Collection Participation

Any visitor use capacity analysis should pay attention to use information; the capacity concept suggests that impacts may be related to use, and standards that define unacceptable impact levels can help define how much use is too much. Thirty years of capacity research suggests that other factors also affect impacts, such as physical constraints, but use information remains a key factor.

Most recreation use information is collected for large areas (e.g., at the forest level) or for long periods of time (e.g., for the entire year), giving little insight about impacts during specific times or at specific locations. For most impacts it is important to focus on more specific use measures, each of which must specify timing (e.g., at one time, per day, per week, per month, per season), location (e.g., at a parking area, in the entire segment, at specific attraction sites), and units (e.g., user days, people, or trips).

The Forest Service currently monitors boating use on the Lower Chattooga through a mandatory permit system, but it does not monitor fishing, hiking, swimming or other uses on either the upper or lower river. Some creel census efforts in the Upper Chattooga (e.g., roving creel observations in 1987-1989; front country angling surveys in 1999-2000 and 2004-2005) provide useful estimates, but they focus only on angling. Additionally, knowledgeable Forest Service staff are able to describe general use patterns and broad estimates of average and peak use by season, but there is little documentation and more specific information is needed.

Therefore, as part of the Phase I Recreation Data Collection efforts being conducted by the Forest Service to facilitate the Chattooga River Carrying Capacity Analysis, the agency is requesting assistance from the public in collecting limited recreation use information. The information to be collected by public includes vehicle counts (at all locations) and people counts (at some locations) at the primary parking areas and site access points above the Route 28 Bridge along the Upper Chattooga River corridor and at certain sites along the lower corridor. The primary objectives for these data collection efforts are to:

- Involve public in the Phase I Recreation Data Collection efforts.
- Improve recreation “relative” use estimates and patterns at multiple trailheads/sites in the Chattooga River Corridor.
- The ability to analyze use data by sorting by date, time, location, flow level, and other variables.
- Improve the quality of the use data to be collected by Forest Service by integrating it with data collected by the public.

Public Use Data Collection Instructions & Protocols

Following is a description of the general protocols for the public use data collection efforts.

- **Schedule for Public Data Collection Efforts** - Interested participants will be recruited beginning at the July 27 public meeting in Highlands, North Carolina through August 15, 2006. The counts will begin August 16, 2006 and continue through August 15, 2007.
- **Public Sign-Up** - Please provide the following information on the sign-up form: name, address, phone number, and email. Please see attached “count card”. If you wish to sign up after the meeting, you may send an email to the Louis Berger contact listed below with the required information.
- **Timing and Location of Counts** - Participants can conduct counts as often as they are willing, but we do not need more than two counts for the same area on the same day. If two counts are conducted at the same location in the same day, those should be at least four hours apart. Repeated, systematic counts at an area (same location every day or week at the same time for several weeks or months) are preferred over occasional counts, but all data will be entered into the database and can be analyzed.
- **How to fill out the Count Cards** – Counts will generally focus on the number of cars in a specified location. For a few locations, participants are also asked to count people in view from a single vantage point. Please count every location in an area (e.g., Burrells Ford Area) and don’t leave any blanks on the form. Participants can write comments about user activities or other use/impact observations on the back of the card (e.g., recreational activities observed, etc.). Please note that this is not a forum for advocacy positions. We are seeking only observation information at the sites.
- **Completed Forms** - Completed count cards can be dropped off at collection boxes at the Andrew Pickens RD and Tallullah RD offices, or USDA Forest Service Information Center in downtown Highlands, NC. Additionally, count cards can be mailed or e-mailed to the following location:

The Louis Berger Group, Inc.
1513 Walnut Street, Suite 250
Cary, NC 27511
Attn. Leslie Yaukey
Email: lyaukey@louisberger.com

- **Need More Forms??** – Go by one of the above Ranger District offices or go to the Forest Service Website at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r8/fms/> and print one out.

The drop-off points for the forms are located at the Forest Service District Offices:

Andrew Pickens Ranger District
112 Andrew Pickens Circle
Mountain Rest, South Carolina 29664

Tallulah Ranger District
809 Highway 441 South
Clayton, GA 30525

U.S. Forest Service Information Center
Highlands, NC

Chattooga River –Recreation Use Monitoring “Count Card”

Date ___ / ___ / ___ Rainy • Cloudy • Part Cloudy • Sunny • Snow Initials _____

Location	Count	Time
Grimshawes / Sliding Rock		
Vehicles in parking lot near swimming area		
Vehicles in shoulder (not in parking lot)		
People in view from shore		
Vehicles parked at Chattooga trailhead		
Vehicles parked near County Line trailhead		
Bull Pen Road – Chattooga Cliffs		
Vehicles parked near Fowler/Bad Creek trailhead		
Vehicles parked near Bull Pen Bridge Parking		
Number of Groups at campsite near Bull Pen Bridge		
People in view from Bullpen Bridge (both directions)		
Vehicles parked at Ellicott Rock trailhead		
Fish Hatchery / Cherry Hill Area		
Vehicles parked at fish hatchery		
People using hatchery picnic area or fishing platform		
Vehicles parked at non-fee trailhead area at Cherry Hill		
Burrell's Ford Area		
Vehicles in parking lot on SC side (campground parking lot)		
Vehicles in parking lot on GA side		
Vehicles parked at/or near bridge/trailhead (not in main lots)		
People in view from bridge (both directions)		
Number of groups (sites occupied) at campground		
Access to Rock Gorge Reach		
Vehicles parked at or near end of Big Bend Road		
Vehicles parked at Thrift Lake / Lick Log Falls trailhead		
Highway 28 Bridge Area		
Vehicles parked at Ridley Fields lot (SC side)		
Vehicles parked near Bridge on GA side (within ¼ - mile)		
Vehicles at Hwy 28 boater put-in		
Vehicles parked along the Long Bottom Ford camping corridor		
West Fork Area		
Vehicles parked in the Big Culvert area		
Vehicles parked at the John Teague Gap parking (TH for Three Forks)		
Vehicles parked at/near the bridge on FS Road 86		
Vehicles parked at FS Road 86 parking area/campground		
Vehicles parked on both sides of the Warwoman Road bridge		
Earls Ford		
Vehicles in parking lot		
People in view from beach		

Count card continued on next page.

