



Forest Supervisor Betty Jewett  
Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests  
Cleveland Highway  
Gainesville, GA

12 September 2019

Re: Objection to the Proposed Union County Target Range Project

Dear Supervisor Jewett:

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy is formally objecting to the Finding of No Significant Impact decision regarding the proposed Union County Target Range Project.

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) is a 94-year-old, non-profit educational organization dedicated to the maintenance, management and protection of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail (A.T.). The A.T. became a unit of the National Park Service (NPS) when it was designated the first National Scenic Trail in 1968. ATC works in close cooperation with the NPS, USDA Forest Service and the volunteers of 31 A.T. maintaining Clubs; in Georgia the A.T. Club assigned responsibility for the A.T. is the Georgia A.T. Club (GATC).

ATC values Union County as an A.T. Community and is supportive of a target range in Union County – but not as proposed. ATC's reasons for our objection are as follows:

- Safety - the range points straight at the A.T. and there is realistic possibility that a stray bullet could reach hikers on the Trail.
- Noise - the range points straight at the A.T. creating noise from the range which will be very intrusive and concerning.
- The A.T. in this location is within the Mark Trail Wilderness and the noise from this range will detract significantly from the Wilderness character of the area, which the USFS must protect.
- Alternative sites have not been adequately explored, and there was inadequate consultation before a site was chosen by Union County.
- There is an existing USFS shooting range, in the adjoining county, about 4 miles away. Adequate explanation as to why it cannot be used by Union County has not been given.

ATC looks forward to participating in a process that helps Union County select a target range location which is suitable for both a range, and the neighbors of the range, including the Appalachian National Scenic Trail.

Thank you for the opportunity to continue to work with Union County and the Chattahoochee National Forest on a Union County target range that provides a win/win solution to Union County needs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Laura Belleville'.

Laura Belleville  
VP of Conservation and Trail Management Programs

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Morgan Sommerville'.

Morgan Sommerville  
Regional Director