

From: [Jewett, Betty M -FS](#)
To: [Gonzalez-Sullow, Nelson -FS](#)
Subject: Fwd: Union County Target Range, Project 54559
Date: Wednesday, September 18, 2019 2:37:30 PM
Attachments: [Current Chatuge G.C. pics.pdf](#)
[Smythe.1.pdf](#)
[Smythe.3.pdf](#)
[Smythe.4.pdf](#)

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From: Johnathon Smythe [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, September 18, 2019 1:43 PM
To: Jewett, Betty M -FS
Cc: Arney, Ken S -FS; [REDACTED]
Subject: Union County Target Range, Project 54559

Ms Jewett:

Please see our Objection to the Union County Gun Range we have also attached our previously unanswered questions. Thank you for your response.

September 17, 2019

Ms. Betty Jewett
Forest Supervisor
Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest
1755 Cleveland Highway
Gainesville, Georgia, 30501

RE: Union County Gun Range: Project: 54559

Dear Ms. Jewett:

We continue to **STRONGLY OBJECT** to this unnecessary and unsubstantiated project at this location. The applicant and the USFS have failed to document the need for or alternatives to this redundant shooting range when there continues to be a lightly used range barely 3 miles away. Documented and photographed under-used conditions on the nearby Chatuge range were submitted in comments of 6/14/19.

The USFS was/is under substantial political pressure to approve this project. Promoters of the proposed project stated openly at public meetings that: "we got to the elected officials before the Forest Service even got wind of this" and similar statements, such as: "we got their (F.S. staff) attention with that". We understand that Secretary Purdue, the Under Secretary for Rural Development, Congressman Collins and other politicians have applied DIRECT pressure to Forest Service management and staff. This political interference and coercion (perhaps collusion) contaminates and circumvents the entire NEPA process.

We are submitting additional evidence of the largely vacant range with additional photographs taken at various times since those previous photos. Nothing has changed in its use. If someone wants to shoot, join up and go shoot, there is space available. See attached current pictures of the largely vacant Chatuge Range.

There appears to be little improvement and refinement in the Final E.A. from the Draft and it is not possible to arrive at the same decision as the USFS officials from that document. We consider all previous comments (copy attached) to be open, requiring substantiated and documented responses from the USFS. The brief general responses do not respect or respond to the time and effort spent on previous comments. See attached general USFS responses. We request adequate responses to these comments (see attached USFS responses below).

52 Smythe, Johnathon

Alternative(s) not analyzed in detail.

Thank you for your comments. The project is consistent with the objectives and goals of the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest Plan. Demand for a target range in Union County is gauged to be high based upon grassroots interest in the Union County Gun Club, use at similar sites, and diverse contacts requesting information on the locations of target ranges on the National Forest. Alternatives analyzed are summarized in the Environmental Assessment.

Gun Range Alternative:

The proposed range is a waste of taxpayer's money and commitment of public lands for an unnecessary range. If Union County feels it needs a range, consider this:

Propose an extraterritorial annexation of the western portion of Towns County extending to the center of the Chatuge gun range. Compensate Towns County by ceding an equal area of the eastern portion of Union County north of Brasstown Bald to Towns County. There should be no tax implications as both areas are contained within the National Forest's lands. In this manner Union County and Towns County can both claim that they each have a gun range. After all, Towns County was formed by taking a part of Union County. Just go take it back. Gun range problem solved.

Thank you for your consideration. Please have the fortitude and professionalism to do the right thing.

Attachments

Date submitted (Eastern Standard Time): 10/24/2018 1:32:37 PM

First name: J.

Last name: Smythe

Organization:

Title:

Official Representative/Member Indicator:

Address1:

Address2:

City:

State: GA

Province/Region:

Zip/Postal Code:

Country:

Email:

Phone:

Comments:

I am a homesteaded resident, registered voter, gun owner and Carry Permit holder living in Union County, Georgia. The map shows the Chatuge Gun Range is 3 miles from this site. Another gun range at this location is unnecessary and would be a public nuisance at the expense of legal land owners and users of the adjacent forest and Appalachian Trail.

Union County is submitting a permit for 100-year site lease to be managed by the private membership, Union Co. Gun Club while Union County is responsible and liable for the gun range for 100 years. Union Co. has suggested using SPLOST County funds to construct a private membership range. Union County recently proposed raising the millage (taxes) because of tax shortfall. The pending SPLOST Amendment does not list the use of SPLOST funds to permit and construct private-membership gun-range on public lands using these public funds. Perhaps a positive vote for the SPLOST Amendment needs to be reconsidered by the taxpayers of Union County. This site is a bad idea.

This site is in the Russell-Brasstown Scenic Byway and the Appalachian Trail is 1 mile down range. The Mark Trail Wilderness Area is ½ mile away and the Brasstown Wilderness Area across Highway 180. These are important economic assets to Union County. This site is not compatible with these uses. The County/club needs to work with the USFS to find an alternative site. This proposal is not appropriate at this location and a questionable use of public funds/resources. Alternative locations need to be found.

Date submitted (Eastern Standard Time): 5/27/2019 5:41:31 PM

First name: J.

Last name: Smythe

Organization:

Title:

Official Representative/Member Indicator:

Address1: [REDACTED]

Address2:

City: Batesville

State:

Province/Region: [REDACTED]

Zip/Postal Code: [REDACTED]

Country: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Phone:

Comments:

Dear Mr. Baker:

I have read the Environmental Report for the Proposed Union County Gun Club. I also looked under the Supporting Documents and Analysis tabs and in the appendices. I find no discussion or responses to the comments and questions posted by the 245 respondents either for or against the project. The project schedule includes 2 items: Analyze public input and issues, and Coordinate Public Involvement, before the 2nd public hearing. It does not appear that the public comments have been analyzed or coordinated in this Environmental Assessment. Where can these items be found? If public comments are not considered or discussed, what is the point of taking the time to make comments?

If I have missed these comment responses, I apologize. If so, can you please direct me (and perhaps others) to where they may be found.

Thank you.

Date submitted (Eastern Standard Time): 6/14/2019 3:52:07 PM

First name: Johnathon

Last name: Smythe

Organization:

Title:

Official Representative/Member Indicator:

Address1:

Address2:

City:

State:

Province/Region:

Zip/Postal Code:

Country:

Email: [REDACTED]

Phone:

Comments:

Union County Gun Range Project Photographs

Mr. Baker:

2 tries on the Union County Gun Range Project Comment Site. Confirmation # 5449 2924-52. The photos didn't go. Hopefully please see attached transmittal text and photos. They tell a story. Only the day of a shooting competition could a person not immediately find a spot to shoot from.

What "Need"?

Thank you.

Date submitted (Eastern Standard Time): 6/14/2019 12:18:01 PM First name: J. Last name: Smythe

Organization: [REDACTED]

Comments: These photos were posted several days ago, but have not appeared on the Comment Web Site. Maybe the file was too large? Therefore, I am re-posting them. If they become redundant, please post whichever you like. These were taken over the period of a year or so during all seasons year and days of the week in good weather only, at the Chatuge Gun Range 3.5 miles from the proposed site. The photos were taken from Owl Creek road during my regular trips to Brasstown Bald, the A.T., Jack's Gap, Wagon Train Tail, trout fishing, etc. Only on one weekend day during a shooting competition was the range busy. You will notice how vacant and under used this range is. Also notice the bullet holes in the "new roof", doubt that they hit the backstop/berm. I see NO justification for the need of another range in this area of the Chattahoochee National Forest. Without a justified need, there should be no further discussion of the poorly located proposal