



Appalachian Long Distance Hikers Association  
15 October 2019

Andrew L. Baker, District Ranger,

ATTN: Nelson Gonzalez-Süllo and/or Jerome Bennett, Chattahoochee-Oconee  
National Forests, 1755 Cleveland Highway, Gainesville, GA 30501

District Ranger Baker,

This letter is submitted in vehement opposition to the planned "target" range Project number 54559 on Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest lands. The project proposes a range for firing as of yet undisclosed types of weapons directly facing the Appalachian National Scenic Trail. The distance from the proposed firing line to the Appalachian National Scenic Trail varies from just under to just over one mile.

This distance is well within the maximum range of most rifles. Maximum range is what must be considered. The .22 caliber long rounds have enough velocity at 2,000 yards to perforate skin, fracture bones, and kill, even though their practical effective range is 100 yards. A .50 caliber round from a sniper rifle can easily reach 4.5 miles. It's not the well-aimed shot (or effective range) that must be considered, it is the maximum range.

This segment of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail is annually traversed by an estimated 5,000 citizens. In late winter through spring, most of the hikers are northbound, during the summer most are section hikers, late summer through fall southbound hikers are finishing the trail. **The injury or death of even one of these hikers is unacceptable.** Although Union County is proposing and plans to construct the project, day to day operation is to be managed by the Union County Gun Club, a private group which has openly stated that they will not assume responsibility, "with respect to discharged bullets..." We find this cavalier attitude particularly disturbing considering they have requested a 100-year Special Use Permit.

Although the safety of those using the Appalachian National Scenic Trail is our primary concern, we are also concerned about the impact of range noise on adjacent Wilderness. We join the Georgia Appalachian Trail Club and the Appalachian Trail Conservancy in opposing this project. We urge you to find that this project is an incompatible land use and not approve the requested permit.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Kenneth R. Bunning".

Dr. Kenneth R. Bunning  
ALDHA Coordinator

