United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest Service
Southern Region

Cooperating Agencies:

Tennessee Valley
Authority

State of Tennessee

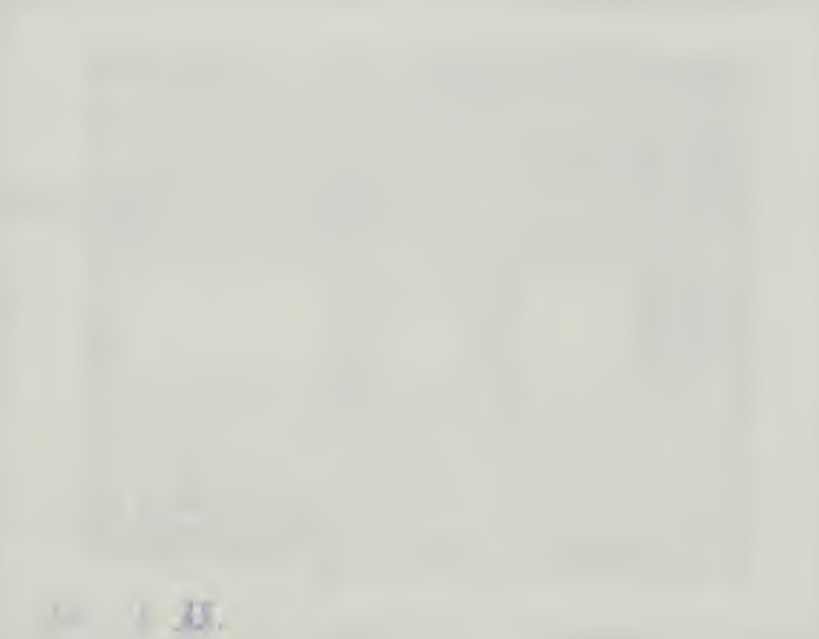
Final Environmental Impact Statement

1996 Olympic Whitewater Slalom Venue
Ocoee River, Polk County, Tennessee
Ocoee Ranger District
Cherokee National Forest

Record of Decision

Management Bulletin R8-MB 68-B

March 1994



1996 OLYMPIC WHITEWATER SLALOM VENUE
OCOEE RIVER
POLK COUNTY, TENNESSEE
OCOEE RANGER DISTRICT
CHEROKEE NATIONAL FOREST

RECORD OF DECISION

Prepared by:

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Forest Service
Cherokee National Forest

Cooperating Agencies

Tennessee Valley Authority

State of Tennessee
Department of Environment and Conservation

March 23, 1994

RECORD OF DECISION
1996 OLYMPIC WHITEWATER SLALOM VENUE
OCOEE RIVER
POLK COUNTY, TENNESSEE
OCOEE RANGER DISTRICT
CHEROKEE NATIONAL FOREST

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Proposed Action

On February 14, 1992, the Cherokee National Forest received a proposal from the State of Tennessee to host the 1996 Summer Olympic Games Canoe and Kayak Slalom Venue on National Forest System lands in and along the upper Ocoee River in Polk County, Tennessee. The State proposal included the hosting of both pre-Olympic and Olympic canoe and kayak events in the summers of 1995 and 1996 on the Ocoee River between Ocoee Dam Number 2 and Dam Number 3 near river mile 26.3.

On behalf of the State of Tennessee, the Forest Service proposes to design and construct facilities needed to operate a canoe and kayak course on the Ocoee River to be used as the site for the 1996 Summer Olympic Games Slalom Venue.

B. Purpose and Need for Action

In 1989, the U.S. Canoe and Kayak Team provided the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games (ACOG) with a proposal to use the Ocoee River as the site of the 1996 Olympic canoe and kayak slalom competition. Other rivers in the southeastern United States, including the Chattahoochee River in Georgia, Chattooga River in South Carolina and Georgia, and the Nantahala and French Broad Rivers in North Carolina were considered for the event by the U.S. Canoe and Kayak Team. However, these rivers were rejected as potential sites for one or more of the following reasons:

1. Being further than two hours driving time from Atlanta;

2. Inability to regulate flows, and;

3. One river is a component of the National Wild and Scenic River System.

Among the reasons contributing to the U.S. Canoe and Kayak Team's selection of the upper over the lower Ocoee River were close proximity to Atlanta, less traffic congestion, ability to locate facilities out of the 100-year floodplain, the availability and controllability of water, and less effect on commercial and recreational users.

The ACOG made the recommendation to the International Olympics Committee (IOC) that the Ocoee River be selected as the site of the 1996 Canoe and Kayak Whitewater Slalom Venue. In December 1992, the IOC formally elected to include whitewater slalom events on the Ocoee River in the 1996 Olympic Games.

In 1991, prior to the IOC decision to include canoe and kayak events in the 1996 Games, the State of Tennessee conducted a feasibility study to determine the potential for successfully hosting Olympic events on the Ocoee River. This study was undertaken based upon the U.S. Canoe and Kayak Team's recommendation of using the Ocoee River.

Upon completion of the feasibility study, the State, acting as sponsor of the event, submitted a proposal to the Cherokee National Forest Supervisor for an authorization to allow development and operation of a whitewater slalom course on National Forest System lands.

The Forest Service, in cooperation with the State, developed a proposed action responsive to the requirements set by the International and Atlanta Olympic Committees that would meet the needs of holding an Olympic event and preserve the legacy of the Olympics for the people of the Ocoee Region as well as the people of the United States.

C. Project Area

The lower Ocoee River is presently being used for commercial and private whitewater canoeing, kayaking, and rafting. Several competitive events are held annually on the lower Ocoee. However, the lower reach was determined to be unsuitable for Olympic competition for the following reasons:

1. Holding an Olympic event within the present rafting area would present increased safety risks and is too confined to accommodate visitors while maintaining traffic flows on U.S. 64.

2. The site is within the base floodplain of the Ocoee River.

3. Construction and event activities in the lower Ocoee Gorge would create safety and congestion problems on the two-lane U. S. Highway 64 for several years.

4. Ruth's Golden Aster, a Federally protected plant species, is found on the lower Ocoee.

The proposed course is located within the Cherokee National Forest on the Ocoee Ranger District, Polk County, Tennessee about 28 miles east of Cleveland, Tennessee, along U.S. Highway 64. The slalom course is proposed for a 400 to 600-meter section of the Ocoee River about 1.1 river miles above Powerhouse Number 3, immediately below the area locally known as the Blue Hole. This section of the Ocoee River has very low flow because of water diversion for hydroelectric power generation. Water within the channel is attributed mainly to small inflows from tributary drainages and leakage from Ocoee Dam Number 3.

Construction of the course and associated facilities will begin in 1994 and conclude with post-Olympic removal of temporary facilities and rehabilitation in 1996 and 1997. Most permanent facilities would be in place for pre-Olympic competitive events in the summer of 1995. The Olympic competition is scheduled to occur over a 3-day period from July 26 through July 28, 1996.

D. Cooperating Agencies

Upon review of the State's proposal, I, as Forest Supervisor of the Cherokee National Forest, invited the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) and the State of Tennessee to participate as cooperating agencies in the environmental analysis of the development proposal.

Since the proposed site is within and on National Forest System land, the Forest Service is the lead agency responsible for conducting the environmental analysis. The Cherokee National Forest Supervisor is the Responsible Official for Forest Service decisions.

TVA was invited to participate in the environmental analysis because the agency manages lands along the river and controls water flows within the Ocoee River. Water releases within the upper Ocoee would have to be approved by the TVA. TVA has special expertise in stream channel hydraulics needed to help design the competitive channel.

The State of Tennessee cooperated in the study because of its interest in bringing the Olympics to Tennessee as an economic stimulus and because the State has expertise in transportation, social, and economic analysis. The State also issues permits needed to construct the course.

II. DECISION

A. Forest Service Decision Made by the Forest Supervisor, Cherokee National Forest.

The decision being made by the Forest Service in this document is threefold:

1. Whether or not to authorize the development and operation of a canoe and kayak slalom course and associated facilities to support the 1996 Summer Olympic Games and associated pre-Olympic events.

2. Under what conditions use of the site would be authorized.

3. Whether or not to amend the Forest Plan to change the management area of the proposed site.

Based upon the information analyzed and disclosed in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), public comments, the Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, and associated documents that the Final EIS tiers to or incorporates by reference, it is my decision as Forest Supervisor of the Cherokee National Forest to approve the development and operation of an Olympic Canoe and Kayak Slalom Venue within the Cherokee National Forest on the Ocoee River, Polk County, Tennessee. I have selected Alternative 3, as amended by this decision, to guide the development of the facility.

I am approving the construction of the competitive course within the Ocoee River channel and other facilities necessary for conducting the competition as determined by the IOC and the ACOG (Final EIS, Appendix G-1). Some of the development will be permanent and available for future training and competitive use or other Forest uses and some facilities will be temporary to serve the special needs of the Olympic events. Table II.B.6-1 of the Final EIS lists the permanent and temporary facilities. All temporary facilities will be promptly removed after the 1996 events and areas impacted by these facilities will be rehabilitated to a natural-appearing condition.

The exact placement of improvements may change from the locations depicted on Figure II.B.4-1 in the Final EIS. Placement of program facilities is dependent upon and cannot be determined until the hydraulic modeling and final design and location of the competitive course is determined. Minor shifting of structures is possible and is not expected to result in any unanticipated or additional impacts not analyzed and disclosed in the Final EIS.

This decision amends the Cherokee National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) to change the management area classification of 165 acres of National Forest System land to Management Area 1, Developed Recreation. This change is being made to allow the development of the facility and to improve recreation opportunities in the area. However, future management of the site will retain the objective of maintaining the area's natural characteristics: All development will be designed to blend with the river setting and to maintain a natural appearance. Although the proposed development will occur on approximately thirteen acres, the remaining Management Area 1 acres around the site will provide for additional recreation opportunities within the general area and allow more control over recreation activities.

A special use permit will be issued to the Tennessee Ocoee Development Agency (TODA) who will operate the facility for pre-Olympic and Olympic events. The use permit will specify operational conditions that must be followed to protect Forest resources. The permit will allow TODA to lease the site to the ACOG for periods of time in 1995 and 1996 for Olympic operations. Following the Olympics, operational responsibility for the facility will revert to the Forest Service.

Alternative 3 provides for the development of a permanent 400-600 meter slalom course within the channel of the Ocoee River, a permanent service building of no more than 8,000 square feet, to serve Olympic needs as well as future Forest needs, bridges over the river to provide pedestrian and vehicular access to both banks of the river (pedestrian use only except during competitive events), and other temporary and permanent facilities needed and required by the IOC for conducting an Olympic-class event (necessary improvements are described on pages I-1, I-2, Table II.B.6-1, and Appendix G-1 of the Final EIS). The facility will occupy about thirteen (13) acres of National Forest System lands on both banks of the Ocoee River. The facility will be centered on Ocoee River mile 26.3.

All construction work will be approved by the Forest Service prior to any activity. Mitigation measures described in Section VIII of this document will be strictly applied to minimize surface disturbance and to accommodate other Forest users and uses.

The selected alternative complies with all applicable State and Federal laws and regulations. If it is determined through project monitoring or other means that laws, regulations or resource protection objectives stated in the Forest Plan and the Final EIS are not being met, the project will be modified to bring it into compliance.

Any State of Tennessee permits needed for construction activities will be applied for under usual procedures established by the State.

B. Tennessee Valley Authority Decision.

The Tennessee Valley Authority decision, as stated in the Draft and Final EIS, is whether or not to release water into the main Ocoee River channel immediately below Ocoee Dam Number 3 for the required pre-Olympic training and competitive events during the summer of 1995 and for pre-Olympic training and Olympic competition in the summer of 1996. Water releases would be limited to the quantity necessary for testing the design of the competitive channel and providing water for training

and competitive events (about 1,600 cubic feet per second). TVA will document their decision in a separate decision document.

C. State of Tennessee Decision.

The State cannot make the decision stated in the Final EIS to issue all required permits because required permits must be applied for and issued on their own merits. The decision the State is making is limited to operating the Olympic site for pre-Olympic events and Olympic events under the terms and conditions of a Special Use Permit issued to the Tennessee Ocoee Development Agency.

The State of Tennessee, will make application for and accept a Special Use Permit from the USDA Forest Service to operate the Olympic site for pre-Olympic training and competition in 1995 and for Olympic training and events in 1996.

D. Decisions Not Being Made In This Document.

The analysis contained in the Final EIS discloses the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of developing and operating a Canoe and Kayak Slalom Venue. It also discloses a reasonably foreseeable development scenario for each alternative. For all alternatives, these scenarios are not proposed or planned activities but are included in the analysis to help understand and disclose the long term environmental effects that could result from development of the Olympic Venue. The future development scenarios are based on existing use patterns on the lower Ocoee River where both private and commercial uses occur. The Final EIS assumes that opening of the upper Ocoee will result in similar activities occurring on the upper river section and projects impacts that could occur if these activities were allowed. Although this decision does not encompass or entail approval of any post-Olympic commercial use of the Venue, such use is disclosed as a means to determine what the impacts of facility development could have on the upper River area.

Any proposed uses of the Olympic site after the Olympics will be evaluated through additional environmental analysis. My decision as Forest Supervisor is strictly limited to allowing the development and use of the facility for pre-Olympic and Olympic events. I am not making a determination that would allow the expansion of commercial use to the upper River area. Any applications for commercial use will be evaluated according to procedures contained in the National Environmental Policy Act and Forest Service Special Use regulations. Likewise, my decision does not approve future use of the Olympic site for competitive events. Each proposal for competitive use of the site will be analyzed according to Forest Service environmental policies and regulations.

III. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

A. Scoping

After being invited to host the Olympic events, the State of Tennessee held a preliminary scoping meeting on December 18, 1991, to identify issues related to the development of the Ocoee River. After receiving the State's formal request to develop the upper Ocoee River for the 1996 Summer Olympic Games Canoe and Kayak Slalom Venue, the cooperating agencies initiated the scoping process to gather comments and concerns on the proposal. On May 28, 1992, the Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement was published in the *Federal Register*. The public comment period lasted from May 29, 1992 until August 1, 1992. On June 25, 1992, a letter was mailed to

approximately 1,000 people announcing the beginning of the scoping process and inviting public participation in the decision making process.

On October 11, 1992, another notice of a scoping meeting was published in local and regional media for a meeting to be held on October 26, 1992, in Benton, Tennessee. Letters of invitation were mailed to about 600 individuals requesting input on the EIS process and announcing the date and location of the scoping meeting. About 45 people attended the meeting, and each person was encouraged to provide the agencies with their comments or concerns with the proposed development. Public comments were accepted until November 2, 1992.

B. Issue Identification

All comments received during the informal scoping meeting conducted on December 18, 1991, response to the *Federal Register* Notice, and comments received as a result of the October 26, 1992, meeting were considered in the issue identification process. A complete record of written comments is included in the Scoping Report on file in the Forest Supervisor's Office in Cleveland, Tennessee.

Content analysis was conducted by an interdisciplinary team and issue statements were prepared. The issue statements identified the resources involved and the related concerns which set the stage for the environmental analysis. The issues resulting from scoping are characterized below and are addressed in the Draft and Final EIS.

1. Air Quality: What are the effects on air quality within the Little Frog Wilderness? The expressed concerns are for the effects on air quality from dust and engine emissions during the construction phase and engine emissions during the event.

2. Traffic and Transportation: What are the effects of the proposed action on U.S. Highway 64 local vehicular travel and public safety? What are the effects of parking facilities and potential methods of public transport such as shuttle buses on regional thoroughfares and on public safety?

3. Socioeconomics: What are the effects on TVA in terms of potential power generation reduction and related revenue changes? What are the short and long-term effects on the local and regional demographics and economies?

4. Recreation: What are the effects on present outfitters and guides on the lower Ocoee River and on local recreational facilities and opportunities both in the short and long term? What are the effects on the adjacent Little Frog Wilderness and the wilderness experience?

5. Visual Resources: What are the effects of the proposed action on the visual resources of the area?

6. Geology: What are the effects of acidic geological formations in the project area? Are mineral rights impacted?

7. Hydrology: What are the effects on availability of water for power generation and what are the short and long-term effects of the proposed action on water quality and stream channel stability?

8. Biological Resources: What are the short-term and long-term effects on fish and wildlife habitats, threatened and endangered species and wetland resources?

9. Cultural Resources: What are the effects of the proposed action on cultural resources especially Old Copper Road?

10. Facilities: What are the short-term and long-term effects on sewage and solid waste collection, treatment, and disposal, and what are the effects on local infrastructure? What are the short-term and long-term effects of facilities on the Ocoee River floodplain?

The Final EIS addresses each of the above issues in Chapter I which describes the purpose and need for the proposal and agency responsibilities in the analysis. Chapter II describes the alternatives that were developed in response to comments and concerns expressed during the scoping period. Chapter III describes the existing situation relative to resource areas identified during scoping. Chapter IV discloses the impacts of the project on the environment and cites specific mitigation measures to reduce the intensity of environmental impacts. Appendix B discloses the agencies responses to comments related to all issues.

C. Summary of Public Comments

A Draft EIS on the proposal to develop and operate an Olympic Venue on the upper Ocoee River was prepared and released for public comment on December 10, 1993. Public and agency comment was solicited on the Draft EIS from December 10, 1993 through January 24, 1994. Draft documents were mailed to over 300 individuals for their review and comment. A Notice of Availability appeared in the *Federal Register* on December 10, 1993. Copies of the Draft EIS were mailed to libraries in Benton, Chattanooga, Cleveland, Knoxville, Johnson City, and Nashville, Tennessee. News releases were sent to about 50 area media announcing upcoming public workshops to receive comments and explain the contents of the Draft EIS. Workshops were held on January 6, 1994, in Ducktown, Tennessee and on January 8, 1994, in Cleveland, Tennessee. The local ABC television affiliate did a live newscast from the January 6 meeting and the local CBS affiliate taped interviews at the January 8 meeting. Representatives from local and regional newspapers were present at both meetings.

The formal public comment period ended on January 24, 1994. Responses from thirty individuals, groups, organizations, and government agencies were received. Comments received on the Draft EIS were analyzed both individually and collectively according to the requirements set forth in 40 CFR 1503.4, regulations for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act. Responses to comments included improving or modifying some part of the analysis, factual corrections, and adding information to the Final EIS. The comments provided no new information and no new significant issues were raised. Some comments addressed course and facility design elements and were given to the design team for consideration as plans are developed.

Because of the number of comments received, a response to each letter was prepared. Appendix B of the Final EIS contains a reproduction of each document and the Agency response to each comment. Of the thirty comments received, two were received too late to be considered.

The Final EIS fully discloses the effects of the alternatives considered and provides the basis for the decision.

IV. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

In response to public comments concerning the proposed action, five alternatives were identified by the interdisciplinary team to be considered in the environmental analysis. One alternative, using the lower Ocoee River for the Olympics, was eliminated from detailed study because it was determined to be technically and administratively unacceptable.

In the development of alternatives, consideration was given to the identified significant issues, public and athlete safety and security, the requirements of the IOC and ACOG, and the management direction stated in the Forest Plan for the general area of the proposed development. The alternatives analyzed in the Draft and Final EIS respond to significant issues raised during the scoping process. All alternatives with the exception of the No Action alternative, are responsive to the program requirements set by the IOC and ACOG and were designed to minimize adverse environmental impacts. The No Action alternative assumes a continuation of present management and serves as a basis for evaluating facility emplacement and operation proposed by the three other alternatives.

The alternatives, described fully in Chapter II of the Final EIS, are briefly described below.

Alternative 1. This alternative is designed to be responsive to concerns that the site is restored to pre-existing conditions after the Olympic event. All facilities would be temporary and removed after the Olympic event in 1996. This alternative meets the program requirements set by the IOC and ACOG.

Alternative 2. This alternative is designed to meet the program requirement of the IOC and ACOG and is responsive to comments that a permanent facility is needed to promote continued use of the region's water resources beyond the Olympics. Alternative 2 is a combination of temporary and permanent structures. Temporary shelters consist of enclosures for venue officials, a start shack, a finish/timing shack, media platforms, judges platforms, athlete accommodations, vendor enclosures, ticket and security check points, screening of comfort stations, and some VIP seating area. Spectator seating consists of a series of temporary bleachers affixed to permanent concrete foundations. Permanent facilities include: the competitive channel, an upper pedestrian/light vehicle bridge to left bank, utilities, a small parking area adjacent to Highway 64, and a day-use building located on the knoll just above Old Copper Road and the Blue Hole. Some of the foundations for temporary facilities will remain for use in potential future competitive events.

Alternative 3. This alternative is designed to meet IOC and ACOG program requirements. This alternative provides for a mix of temporary and permanent facilities. Alternative 3 is similar to Alternative 2 in many respects. However, Alternative 3 provides for permanent riverbank terracing, reconstruction of a portion of Old Copper Road to its 1850's condition, permanent parking for about 54 vehicles, a 16,000 square foot day-use building, a timing shack on the left bank near the finish line, a lower pedestrian bridge and an upper pedestrian/light vehicle bridge to allow additional access to the left bank. The permanent terracing, constructed adjacent to the competitive channel on the right bank, provides additional spectator seating at the Venue and increased stabilization of the bank. The need for bleachers is minimized as the terraces serve as viewing areas. These terraces are located on fill material behind the levee that forms the competitive channel. In addition, picnic areas are provided for post-Olympic use, including one with restroom facilities on river left.

Alternative 4. Under this alternative, the proposed development will not occur. Adoption of this alternative will result in a continuation of current management direction and practices. This alternative also discloses the lost opportunity of not hosting the Olympic event.

V. RATIONALE FOR THE DECISION

The Forest Service rationale for selecting Alternative 3 to guide development and operation of the facility is consistent with the findings documented in the Final EIS and is presented below in a manner corresponding to the issues raised during scoping and from public comment as stated in Section III above. The cooperating agencies concur on the decision to develop and operate the Olympic Venue but because the TVA and State lack the authority to make decisions affecting National Forest resources, the Forest Supervisor is making the decision to allow development and operation of the facility. The decision statements below reflect the decision of the Cherokee National Forest Supervisor. The State of Tennessee concurs with the decision of the Forest Supervisor. The TVA will issue a separate decision documenting their decision and the rationale for their decision.

1. Air Quality Issues.

Air quality of Class 1 areas is not expected to be impacted. The adjacent Little Frog Wilderness is a Class 2 area and expected to experience very limited, short-term air quality impacts. Neither construction nor operation of the site is expected to produce emissions in excess of air quality standards established by the State of Tennessee.

All development alternatives will result in gaseous and dust emissions from construction and event related traffic. Through the application of mitigating measures such as watering, dust emissions will be held to a minimum. Maintaining earth moving and hauling equipment in proper operating condition will reduce release of gaseous and particulate emissions. Construction activities would be of limited duration and are not expected to cause any long-term impairment of air quality.

It is my determination, based upon the analysis and disclosure of effects contained in the Final EIS, that emissions from project construction and operation activities will not adversely effect area resources and measures to reduce fugitive dust and vehicular emissions will be effective.

2. Traffic and Transportation Issues.

With the selection of Alternative 3, I recognize that traffic volume along U. S. Highway 64 will increase from the time construction activities begin in 1994 until the Olympic event is held in 1996. Even after the event, traffic volumes during the summer months is expected to continue an upward trend as people are drawn to the area to view the Olympic facility and participate in water based recreational activities. These increases could cause some delays for local traffic during peak visitation periods in the summer, during construction activities, and during the pre-Olympic and Olympic events.

To minimize congestion and public safety problems along U.S. 64 during construction and competitive events, the two eastbound lanes of U.S. 64 adjacent to the Venue site will be closed to traffic. The two westbound lanes would then be used for two-way traffic. This will keep the traffic moving through the area, however travelers may see reduced speeds and possible congestion during the busier times of the day and on weekends.

During the pre-Olympic and Olympic events, all spectators and officials will be shuttled to the site. Olympic-related shuttle buses will operate over a three day period causing temporary inconvenience

to local traffic over normal July traffic. Parking at the site will be limited to key officials and service staff since developed parking will be kept to a minimum.

Many comments expressed a concern for public safety on U.S. Highway 64 with respect to bus-tractor trailer traffic, bus-outfitter bus traffic and bus-car traffic. Bus traffic from each portal is expected to encounter tractor-trailer traffic. However, most problems are expected within what is locally known as the Gorge. Sharp curves with speed limits of 15 miles-per-hour and with essentially no shoulder on either side of the roadway present the greatest safety hazard. In 1994, the Tennessee Department of Transportation will develop a detailed transportation plan that will address ways to maintain public safety.

3. Socioeconomic Issues.

The analysis presented in the Final EIS indicates that construction and operation of the Olympic whitewater course will have a positive impact on the local, regional, and State economies. As stated in the Final EIS, the economic models used to forecast effects cannot capture all economic aspects of holding an event of the magnitude of the Olympics. Alternative 3 provides the greatest economic return to the local area, State and Region.

The Final EIS presents the findings of two independent studies that forecast the economic impact the Olympics will have on the local, regional, and State economies. Local communities are expected to benefit from construction related activities with the addition of an estimated 227 new jobs being created by construction related activities. About 61 jobs would be created by operation of the whitewater course. There will likewise be a demand for an estimated 45 rental housing units.

Socially, the local communities may experience changes as new workers move into the area. The newcomers may not share the same values as local residents which could lead to conflict. However, since the construction period is short, newcomers may have no more effect on local communities than tourists. That is, with so many tourists attracted to the area during the summer, the local communities are accustomed to people with backgrounds, values, and beliefs different from their own.

Several comments were related to the cost of developing the whitewater venue. As stated in the Final EIS, the final design of the facilities has not been accomplished. Therefore, it was impossible to base the EIS on actual costs so a concept plan was developed. Estimates place total event costs at $25-million, with site development costs estimated to be $12-million. Much of the costs involve "in-kind" contributions rather than cash outlays. Furthermore, private sector sources are expected to finance nearly 50-percent of capital construction costs plus a significant share of the State of Tennessee's obligation for operating expenses. Every effort is being made to keep capital costs as low a possible yet provide the quality of facility expected for an Olympic event. I, as the Forest Supervisor, can approve construction and operation of the venue but appropriated funds must be approved by Congress. If costs are too high, Congress may set limits on the amount of Federal funds that may be expended: I have no control over funding other than to seek funding through the Forest Service budget process.

4. Recreation Issues.

A. Wilderness. Little Frog Wilderness, a component of the National Wilderness Preservation System, is adjacent to the Olympic site. During operation of the facility in 1996, there is the potential for temporary loss of access to the Wilderness on the Rock Creek and Dry Pond Lead trails. These two trails provide the only access to the Wilderness from U.S. Highway 64. These trails may be closed

for a short time before and during Olympic practice and competition for security reasons. Big Frog Wilderness is not expected to be impacted by any of the pre-Olympic or Olympic events.

Noise from construction activities, shuttle buses, crowds, and aircraft could detract from the wilderness experience of individuals recreating on the slopes facing the whitewater course. The topographic barrier is expected to attenuate noise associated with pre-Olympic and Olympic training and competitive events. Noise, other than aircraft, is expected to be of short duration and noticeable only on the portion of the wilderness adjacent to U.S. Highway 64. As stated in Forest Service regulations, when flying over wilderness, non-emergency aircraft are discouraged from flying within 2,000 feet of the ground surface. While this action will reduce noise levels, only a complete closure of the area to aircraft would eliminate noise. Use of aircraft for observation purposes is anticipated to be of short duration, limited to the days on which events are held.

As Forest Supervisor, I make my decision knowing that the wilderness experience may be diminished during the proposed events. However, only a small portion of the wilderness facing the Venue is affected. Commercial use of the Wilderness will not be allowed.

B. Recreational Use Issues. The upper Ocoee is a popular recreation area during the summer months. People use the area for a variety of activities including swimming and sunbathing. During construction, the Blue Hole area will be closed to recreation use for safety reasons. Likewise, the area will be closed during pre-Olympic and Olympic competition for security purposes. The areas adjacent to the construction zone will remain available for recreational use during 1994 and 1995 but will be closed for a short period for security reasons during the events in 1996.

Additionally, periodic short-term loss of other recreation opportunities could occur due to pre-Olympic and Olympic activities such as construction, for safety and security reasons, competitive events, and administrative use.

C. Outfitter and Guide Issues. There are no plans to interrupt any commercial use of the lower Ocoee River. Activities are anticipated to occur as usual. I have no authority to regulate use of the lower Ocoee River by commercial outfitters as that activity does not occur on National Forest System lands. Commercial use is controlled by TVA and the State Department of Environment and Conservation.

Because shuttle buses will be used to carry people to the Venue during the Olympics, commercial outfitters on the lower Ocoee River may experience delays and inconvenience getting their customers to the designated put-in area and picking up customers at the take-out point during the morning hours and late afternoon hours. This effect will be temporary, lasting for the three days of the Olympic events. This is an unavoidable impact since U.S. Highway 64 is a narrow and winding road through the Ocoee Gorge. Outfitters located in the Copper Basin area will experience many of the same problems as the outfitters operating from the Ocoee area but because the portion of Highway 64 that they normally travel to the east of the site is typically three and four lanes wide, fewer problems with congestion and delays are anticipated.

In reaching my decision, I have considered potential impacts on the Little Frog Wilderness, dispersed recreation use of the Blue Hole area, and use of the lower Ocoee River by both commercial and private interests and have determined that there are temporary, unavoidable impacts arising from my selection of Alternative 3 to guide construction and operation of the Olympic Venue. However, the impacts are the same for all alternatives considered except for the No Action alternative. If the Olympic course is built and operated, other recreational opportunities in the immediate area will be foregone or inconvenienced for short periods between now and 1996.

As Forest Supervisor, I have reached the conclusion that the benefits of holding the Olympic events outweigh any temporary negative impacts accruing to recreationists. In the long term, after 1996, the facility will be available for public use. The Blue Hole and upstream areas presently used for recreation will remain unaltered except for improved access. Additional trails, picnic areas, restrooms, drinking water, and two river crossings will be provided. The area will be a developed recreation site and maintained as are other Forest Service developed recreation sites. Recreational opportunities will be increased as will the quality of the recreation experience.

5. Visual Resource Issues.

In reaching my decision, I have considered public comments that the development be accomplished in a manner that blends with the naturalness of the area. Based on public concerns, I have decided that all improvements will be accomplished in an environmentally sensitive manner. Materials and color will be used that blend with the natural landscape and will not be an intrusion on the landscape. This is particularly important since the site will be viewed by thousands of motorists traveling U.S. Highway 64 and by wilderness users from a very limited area of the Little Frog Wilderness.

Based on information disclosed in the Final EIS, it is my determination that Alternative 3 will have the least impact on visual resources. Removal of facilities as proposed under Alternative 1 would permanently scar the river channel which would be highly visible from Highway 64 and from a limited area of the Little Frog Wilderness. Alternative 2 would leave foundations within the river for use during future competitive events (bleachers foundations) that would be visible and contrast with the surrounding native rock. Alternative 3 uses a limited amount of bleachers, but depends instead on terraces for spectator seating and circulation. The terraces will have a positive effect on viewing areas of the river and will create a natural appearance.

6. Geological Issues.

Alternative 1, 2, and 3 have the potential for exposure of sulfide-bearing formations and subsequent release of acid into the waters of the Ocoee River. The effects of acid release into the environment are well known. I considered the potential for disturbing the known acid-producing formations in selecting Alternative 3. My examination of the information disclosed in the Final EIS, visits to the site, and careful consideration of construction and rehabilitation information, convinced me to select Alternative 3 to reduce the risk of exposing acid-producing formations.

Equipment operating within the riverbed poses the potential for disturbance of acid-producing geologic formations that would be in direct contact with water flowing in the channel. Equipment could break existing rock ledges during placement and removal of the fill material destroying the natural appearance of the riverbed. Alternative 1 requires two entries into the site, one for placement of fill material to form the competitive channel and one for removal of fill material after the competitive events are held. I have determined that the risk of exposing acid-producing formations and potential release of acid into the waters of the Ocoee River foreclose the option of selecting Alternative 1.

Alternatives 2 and 3 require emplacement of fill material to form a permanent competitive course. Fill material consisting of clean, limestone quarry stone would be placed within the riverbed to narrow the river channel. Neither alternative is expected to require the operation of equipment directly on the riverbed to place the fill.

7. Hydrology Issues.

All alternatives except Alternative 4 have the potential to impact the water quality of the Ocoee River. Alternative 1 has the lowest construction-related impact on water quality but the highest reconditioning-related impact on water quality followed by Alternative 2. Alternative 3 is expected to have the least impact on water quality although there will be a temporary decrease in water quality in terms of suspended sediment concentrations during site construction.

Construction of the competitive course as described in the alternatives is not expected to exacerbate either upstream or downstream flooding. The design of the competitive channel in Alternatives 1 and 2, while designed to provide the hydraulic characteristics and appearance of a natural channel, would not pass flood events with the same efficiency as Alternative 3. The terraces proposed in Alternative 3 are designed to channel a flow rate of 1,200 to 1,600 cubic feet of water per second (cfs). At greater discharge rates, water is expected to spread over the terraces and flow freely downstream: The terraces are not designed to retard water movement but allow water to flow freely. The upstream face and base of the terraces will be reinforced and affixed to the channel bottom with concrete to reduce the likelihood of removal during extreme flood events.

In reaching my decision to select Alternative 3, I gave special attention to my mandate to protect Forest resources, especially nonimpairment of water quality and the stability of the competitive channel with respect to flooding. I have determined that Alternative 3 offers the best approach to preventing water quality degradation from suspended sediments and acidification of the Ocoee River. Terraces also provide additional protection to U.S. 64 from flooding.

8. Biological Resource Issues

In reaching my decision, I paid close attention to the impacts on biological resources, especially threatened and endangered species of plants and animals. Protection of wetlands was also a primary concern. As determined by Forest Service biologists and confirmed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the development of the Olympic venue will not effect either the endangered Red-cockaded woodpecker or the endangered Ruth's Golden Aster. No other proposed, threatened or endangered species occur within the project area.

As stated in the Biological Assessment (Final EIS, page I-2) and the Biological Evaluation (Final EIS, page I-13), the Endangered plant Ruth's Golden Aster is found on the Ocoee River between TVA Powerhouses 2 and 3. The population is considered to be declining due primarily to habitat loss attributed to encroachment by plant species that have been able to invade the area as a result of streamflow regulation.

Another threat to the species is trampling or picking by people. All of the sites in the Ocoee River population are located along U.S. 64. The sites are exposed to thousands of boaters and many sight-seers who park beside the highway and walk down to the river.

Botanical surveys of the Olympic site and the area immediately downstream (within the area of development) did not reveal the presence of Ruth's Golden Aster. Water releases in the upper River channel are not expected to change downstream flow regimes which could have an effect on downstream plant populations. Specific mitigation requirements to protect the plant are cited in Section VIII below.

Each alternative, except for Alternative 4, results in wildlife habitat loss. With respect to loss of riparian habitat, Alternative 1 provides the least reduction in habitat (7.2 acres) and Alternative 3 provides the

greatest reduction in habitat (12.5 acres). There is no loss of habitat for upland wildlife species under any alternative. Although the area south of U.S. 64 is a bear sanctuary, bear are not expected to be significantly impacted. Heavy human use of the area at the present time has reduced local habitat effectiveness for bear. This is not expected to change by holding the Olympic events.

Direct loss of habitat due to the project would be less than 13 acres under any alternative and thus environmental effects on wildlife would be minimal.

There is no clear choice among the alternatives since the impacts to wildlife are nearly the same under each alternative. Therefore my decision hinges on determining which alternative, in combination with other resource issues, provides the maximum benefit to the project and at the same time protects Forest resources. I have determined that with the mitigation proposed, Alternative 3 best meets the needs of the project without deterioration of wildlife habitat and adversely impacting Federally protected species of plants and animals.

9. Cultural Resource Issues.

The presence of Old Copper Road within the development area was of great concern to me from the initiation of this project. Alternatives 1, 2, and 3 were found to have the same adverse effects on Old Copper Road. Therefore, no matter which alternative I choose, except No Action, a small portion of Old Copper Road will be altered and result in a change in the surrounding setting in the Venue area.

Old Copper Road is the main cultural feature within the area of the Venue and is eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. Other prehistoric sites were discovered during field examinations but none are eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

Any development within the area was found to have adverse effect on Old Copper Road. Because of this, extensive consultation with the Tennessee State Historic Preservation Officer was undertaken. A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was developed among the State Historic Preservation Officer, Forest Service, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service) to allow the development of the whitewater venue in accordance with strict guidelines which are stipulated in the MOA and will be mitigated in a Historic Preservation Plan (HPP). The Forest Service HPP for Old Copper Road will include, as feasible and prudent, rehabilitation and adaptively reuse of Old Copper Road and assurances that the design of the project is compatible with the historic and engineering qualities of Old Copper Road. A complete recordation of all features of Old Copper Road from the venue site upstream to Ocoee Dam No. 3 shall be completed. Based on the acceptance of the MOA, the State Historic Preservation Officer and Advisory Council have consented to development of the whitewater Venue.

Based upon the recommendations of experts in historic preservation, I conclude that Alternative 3 will have no greater impact on cultural resources than Alternatives 1 or 2.

10. Facilities Issues.

My decision to allow development guided by Alternative 3 is based upon the program facilities required by the ACOG and facilities needed to support the athletes, officials, and visitors to the event. My decision also allows development of other facilities for use and enjoyment by the public after the Olympic event is held. These facilities will aid in keeping the area clean, safe, and provide for a more enjoyable recreation experience.

I have decided to change the type of bridges described in Alternative 3. The upper bridge will be a pedestrian bridge. The lower bridge will be constructed to handle heavy loads for construction and operation of the Olympic venue. At the conclusion of the Olympics, the lower bridge will be removed and replaced with a pedestrian/light vehicle bridge. The lower bridge will be closed to vehicular traffic except for administrative use.

The size of the permanent day-use building is reduced from about 16,000 square feet to no more than 8,000 square feet. My decision to reduce the size of the building is a direct result of public comments to keep the natural appearance of the area: A large building would not satisfy that concern.

I am not allowing the development of the timing shack and restrooms on the left bank of the river because these facilities would be within the 100-year floodplain.

Because of costs and environmental impacts, I have decided to allow the placement of electrical power cables in the same trench that is used for telecommunications cables. The trench will be placed within the Highway 64 right of way. On site power distribution will remain underground or in conduit where required because of subsurface conditions.

A disclosed in the Final EIS, there is excess capacity in local solid waste disposal sites and sewage treatment systems. Disposal sites for trash and sanitary waste will be selected at a later date. Development of a permanent water source and septic system for the administration building is not expected to have adverse impacts on Forest resources.

VI. FINDINGS REQUIRED BY OTHER LAWS

Since receiving the State's proposal in 1992, the Forest Service has consulted with various Federal and State agencies, local governments, and groups and individuals interested in the project. Every effort was made to comply with all applicable law and regulation, both Federal and State. A listing of the primary agencies consulted in the EIS process is included in the Final EIS (Appendix A).

Based upon the findings of the Final EIS, I have determined that implementation of the selected alternative, Alternative 3, is consistent with the standards and guidelines of the Forest Plan, as amended. This determination is based upon my decision to amend the Forest Plan through this Decision to allocate 165 acres of land to MA 1. Developed Recreation.

Through the analysis documented in the Final EIS, the biological evaluation, and consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, I have determined that the project will not jeopardize the continued existence nor preclude or adversely affect the recovery of any threatened or endangered species of plant or animal pursuant to the Endangered Species Act.

As documented in the Final EIS and through subsequent consultation with the Tennessee State Historic Preservation Officer, the Forest Service has met the procedural requirements of the National Historic Preservation Act and regulations and guidelines pertaining thereto.

VII. ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

In reaching my decision, I considered the existing environment at the site and potential impacts to the physical, biological, and social environments of implementing the proposed action as required by 40 CFR 1502. As defined in the Final EIS (Chapter II), Alternative 3 is the environmentally preferred

alternative. Under this Alternative, there will be surface disturbing activities and permanent changes to the landscape. However, the modifications that I am approving will result in much needed physical improvements to the site and help diversify the economy of the Copper Basin area. My selection of Alternative 3 as the environmentally preferred alternative is based on the factors described below.

The site is presently heavily used by recreationists for a variety of water-based activities. The scenery, presence of deep, blue-green pools of water, polished and rounded boulders, and natural setting attract many local users as well as tourists to the area. However, when viewed close-up, the area is not as pristine as when viewed from a distance. The area is still recovering from an era of copper mining that severely impacted the natural resources of the Copper Basin, especially water quality. Water quality is improving as the Copper Basin is rehabilitated but aquatic life has not reestablished in the upper Ocoee River. Tributary drainages in the vicinity of the Olympic site support aquatic life.

Recreational use within the general area of the Olympic site has resulted in trampling of vegetation, dumping of garbage, and, since there are no sanitary facilities, development of social trails to isolated areas. Old Copper Road is being heavily impacted by trampling with the potential for destruction of some features.

Visually, from a distance, the area appears natural. A closer view shows vandalism of river rock and Old Copper Road features, graffiti on river boulders, trees and tree branches chopped-off for fuel wood, countless trails leading from Old Copper Road to the River, and broken glass and trash in pools and strewn throughout the woods. Alternative 3 provides for a caretaker residence in the administration building to monitor site use and deter depreciative behavior.

Wildlife habitat is presently being impacted by the large numbers of visitors to the area. Displacement to adjoining habitat and avoidance of the area are possibly already occurring especially the area adjacent to U.S. Highway 64. Such use is expected to continue as the public demands additional areas for recreation. Wildlife habitat will be improved by cleaning up trash, reducing the number of trails, and building of restroom facilities. However, there will be an overall loss of habitat because of the development.

The present use as described above is expected to continue even with stepped-up enforcement actions. Based simply on existing site conditions, the No Action alternative is not the environmentally preferred alternative especially when a lack of improvement will result in greater site deterioration.

The economy of the Copper Basin area has suffered as mining operations ceased and raw materials used in acid-making were imported rather than produced locally. As disclosed in the Final EIS, the local economy is expected to benefit from holding the Olympics.

Through the Olympics, the Forest Service has a unique opportunity to demonstrate forest stewardship to a global audience estimated at 3-billion viewers; promote, through the rural development program, economic development within a rural area; assist in the recovery of an ecologically devastated environment; promote multi-cultural diversity in canoe and kayak sport, and; create partnerships among various Federal and State agencies and the private sector to increase the national recognition of the recreational resources of the southeast.

I considered all of these factors to arrive at my selection of the environmentally preferred alternative. Considering resources individually rather than collectively could result in the selection of a different alternative. However, my decision is based not only on purely the biological environment but the physical and economic environments as well.

VIII. SUMMARY OF MITIGATING MEASURES

Mitigation measures are described for each resource area analyzed in Chapter IV of the Final EIS. Mitigation measures were developed to lessen the effects on resources that would result from the proposed project. The measures identified are ways of mitigating the effects of project implementation on surface resources. These mitigation measures are what I consider the best means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts that may arise from the project. Mitigation measures I have decided to carry forward are listed below and shall be followed as the project is implemented on the ground.

1. Air Quality

   Institute a dust abatement program to reduce fugitive dust through watering, chemical stabilization, sodding, seeding, mulching, or other methods to reduce the area of bare ground.

   Control vehicle speed on temporary roads.

   Clean U.S. Highway 64 as needed to prevent dust.

   Control emissions from construction vehicles and shuttle buses by requiring regular vehicle maintenance, reducing idle time, and reducing the number of trips when feasible.

   Control gaseous emissions during venue operation by using a shuttle-bus system, use off-site parking, and reduce idle times of shuttle buses.

2. Traffic and Transportation

   A traffic and transportation plan will be developed and implemented for the Olympic event to minimize traffic congestion and improve public safety.

3. Socioeconomics

   Since impacts are positive, mitigation is not proposed.

4. Recreation and Visual Resources

   Screen unsightly temporary construction activities from view of U.S. 64 if possible.

   Provide an information bulletin board and small viewing area overlooking the construction site.

   Adopt natural-appearing materials, forms, and colors for all facilities.

   Non-emergency use of aircraft over wilderness in connection with Olympic events shall not be allowed below 2,000 feet above ground level.

5. Geology

Avoid excavation or disturbance of known acid producing rock. Site-specific best management practices to address exposed pyritic rock will be developed in the design phase.

Samples of rock from areas of proposed excavation will be collected and analyzed to determine their potential to produce acidic drainage.

On-site inspection of any materials to be extracted will be provided by a project inspector. The inspector will oversee all activities involving core drilling and earth moving in areas of known acid producing formations.

If disposal of pyritic rock becomes necessary, acceptable methods shall be employed.

6. Hydrology

To minimize the release of sediments during construction and reconditioning, best management practices shall be followed. A site construction plan shall be developed that includes a storm water pollution prevention plan that meets or exceeds EPA requirements for construction projects.

Use of structural controls for reducing movement of sediment shall be employed. Structures include earthen dikes, silt fences, sediment traps, straw bales, or sediment basins. The appropriate measures will be selected by the project inspector.

To avoid flood damage, the competitive channel shall be constructed of materials resistant to washout by floods. The channel fill shall be anchored to the riverbed.

All fill material shall be planted with native vegetation or hardened to prevent scour during flooding.

Limestone shall be used as fill material to help buffer potential acid production.

7. Biological Resources

Mitigation requirements for aquatic resources are the same as for water quality described above.

Effects on wildlife populations that occur in communities near the Venue are expected to be minimal because of adjacent suitable habitats. No mitigation is proposed.

Reduce to a minimum loss of habitat by limiting the clearing of vegetation to the minimum necessary to complete construction. All disturbed areas will be rehabilitated, with native materials, at the end of the construction phase.

Populations of horse sugar, pink lady slipper, southern lobelia, chalk maple, and Nevius' stonecrop shall be flagged and avoided, where possible, during construction. Horse sugar on the site should be incorporated into the landscape design when possible. Transplanting may be appropriate.

Crowd control measures shall be developed to prevent intrusion into areas of known occurrences of sensitive plant species.

To the extent practical, wetlands along Old Copper Road shall be avoided by construction activities and protected during operation. Wetlands shall be considered in the design of facilities.

Ruth's Golden Aster shall be protected by implementing the specific mitigation requirements contained in the Biological Assessment (Final EIS, Appendix I) and summarized below:

1. All known habitat on the lower Ocoee River shall be monitored to determine if rafters and visitors are having an impact.

2. Signs shall be placed indicating the presence of Endangered plants.

3. Block access where plants are particularly vulnerable.

In addition to the site specific mitigation measures described above, the following general provisions will be implemented:

1. Commercial outfitters will be informed of the Ruth's Golden Aster and asked to keep their clients off specific areas.

2. A sign placed at the rafting put-in will identify the Ocoee River as having Biologically Sensitive areas that should be avoided.

3. A cooperative monitoring effort will be implemented to evaluate the effectiveness of the site specific mitigation measures. Participants include the Forest Service, Tennessee Valley Authority, and State Department of Environment and Conservation.

8. Cultural Resources

A historic preservation plan shall be developed for Old Copper Road which includes methods to prevent degradation of the property, methods of interpreting the significance of the property, and methods of monitoring the property.

Full documentation of Old Copper Road shall be completed prior to any surface disturbing activities. Documentation shall include topographic mapping of the property, recording of construction techniques and associated features, and photographic documentation.

Any construction activities that disturb portions of Old Copper Road shall be monitored. Any portion of Old Copper Road affected by construction shall be rehabilitated and adaptively reused to the extent prudent and feasible.

9. Facilities

All facilities shall be designed and constructed of materials that harmonize with the natural character of the site.

The installation and proper maintenance of standard practices for sediment and erosion control including construction-site access, perimeter barriers, and dust and vehicle emissions abatement measures shall be utilized to minimize the effects of construction activities.

All permanent facilities shall be located above the 100-year flood elevation (except the competitive channel).

IX. SUMMARY OF MONITORING AND EVALUATION MEASURES

Monitoring is an essential component of the implementation process to verify implementation is occurring as stated in Alternative 3 and to verify that the mitigation measures are providing the desired results. If at any time during implementation of this decision, monitoring determines that unacceptable resource damage is occurring, all activities will be suspended until corrective measures are put in place.

Plans shall be developed for the construction phase and shall include ways in which erosion will be controlled to keep sediment out of the Ocoee River. Construction plans shall also state how sensitive plant species and wetlands will be protected from disturbance.

A plan of operations shall be developed for the operations phase of the project. This plan will describe the conditions under which the site may be used for pre-Olympic and Olympic events. This plan will contain operating measures designed to protect the on-site as well as off-site environment from damage during events. Items that may be included in the plan include sanitary waste disposal, solid waste disposal, and crowd control (to prevent trampling of vegetation).

X. ADMINISTRATIVE APPEAL PROCEDURES

The Forest Service decision is subject to appeal pursuant to 36 CFR 215.7 Any written Notice of Appeal must be postmarked or received within 45 days after the date this notice is published in the *Knoxville-News Sentinel* (Tennessee) newspaper. The Notice of Appeal should be sent to:

Regional Forester, Southern Region
USDA Forest Service
1720 Peachtree Rd. NW, Suite 951
Atlanta, GA 30367-9102

Appeals must meet content requirements of 36 CFR 215.14. For further information on this decision contact Miera Crawford at the address or phone number in Section XI.

If no appeal is received, implementation of this decision may occur on, but not before, 5 business days from the close of the appeal filing period. If an appeal is received, implementation may not occur for 15 days following the date of appeal disposition.

XI. CONTACT PERSON

For additional information regarding the development of the Olympic Canoe and Kayak Slalom Venue, contact:

Miera Crawford
Olympics Communications Coordinator
USDA Forest Service
P.O. Box 2010
Cleveland, Tennessee 37320-2010
615-476-9700

XII. APPROVALS

USDA FOREST SERVICE

John F. Ramey, Forest Supervisor

STATE OF TENNESSEE

Ed Cole, Assistant Commissioner for Administration, Dept. of Environment and Conservation

Cherokee National Forest
Land and Resource Management Plan

Amendment Number 24

March 23, 1994

This amendment changes the allocation of 165 acres among various management areas.

Chapter IV, Forest-wide Management Requirements:

Page IV-73	Management Area 1.	Change the acreage figure at the top of the table from 1963 to 2128.
Page IV-97	Management Area 5.	Change the acreage figure at the top of the table from 25,836 to 25,714.
Page IV-177	Management Area 17.	Change the acreage figure at the top of the table from 96,429 to 96,394.
Page IV-183	Management Area 18.	Change the approximate acreage from 23,400 to 23,392.

In summary, the changes presented by this amendment represent the portion of the Olympic venue site that will be managed as a Developed Recreation site encompassing about 165 acres. The amendment provides a buffer beyond the immediate area altered by construction of the Olympic course and associated improvements.

This amendment is not a significant change in the Cherokee LRMP. The determination that this is a nonsignificant amendment is made pursuant to 36 CFR 219.10(f) in accordance with FSM 1922.5 (53 Fed. Reg. 26812, July 15, 1988), and FSH 1909.12, Chapter 5.32 (53 Fed. Reg. 26836, July 15, 1988).

There is no effect on the PNV or ASQ of the Cherokee National Forest, as currently managed. The changes in this amendment do not change the desired future conditions of the land and minimally alters the goods and services to be produced, as displayed in the Forest Land and Resource Management Plan. Therefore this amendment is determined to be a nonsignificant amendment.

John F. Ramey

JOHN F. RAMEY
Forest Supervisor

3/23/94
Date