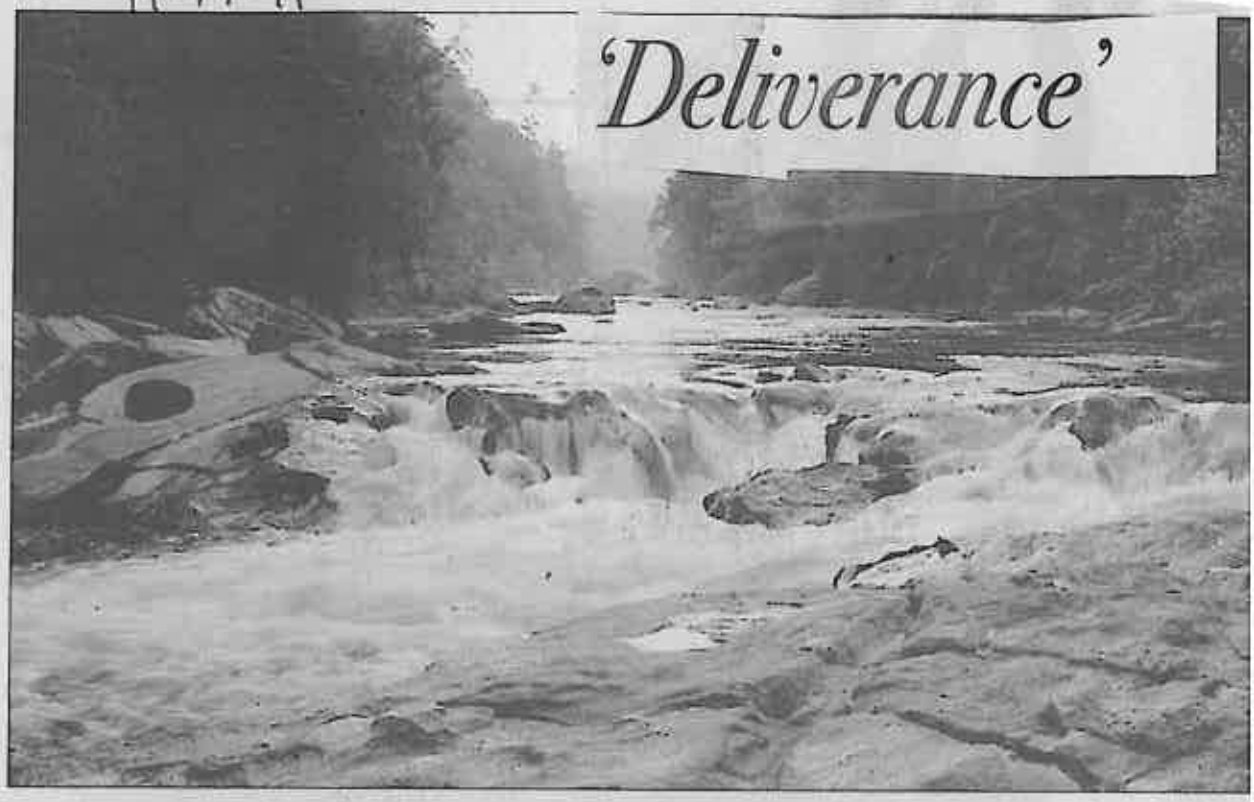
Chattooga River Festival to celebrate 'Deliverance'

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FOR THE JOURNAL



A new festival to debut next June will celebrate the Wild and Scenic Chattooga River. The first event will have v in Rabun County, Ga. and Long Creek.

LONG CREEK — Come June you will hear banjo music if you are anywhere near the Wild & Scenic Chattooga River.

The first Chattooga River Festival, being organized by a broad coalition of groups from both Georgia and South Carolina, will be held June 22 through 24. The event will include events and activities in both Clayton, Ga. and Long Creek.

Organizers said the festival will encourage environmental stewardship in conjunction with the responsible recreational use of the Chattooga River watershed. Its mission is to increase awareness of the importance of protecting and preserving the unique ecological environment and scenic beauty of this valuable resource.

Each year the festival will be themed around an important aspect of the river's history. The inaugural festival will celebrate the movie "Deliverance" as a tribute to the 40th anniversary of the film's release.

"'Deliverance' was an important part of American popular culture. It created a huge surge in interest in the river and the whitewater industry as a whole. It is what ultimately lead to the Wild and Scenic designation for the Chattooga River," said Jim Greiner, owner of Wildwater Ltd Rafting. "'Deliverance' brought the Northeast Georgia mountain region into the national spotlight and created a lasting positive economic impact in the region."

There will also be an adventure race and opportunities to hike, paddle or view the river.

"Some of the activities will be weighted toward action — music, dancing, rafting, canoeing, archery, hiking and running — as we want to make sure that our audience stays engaged," Greiner said. "This is a great chance to celebrate our unique river environment and mountain heritage at the same time."

A definitive schedule of events will be published by the end of December. At that time, information will be available at www.ChattoogaRiverFestival.com or by emailing info@chattoogariverfestival.com.

The theme of this annual event will change each year with 2014 already slated to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Wild and Scenic designation by Congress.

The festival is being organized by a coalition of interested local parties including: Rabun County Chamber of Commerce, Rabun County CVB, Mountain Lakes CVB in Oconee County, Discover Upcountry South Carolina and local businesses.

On Saturday there will be an all day music festival including a "banjo duel" between the states featuring the best from each state as well as a performance by Ronnie Cox and other well-known bands.

The festival will include a Festival Village, which will be open to the public in Long Creek on Saturday with local art, crafts, product and gear demos, activities that celebrate the culture of the region — both past and present — and family fun activities.

The festival will include a celebrity charity dinner and film showing in Rabun County on Friday night.