

CANOE AND KAYAK TRIPS IN THE DAHLONEGA AREA

**27 Canoe and Kayak Trips in the Georgia Mountains
Within 37 Miles of Dahlonega**



Provided by the Dahlonega-Lumpkin County Visitors Center

**Information compiled and produced by
the Yahoola Trails Conservancy**

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Canoe and Kayak Trips in the Dahlonega Area

The 40 mile area around Dahlonega offers a significant selection of premier mountain whitewater and flatwater for canoeists and kayakers. This guide is provided for visitors and local residents to highlight 27 canoe and kayak trips in the Dahlonega area. While there are brief descriptions of the river sections, this guide does not contain detailed description of the river sections, although it does contain cursory information on significant rapids and hazards. For detailed information, see the resources section at the end of this guide. The two most significant resources are the Georgia Canoe Association and the book Canoeing and Kayaking in Georgia. This guide provides detailed driving directions and parking information from the Dahlonega square. Visitors and locals who enjoy paddling, whether flatwater or whitewater, but are unfamiliar with what is available, can easily find all opportunities within 40 miles by using this guide.

Be aware that river law in Georgia is different from most other states. Land ownership, instead of ending at the highwater mark, extends to the middle of the river or creek channel. The surface of the water is public, but the bottom is not. Therefore, to be out of your boat constitutes trespassing. If the land on both sides of the river is owned by one owner, it is permissible to put a fence or other obstruction across the river. Many landowners also do not welcome fishermen in "their" waters. It is illegal to fish in waters with the same landowner on both sides. For these reasons, the relationship between boaters and landowners is sometimes tenuous. Boaters have been arrested and fined for violations of these laws. Please help to preserve good boater/owner relationships and use courtesy and common sense when using these waterways. If it is necessary to portage a blowdown or other obstruction, do so quickly and quietly. Do not loiter on shore or take breaks on privately owned land. Use rocks in the river when possible to scout rapids or take breaks. When traversing public lands such as those managed by the US Forest Service or the Georgia DNR, feel free to use the land as well as the river. Do not change clothes on private property or in sight of privately owned land. Do not block driveways or roads when parking. The boating community has for the most part built good relationships with most river property owners, and all boaters should help maintain this relationship.

Keep these tenets in mind and enjoy the water!

Key:

A)–Location on Map, **Hightower Bridge**–Name of access point, **(USFS)**–Access point ownership, **5.5 miles**–section length, **Class II**-Whitewater Class rating, **(IV)**-denotes advanced rapid that can be easily portaged. Highway right of way and USFS parking is uncontrolled and often remote. Be sure to lock vehicle and take valuables.

ROW (Highway Right of Way); Public Access Launch Site (PALS); Lumpkin County Park (LCP)
USFS (US Forest Service); State of Georgia (GA); Privately Owned Launch Site (POLS)

Etowah River

The 163 mile long Etowah River begins in Lumpkin County near Hightower Gap in the Chattahoochee National Forest. It becomes accessible and navigable at Hightower Bridge in the National Forest. The first impoundment of the Etowah is at Lake Allatoona near Cartersville, GA. In Rome, GA, the Etowah joins the Oostanaula River to form the Coosa River which makes its way through Alabama to Mobile Bay and the Gulf of Mexico.

A) Hightower Bridge, (USFS), 5.5 miles, Class II. The section from Hightower Bridge to Jay Bridge is the most remote section of the Etowah covered in this guide. Flowing mostly through the Chattahoochee National Forest with little road access, the section offers excellent scenery and trout fishing. Camping is permissible on the National Forest property in this section. Because of the remote character of the

section, fallen trees across the river can be problematic, but local boaters keep the sections of the Etowah relatively cleared. The section is a fun intermediate level run with frequent shoals, several class I rapids and three class II drops ranging in size from 2 feet to 8 feet. The two larger drops are slides and not sheer drops and all have recovery pools at the bottom. Scouting is easy from the rocks at the top of all drops and all can be easily portaged. Near the beginning of the section, pass two houses and fields including two low bridges which may require portaging depending on water level. This is private property, so please be courteous. Four or five “river dogs” often follow boats from these houses to the takeout. They wear collars with phone numbers and a courtesy call will alert the owners of the dogs’ whereabouts at the end of the run. 3.8 miles from Hightower Bridge, Forest Service Road 97 fords the river and is a four wheel drive road. After the houses, the river remains in the National Forest until a house very near the river on river left. This begins the Montaluce property, a large faux Italian development with vineyards, a winery, and restaurant. Soon after the development, the takeout is at Jay Bridge, either on river right above the bridge with steep banks and large parking area, or river right below the bridge with an easy access to a smaller parking area.

Getting there from Dahlenega Square: 9.7 miles. Take Main Street west 0.6 mile to Morrison Moore Parkway (Hwy 52/9). Turn right on Hwy 52/9. In 3.1 miles, turn right on Siloam Church Road. In 2.9 miles, at the four way stop, Siloam Church Road becomes Hightower Church Road. From the stop sign, go straight ahead 3 miles to the T intersection. Hightower Bridge across the Etowah River is immediately on the left. The best parking is in the small field on the left side of the road just below the bridge. This is a popular trout fishing access point.

B) Jay Bridge, (ROW), 2.7 miles, Class I. The section from Jay Bridge to the Highway 52 Bridge is an easy and short section that flows through high banks with a few houses, hay fields, and both the Etowah Campground and Swiftwaters Women’s Campground. There are three easy shoals and a fun run through a local-built fish weir that creates a nice fast drop. The campground runs innertube trips from Jay Bridge to the campground. The author of this guide lives on this section, and if you see the canoe/kayak rack on river left after passing Swiftwaters Campground, stop and say hi! The quarter mile section above the Highway 52 bridge features large boulders and thick rhododendron and is more reminiscent of the Hightower section. The takeout is a few hundred feet below the bridge on river right at the log steps.

Getting there from Dahlenega Square: 9.3 miles. Take Main Street west 0.6 mile to Morrison Moore Parkway (Hwy 52/9). Turn right on Hwy 52/9. In 3.6 miles, take Highway 52 to the right. In 3.5 miles, turn right on Jay Bridge Road. Jay Bridge is in 1.6 miles. Parking is in a small pulloff on the right just below the bridge or a large dirt parking area accessed by going straight ahead at the right bend of the paved road at the bridge.

C) Highway 52 Bridge, (ROW), 2.5 miles, Class 1. The section from Highway 52 to Highway 9 is short and easy. Much of the section flows through farmland and University of North Georgia forested property. There are a few shoals and a Class I rapid near the end of the run. It has a large recovery pool below and a sandy beach on river left. There are several houses on this section. Take out either above the bridge on the dirt slope on river right or just under the bridge on river right on the broken concrete fill. **Note:** This section is offered from Highway 52 to Castleberry Bridge by Appalachian Outfitters as an outfitted trip or fee shuttle. (See info at end of guide)

Getting there from Dahlenega Square: 5.8 miles. Take Main Street west 0.6 mile to Morrison Moore Parkway (Hwy 52/9). Turn right on Hwy 52/9. In 3.6 miles, take Highway 52 to the right. The bridge across the Etowah is in 1.6 miles. Parking is across the bridge on the left side of the road. There is a short trail downriver to log steps into the river.

D) Upper Highway 9 Bridge, (ROW), 5.8 miles, Class II (IV). The section from Highway 9 to Castleberry Bridge is the most popular on the Etowah and the most fun with many shoals, Class I and II rapids, and the Class IV Etowah Falls. Class II Chuck Shoals Rapid is .9 mile from Highway 9. The rapid is

after a long calm pool and marked by the sound and rocks in the middle of the river. The rapid can be scouted from the rocks in the middle of the river and is run from the left side toward the center. The rapid can be portaged on the rocks. The banks are private property and contain sensitive plants, so stay on the rocks. For the next 1.4 miles, there are stretches of shoals and then a distinct line across the river at a large house on river right. This is Mooney Branch Rapid (also called Warning Rapid due to its placement .1 mile above Class IV Etowah Falls), a 2 foot riverwide ledge. Run this rapid just right of center or far left with a turn toward the center at the bottom of the drop. A rock garden runs down .1 mile to Etowah Falls that, even if run, should be scouted. Take out on river right just above or at the falls on the large rocks. Experienced boaters can run the 8 foot falls either on the right in the narrow chute into the pool below, or if there is enough water, down the center. This rapid can cause much damage to equipment and body and should be approached with caution and only run by experienced boaters. There is an easy portage on the trail on the right side of the falls. Just below the falls is a secondary 3 foot riverwide ledge. After the portage, either put in at the very short pool above the second drop OR pull the boat on down below this ledge and enter the river. From Etowah Falls, there are a series of rapids separated by long stretches of fast moving flat water. The last half mile of the run is almost continuous shoals and rapids. At the large island, either run the right side of the island or run through the narrow slot on the left side and then around the lower end of the island back to the main flow. After the island and the shoals and ledges following, at the next place to see riverwide rocks, begin Castleberry Rapid. Run this Class II rapid beginning in the middle and moving left to stay in the main flow on the left side of the large boulder. The bridge is just below this rapid. Though there is an obvious take out on the upriver side of the bridge on river right, this property is in the process of being closed to the public. Take out just under or below the bridge on river right.

Getting there from Dahlonga Square: 5.3 miles. Take Main Street west 0.6 mile to Morrison Moore Parkway (Hwy 52/9). Turn right on Hwy 52/9. In 3.6 miles, take Highway 9 straight ahead as Highway 52 turns to the right. The bridge across the Etowah is in 1.1 miles. The parking is on the right of the upriver side of the bridge. The turn is steep and sharp from this direction, so go ahead about .1 mile and just past the mailbox on the left, turn around in the gravel turnout on the left and go back to enter the dirt road that goes under the bridge. There is plenty of parking under and beside the bridge. When leaving, again go south (straight ahead on the paved road) .1 mile and use the turnout to go back north.

E) Castleberry Bridge, (ROW), 8.1 miles, Class II. This section starts with several class II rapids followed by some very long challenging shoals, then long flat stretches to Highway 136. This section contains the very interesting "tunnel." The tunnel, nearly one quarter mile long, cuts through the mountain at a bend in the river. Miners drilled through the mountain, built a dam on the river, and sent the flow through the tunnel to mine the gold in the dry riverbed. Today, the remains of the dam do not hold back the river flow and some goes through the tunnel and some goes around. The tunnel can be scouted at the mouth by looking through. DO NOT run the tunnel if you cannot see daylight ahead as the tunnel may be clogged with debris from high water and should never be run in high water. There is a rapid in the middle and also at the end when exiting the tunnel. Looking at the tunnel and then going around by river is always an option. This is a very scenic section with few houses beside the river. The takeout is on river right under the bridge. This takeout is steep and the carry to the parking area is several hundred feet long.

Getting there from Dahlonga Square: 7 miles. Take Main Street west 0.6 mile to Morrison Moore Parkway (Hwy 52/9). Turn right on Hwy 52/9. In 1.1 miles, turn left on Auraria Road. In 4.4 miles turn right on Castleberry Bridge Road. The Etowah River bridge is in .9 mile. Parking is on the left and right on both sides of the bridge. Use caution here, as cars drive very fast on the hills on both sides of the bridge. Do not block the gated gravel drive on the left.

F) Highway 136 Bridge, (ROW), 8.3 miles, Class I. This section, other than the occasional barely Class I shoal, is mainly a flat though swift moving float. The river flows past some houses and farmland. The

takeout is at the developed public access launch site with gravel parking lot, covered pavilion, portajohn, and steps to the river.

Getting there from Dahlonega Square: 13.5 miles. Take Main Street west 0.6 mile to Morrison Moore Parkway (Hwy 52/9). Turn right on Hwy 52/9. In 1.1 miles, turn left on Auraria Road. Go 11 miles to the end of Auraria Road. Turn right and the Etowah Bridge is .8 mile. Parking is on the right in a long gravel pulloff. Access to the river involves a several hundred foot walk and steep slide down the dirt bank.

G) Lower Highway 9 Bridge, (PALS), 9 miles, Class I. This section flows through the Dawson Forest Wildlife Management Area with little road access. This section is swift flowing, but mostly flat water with one Class I rapid (Radioactive Rapid) near the end of the run. Pass Shoal Creek at mile 4.1 and Amicalola Creek at mile 7.1. Dawson Forest was once a nuclear jet engine and radiation effect research facility and you will see many bridge abutments, old railroad beds, concrete structures, and more. There are abandoned nuclear reactors and other facilities away from the river. This section is a great place for birding and observing wildlife. The takeout is at a wide concrete ramp on river right just above Kelly Bridge. This takeout is a private fee area (\$3 per person). When parking here, pay at the pay station at the gate. There is a portajohn here too. **Note:** This section is offered by Appalachian Outfitters as an outfitted trip or fee shuttle. (See info at end of guide)

Getting there from Dahlonega Square: 19.6 miles. Take Main Street west 0.6 mile to Morrison Moore Parkway (Hwy 52/9). Turn right on Hwy 52/9. In 3.6 miles, take Highway 9 straight ahead as Highway 52 turns to the right. Go a total of 14.8 miles, going around the Dawsonville square to remain on Highway 9. At 14.8 miles, the Public Access Launch Site is on the right just before the bridge across the Etowah.

H) Kelly Bridge Road bridge, (POLS), 6.7 miles, Flatwater. At Kelly Bridge Road, there is parking for a fee (\$3 per person) in a gated field with a portajohn. This location has a wide concrete ramp launch. The Forsyth County Parks and Recreation Department is in the process of building Eagle's Beak Park, a county park including a boat launch at the Etowah River and Old Federal Road. When completed, this section will have good access at the lower end and be accessible for boating. The section is typical fast moving flatwater.

Getting there from Dahlonega Square: 27.7 miles. Take Main Street west 0.6 mile to Morrison Moore Parkway (Hwy 52/9). Turn right on Hwy 52/9. In 3.6 miles, take Highway 9 straight ahead as Highway 52 turns to the right. Go a total of 20.7 miles, going around the Dawsonville square to remain on Highway 9. At 20.7 miles, across from the Citgo station, turn right on AT Moore Road. At 1.9 miles, turn right onto Kelly Bridge Road. The Etowah is 4.4 miles. The fee parking area (\$3 per person) is on the right side after crossing the bridge.

Chestatee River

The Chestatee River begins at the confluence of Dicks Creek and Frogtown Creek near Turners Corner in Lumpkin County. It runs 50.8 miles to the Chattahoochee River, with 18 miles under Lake Lanier. It is a major tributary of the Chattahoochee River. The upper Chestatee offers challenging Class II and III rapids and the Class IV Grindle Falls, but access is very limited due to private property issues. This guide will begin at the Highway 52 Bridge with public access.

I) Highway 52 Bridge, (POLS), 3.5 miles, Mild shoals. The section from Highway 52 at the Cool Breeze Restaurant (old Oar House) to Highway 60 is a scenic easy run with mostly flatwater and some shoals. The restaurant offers parking and launch area for boaters (check in with the restaurant staff) and is a great place to start with a meal or end with one when running the ending shuttle. The last part of the section flows through the Achasta Golf Course before ending at the Highway 60 bridge. The takeout is on river right on the downstream side of the bridge. Parking in the dirt parking area is for a fee paid at the Chestatee River Adventures next to the parking area. Alternately, contact Appalachian Outfitters about

parking and exiting at the Appalachian Outfitters outpost about 10 minutes below the bridge. (See info at end of guide)

Getting there from Dahlonega Square: 3.9 miles. Take Main Street east 0.6 mile to Morrison Moore Parkway. Turn left and remain on Morrison Moore/Hwy 19/60 for .3 miles to the traffic light. Turn right on Highway 52 West. The Chestatee River bridge is 3 miles. Cool Breeze Restaurant is just past the bridge on the right.

J) Highway 60 Bridge, (POLS), 6.2 miles, Class I. This section has flat stretches interspersed with fun shoals and Class I rapids. Park at the fee area at the bridge to begin, or alternatively, arrange a shuttle with Appalachian Outfitters and park in their parking lot .7 miles downriver from the bridge (See info at end of guide). The takeout is at the Public Access Launch Site on Highway 19/60 near the Highway 400 bridge. This site has ample gravel parking, dressing rooms and a pavilion. **Note:** This section is offered by Appalachian Outfitters and Chestatee River Adventures as an outfitted trip and as a fee shuttle. (See info at end of guide)

Getting there from Dahlonega Square: 2.9 miles. Take Main Street west around the square and exit the square to the south on South Chestatee Street. In .5 mile, go straight at the traffic light, remaining on Highway 19/60. In 2.1 miles, parking is on the right before the bridge. If parking at Appalachian Outfitters, they are located just past the Yahoola Creek bridge 1.7 miles from the traffic light.

K) Highway 19/60 Public Access Launch Site, (PALS), 4.6 miles, Lake. This section is a flat, swift flowing mostly lake section. It is very scenic, great for fishing, and has very few houses. The put-in is at the Public Access Launch Site on 19/60 near the Highway 400 bridge. Just after leaving the launch area, run Last but not Least rapid on the right side, a Class I just above the Highway 400 bridge. Avoid the boat busting rock on the left side. After this, paddling is on flatwater that becomes harder due to the Lake Lanier. At mile 3.5, a large tributary enters from the right. At mile 3.9 pass a sand dredging operation on the right. Start watching for the cut path through the long tree grown underwater peninsula on the right. You can see the open water on the other side of this feature, but the thick growth prevents passing through except where the outfitter has cut a path. One quarter mile past the dredge, pass a large slough on the left. One quarter mile past the slough is the obvious path leading to the water on the other side on the right. After passing through, turn right and go another .2 miles to the take out at Lumpkin County Park. LCP has a paved parking area and boat ramp.

Getting there from Dahlonega Square: 5.1 miles. Take Main Street west around the square and exit the square to the south on South Chestatee Street. In .5 mile, go straight at the traffic light, remaining on Highway 19/60. In 5 miles, the Public Access Launch Site entrance is the gated, signed gravel drive on the right. Site has a dressing room and portajohn.

KK) For the takeout at Lumpkin County Park, (LCP): 9.4 miles. Take Main Street west around the square and exit the square to the south on South Chestatee Street. In .5 mile, go straight at the traffic light, remaining on Highway 19/60. Go 5.6 miles to Highway 400. Turn right on Highway 400. In 2.1 miles at traffic light, turn left on Lumpkin County Parkway. Go 1.3 miles and turn left on Lumpkin County Park Road. Park in the large paved parking area at the boat ramp.

Yahoola Creek

Yahoola Creek begins in the Chattahoochee National Forest north of Dahlonega and is dammed at Lake Zwerner, the Dahlonega Reservoir. From here, it flows through a narrow valley with significant whitewater, but does not become easily accessible for boating until passing through Yahoola Creek Park in Dahlonega. Yahoola Creek enters the Chestatee River at the Appalachian Outfitters Tubing Outpost 2.2 miles from the square.

L) Yahoola Creek Park, (LCP), 2.5 miles, Class I. Put in at the bridge in the middle of Yahoola Creek Park at the bottom of the entrance road. Yahoola Creek is best run when water is up as it is small and narrow. It is also best for kayaks or solo canoes. Yahoola is very scenic and passes the site of a major

gold mine. For takeout, either make arrangements with Appalachian Outfitters (See info at end of guide) for parking at their location at the confluence of Yahoola Creek and the Chestatee River and a shuttle, or paddle on down the Chestatee River (see Chestatee River section above) another 6 miles to the Public Access Launch Site.

Getting there from Dahlonega Square: 1.75 miles. Take Main Street east 3 blocks to the intersection with Memorial Drive. Turn right and go two blocks to the intersection with Morrison Moore Parkway. Turn right for 0.2 miles. Take the first left onto Mechanicsville Street. After entering the park, go 1 mile, take a left at bottom of hill, park anywhere near the bridge, and launch just above the bridge.

Chattahoochee River

The Chattahoochee River, like all the rivers so far in this guide, has its headwaters in the Chattahoochee National Forest. The spring is located at Chattahoochee Gap on the Appalachian Trail. The river flows through Atlanta and becomes the Apalachicola River at the Florida state line, entering the Gulf of Mexico at Apalachicola Bay. The Chattahoochee in the upper section is very scenic and a pleasant deep emerald color, typical of cold mountain waters. It offers a variety of up to Class III rapids. Note that high water on this river increases the class rating and difficulty of rapids on this river. This guide will cover the six sections comprising the Upper Chattahoochee River Blue Trail. The Blue Trail offers camping at Buck Shoals State Park, Mossy Creek State Park, and the new Don Carter State Park. It is possible to arrange shuttle services from Wildwood Outfitters for all Chattahoochee sections covered in this guide (see info at end of guide).

M) Sautee Creek Bridge, (ROW), 6 miles, Class I. This section from the Lynch Mountain Road bridge across Sautee Creek to the Highway 255 bridge is a flat, slow moving section with no big rapids. The first part is on Sautee Creek until joining with the Chattahoochee. It is scenic and isolated with few houses.

Getting there from Dahlonega Square: 28 miles. Take Main Street east 0.6 mile to Morrison Moore Parkway. Turn left and remain on Morrison Moore/Hwy 19/60 for .3 miles to the traffic light. Turn right on Highway 52. In 6.7 miles at the 4 way stop, where Highway 52 turns right, go straight ahead on Highway 115 for 10.5 miles. Turn left on Wilford Ash Sr Parkway. This road becomes GA 75 in .4 miles. Continue straight on GA 75 for 6.8 miles. Turn right onto GA 17 just outside Helen within site of the Indian mound with gazebo on top. Go 2.3 miles and turn left onto GA 255. In 200 feet, turn right onto Lynch Mountain Road. The bridge is in .3 mile with parking for about 4 cars in the dirt area on the right after the bridge. DO NOT block the gate. Shuttle service for fee is available from Wildwood Outfitters (see info at end of guide).

N) Highway 255 Bridge, (ROW), 6 miles, Class II. This section to the Highway 115 bridge is mainly class I and some class II rapids with interspersed pools and flat water. At mile 3.5, the Smith Island Shoals is a Class II+ rapid. After a long pool created by the Smith Island rapid, at the split above the island, take the left fork. Enter the section on the left and work across to the right side (left side of island) at the bottom of the run. There is a deep recovery pool at the bottom of the rapid. The island is private property. Take out is under the Highway 115 bridge on the left side.

Getting there from Dahlonega Square: 27 miles. Take Main Street east 0.6 mile to Morrison Moore Parkway. Turn left and remain on Morrison Moore/Hwy 19/60 for .3 miles to the traffic light. Turn right on Highway 52. In 6.7 miles at the 4 way stop, where Highway 52 turns right, go straight ahead on Highway 115 for 13.5 miles (through Cleveland). Turn slight left onto Highway 255. Go 5.5 miles to the Chattahoochee River bridge. Parking is on the paved shoulders on the left and right of the east side of the bridge. The trail to the river is on the east downstream side of the bridge.

O) Highway 115 Bridge, (GA), 5 miles, Class III. This section, the most popular, from the Highway 115 bridge to the Duncan Bridge Road bridge is a fun fairly continuous whitewater run with shoals to Class III rapids, very reminiscent of the Hiwassee River in Tennessee. The river here is very wide and swift. When water is low, getting through the shallower shoals can be tricky. This section has so many

significant rapids that this guide will not attempt discuss them. Check the Chattahoochee River resources at the end of the guide for detailed descriptions. The launch site is administered by the state of Georgia and there is a parking fee here. Camping is available at the restricted access Buck Shoals State Park in the middle of this section with prior arrangement with Wildwood Outfitters (see info at end of guide).

Getting there from Dahlonega Square: 26 miles. Take Main Street east 0.6 mile to Morrison Moore Parkway. Turn left and remain on Morrison Moore/Hwy 19/60 for .3 miles to the traffic light. Turn right on Highway 52. In 6.7 miles at the 4 way stop, where Highway 52 turns right, go straight ahead on Highway 115 for 18.4 miles (through Cleveland). At the east end of the Chattahoochee River bridge, turn onto Mineral Springs Trail. The fee parking area is immediately on the right. The fee is \$5 per day for a car/\$50 for an annual pass.

P) Duncan Bridge Road Bridge (Hwy 384), (POLS; GA), 5.2 miles, Class II. This section to the Mossy Creek Access Area is mainly flatwater with intermittent Class I and Class II rapids. The great mountain scenery is still evident on this section. The access at Duncan Bridge Road (Hwy 384) is at Wildwood Outfitters (See info at end of guide). If not using the outfitter for shuttles or boat rental, there is a parking fee administered by the state of Georgia.

Getting there from Dahlonega Square: 28 miles. Take Main Street east 0.6 mile to Morrison Moore Parkway. Turn left and remain on Morrison Moore/Hwy 19/60 for .3 miles to the traffic light. Turn right on Highway 52. In 6.7 miles at the 4 way stop, where Highway 52 turns right, go straight ahead on Highway 115 for 16.9 miles (through Cleveland). Turn right onto Duncan Bridge Road/GA 384. Go 3.3 miles and turn left onto Megan Drive just before the bridge. Parking is at Wildwood Outfitters, state fee box if not using WO services. The fee is \$5 per day for a car/\$50 for an annual pass.

Q) Mossy Creek Access Area, (GA), 5 miles, Class II. This section to the Belton Bridge is mainly flatwater with intermittent Class I rapids and several Class II rapids with a continuation of the excellent scenery. The put in is at Mossy Creek Access Area administered by the state of Georgia. The parking area will hold 5 with overflow parking .4 miles back up the entrance road. There is a good river access here at the mouth of Mossy Creek. Note: there is very little parking at the Belton Bridge, though Chattahoochee.org lists this as the end of the section. Paddling downriver another .7 miles, there is a large paved parking area that is a Gainesville City park on the left (.5 miles on road from bridge).

Getting there from Dahlonega Square: 22 miles. Take Main Street east 0.6 mile to Morrison Moore Parkway. Turn left and remain on Morrison Moore/Hwy 19/60 for .3 miles to the traffic light. Turn right on Highway 52. Go 11.9 miles, being sure to turn right at the 4 way stop to stay on Highway 52 after 6.7 miles. Turn slight left onto Clermont Highway/GA 283 for 3.3 miles. Turn left onto Main Street/GA 283 for 200 feet. Take the first right onto Holly Springs Road/GA 283 and go 2.4 miles and turn left onto Skitts Mountain Road. Go 2.9 miles and turn right onto Skitts Mountain Drive. Turn left onto Homeplace Road and go 1 mile to the overflow parking and another .4 miles to the riverside parking area.

R) Belton Bridge, (PALS), 3 miles, Lake. This section, ending at Lula Park Bridge (Highway 52), is all flatwater. Depending upon Lake Lanier water level, this is typically a mix of slow flatwater and lake paddling.

Getting there from Dahlonega Square: 23 miles. Take Main Street east 0.6 mile to Morrison Moore Parkway. Turn left and remain on Morrison Moore/Hwy 19/60 for .3 miles to the traffic light. Turn right on Highway 52. Go 11.9 miles, being sure to turn right at the 4 way stop to stay on Highway 52 after 6.7 miles. Turn slight left onto Clermont Highway/GA 283 for 3.3 miles. Turn left onto Main Street/GA 283 for 200 feet. Take the first right onto Holly Springs Road/GA 283 and go 2.4 miles and take a slight left onto Belton Bridge Road. Belton Bridge is in 4.1 miles. There is very limited parking at the bridge. Go on another .5 miles past the bridge to the large paved parking lot on the right, a Gainesville City Park area with concrete boat launch.

S) Lula Park Bridge, (PALS), 10 miles, Lake. This section, the longest, ends at Clarks Bridge (Highway 284). It is all lake paddling in Lake Lanier and passes by the new Don Carter State Park. The state park offers lakeside camping on gravel pads (no staked tents allowed) at this time as the lakeside primitive camping is not completed. There is primitive camping several hundred yards up the road from the lake access. Registration, if done at the time of landing is a one mile walk uphill to the registration office. Suggestion is to register in advance when parking. Parking is in a paved lot. The takeout is at the Clarks Bridge Olympic Rowing Center.

Getting there from Dahlonega Square: 23 miles. Take Main Street east 0.6 mile to Morrison Moore Parkway. Turn left and remain on Morrison Moore/Hwy 19/60 for .3 miles to the traffic light. Turn right on Highway 52. Go 11.9 miles, being sure to turn right at the 4 way stop to stay on Highway 52 after 6.7 miles. Turn slight left onto Clermont Highway/GA 283 for 3.3 miles. Turn left onto Main Street/GA 283 for 200 feet. Take the first right onto Holly Springs Road/GA 283 and go 2.7 miles and take a slight left onto Lula Road/GA 52. Lula Bridge is in 4.3 miles. Parking is a very large paved parking lot on the left before the bridge.

SS) For the takeout (Olympic Rowing Center/Clarks Bridge Road bridge): 24 miles. Take Main Street east 0.6 mile to Morrison Moore Parkway. Turn left and remain on Morrison Moore/Hwy 19/60 for .3 miles to the traffic light. Turn right on Highway 52. Go 15.8 miles, being sure to turn right at the 4 way stop to stay on Highway 52 after 6.7 miles. Turn right on Clarks Bridge Road and go 7.3 miles. The Olympic Rowing Center is on the left just before the bridge and has a very large paved parking area.

Amicalola Creek

The Amicalola, called a creek on some maps and a river on others, lies entirely in Dawson County. It is navigable above Six Mile Campground, but is subject to downed trees and problematic parking. The Amicalola offers some of the most spectacular scenery and challenging whitewater in the northern part of the state. Its flow is almost entirely within Dawson Forest State Forest, a managed state forest and wildlife management area. It features several Class II rapids on the upper Amicalola, and a solid mile of up to Class III (IV) rapids just below Highway 53. The Amicalola is also a prime trout fishing stream. The Amicalola enters the Etowah River in Dawson Forest. All accesses covered in this guide are now fee areas. For parking, a Georgia Outdoor Recreation Pass must be secured by phone or internet from the Department of Natural Resources. A 3 day GORP is \$3.50 and an annual GORP is \$19. See GORP in the Resources section at the end of the guide. Note: there are no pay stations at the access points.

T) Lindsey Ford Access (Six Mile Campground) (GA), 5.4 miles, Class II. The run from Lindsey Ford (Six Mile Campground) to Steel Bridge is a great Class II section with several challenging ledges and Class II rapids interspersed with Class I and long pools. A GORP is required to park at the put in with boating parking for several cars. In warm weather, there is normally a large group of swimmers at Devil's Elbow just above Steel Bridge. The drownings that have occurred here have been local swimmers and not boaters.

Getting there from Dahlonega Square: 21 miles. Take Main Street west 0.6 mile to Morrison Moore Parkway (Hwy 52/9). Turn right on Hwy 52/9. In 3.6 miles, take Highway 52 to the right. Go 10.7 miles and turn left on Joe Chester Road. After 1.1 miles, turn slight left onto Crane Road. Go 1.1 miles. Turn right onto GA 136. After 500 feet, turn left onto Emma Terrace for .3 miles. Turn right onto GA 183. Go 300 feet and turn left onto Afton Road. Go 3.1 miles and turn left onto Amicalola Church Road. In .5 miles, watch for DNR sign with a left turn into Lindsey Ford Access (Six Mile Campground).

U) Steel Bridge, (GA), 2.3 miles, Class II. This section has several Class 1 and Class II rapids and is exceedingly scenic with emerald green mountain water and rocky features. A notable Class II with a great playhole is just at the end of the run after a 90 degree right turn and long rock garden. The put in (GORP required to park) is a very popular local swimming area and is often crowded with swimmers

and trout fishermen. The takeout is a developed DNR parking area (GORP required) and handicapped fishing platform. These are located just above the Highway 53 bridge.

Getting there from Dahlonega Square: 22 miles. Take Main Street west 0.6 mile to Morrison Moore Parkway (Hwy 52/9). After 3.6 miles, stay straight ahead on Highway 9 for another 10.4 miles. At the Dawsonville square, stay straight on Highway 53 for 4.8 miles. Turn right onto Sweetwater Juno Road for two miles. Turn left onto Steel Bridge Road. Parking (GORP required) and the bridge is in .3 miles.

V) Highway 53 Access, (GA), 9.8 miles, Class IV. This section of the Amicalola begins almost immediately with the well known Edge of the World Rapids and continues fairly continuously for a mile with an average gradient of 39 feet per mile. Rapids and ledges continue for another mile and half. This section is for experienced boaters but is included here due to its extreme popularity with the experienced boater. After Rooster Tail Rapid, there is six miles of flatwater paddling including 2 miles on the Etowah River to the takeout.

Getting there from Dahlonega Square: 21 miles. Take Main Street west 0.6 mile to Morrison Moore Parkway (Hwy 52/9). After 3.6 miles, stay straight ahead on Highway 9 for another 10.4 miles. At the Dawsonville square, stay straight on Highway 53 for 6.3 miles. Just before the bridge, turn into the (GORP required) parking area.

H)For the takeout (Kelly Bridge Road bridge): 27.7 miles. Take Main Street west 0.6 mile to Morrison Moore Parkway (Hwy 52/9). Turn right on Hwy 52/9. In 3.6 miles, take Highway 9 straight ahead as Highway turns to the right. Go a total of 20.7 miles, going around the Dawsonville square to remain on Highway 9. At 20.7 miles, across from the Citgo station, turn right on AT Moore Road. At 1.9 miles, turn right onto Kelly Bridge Road. The Etowah is 4.4 miles. The fee parking area (\$3 per person) is on the right side after crossing the bridge.

Cartecay River

The Cartecay River is one of the most popular whitewater runs in the north Georgia mountains, probably due to many Class I and Class II rapids and close proximity to Highway 52. The river is scenic, but runs by many houses and yards. Best behavior is paramount here and avoidance of trespassing on the riverside private property. Notable rapids are Blackberry Falls and Clear Creek Falls.

W) Holt Bridge (Ellijay River Outfitters), (POLS), 2.7 miles, Class I. The river from Holt Bridge and the Ellijay River Outfitters outpost is shallow and flows through pastures and fields. No significant rapids are on this section. Take out is at River Left, an outpost of Cartecay River Experience. River Left offers parking for a fee.

Getting there from Dahlonega Square: 33 miles. Take Main Street west 0.6 mile to Morrison Moore Parkway (Hwy 52/9). Turn right on Hwy 52/9. In 3.6 miles, take Highway 52 to the right. Go 27.1 miles and turn right on Roy Road at the Chevron Station. Go 1.4 miles and turn left on Holt Bridge Road. The bridge and entrance to Ellijay River Outfitters is .2 miles.

X) Lower Cartecay Bridge (River Left), (POLS), 2.4 miles, Class II+. This section has 6 Class II rapids, with the last 3 pushing Class II+. This is the most popular section of the Cartecay and is often crowded on weekends with plenty of water and sunshine. S-Turn, at mile 1.8 and Whirlpool at mile 2.0 increase in difficulty in higher water. At Whirlpool, avoid the large swirling eddy on river right. The last Class II rapid, just above the takeout, is Blackberry Falls, a 5 foot waterfall with a large haystack at the bottom. Takeout is a couple of hundred yards beyond just after the covered bridge. Parking here is limited to about 8 cars. This spot is a very popular local swimming area, so parking may be unavailable. DO NOT block the numerous driveways in the parking area, as you will be towed. The outfitters in the area provide shuttles. There is an operable payphone at the takeout parking area.

Getting there from Dahlonega Square: 32 miles. Take Main Street west 0.6 mile to Morrison Moore Parkway (Hwy 52/9). Turn right on Hwy 52/9. In 3.6 miles, take Highway 52 to the right. Go 25.7 miles and turn left on Lower Cartecay Road just after the Mack Aaron Apple House. Go 1.7 miles. River Left is

on the left just before the bridge. River Left is an outpost of the Cartecay River Experience and offers parking for a fee.

Y) Mulkey Road access (Blackberry Falls), (PALS), 4.8 miles, Class II+. This section offers many Class I and Class II rapids. The mentionable one for this run is Clear Creek Falls or the Narrows at Clear Creek. It is a falls somewhat like Blackberry Falls, but with all the flow on the left. Care should be taken at higher water levels as a hydraulic forms below the falls. This section is more remote with less houses than the previous section. The takeout is a DNR dirt parking area requiring a DNR GORP (see directions below).

Getting there from Dahlonega Square: 35 miles. Take Main Street west 0.6 mile to Morrison Moore Parkway (Hwy 52/9). Turn right on Hwy 52/9. In 3.6 miles, take Highway 52 to the right. Go 29.6 miles and turn left on Stegall Mill Road. In .6 miles, merge a slight left onto Mulkey Road. The parking area is in .5 miles. DO NOT block driveways as cars will be towed.

YY) For the takeout at Cartecay Canoe Launch, (GA): 35.5 miles. Take Main Street west 0.6 mile to Morrison Moore Parkway (Hwy 52/9). Turn right on Hwy 52/9. In 3.6 miles, take Highway 52 to the right. Go 30.5 miles and turn left on Canoe Launch Road. There are signs here for the Animal Shelter. The first part of the road looks like you are driving into the Gilmer County roadworks area, but continue straight ahead for .8 miles to the dirt parking area on the banks of the river. For parking, a Georgia Outdoor Recreation Pass must be secured by phone or internet from the Department of Natural Resources. A 3 day GORP is \$3.50 and an annual GORP is \$19. See GORP in the Resources section at the end of the guide. Note: there are no pay stations at the launch.

Toccoa River

The Toccoa River headwaters are in the Chattahoochee National Forest and flows near the route of Highway 60 to Blue Ridge Lake. Below the lake, when entering Tennessee, the Toccoa becomes the Ocoee River. The Toccoa offers a 13.8 mile US Forest Service Canoe Trail. It begins and ends in the National Forest with some private property in between. This section of the Toccoa is extremely scenic and is excellent trout habitat. If fishing, read information on the Forest Service website for this river on restrictions on private property. Since it is mostly Forest Service land, much of the run is open to camping and makes an excellent canoe camping trip. The section has many Class I and Class II shoals and rapids with the largest, a solid Class II+ being just below the Benton MacKaye Trail swinging bridge. From here, the river offers sections of placid floating with more Class I and IIs.

Z) Deep Hole Access, (USFS), 8.3 miles, Class II+. Deep Hole Campground offers a canoe launch and boater parking for a \$3 per day fee payable at a pay station. The concrete launch begins this section on a flat, swift moving section. The narrowness and speed of the river offer many standing waves until the river enters the National Forest again after passing several houses. At the entrance of Rock Creek, there is a half mile of continuous whitewater, up to Class II. Soon, encounter a large camping area on both sides of the river just upstream of the Benton MacKaye Trail swinging bridge which is 260 feet long. Just below the bridge, encounter the largest rapid, Class II+ on the right. After this, more fun drops until the river leaves the National Forest briefly and flows past cabins on the riverbanks. If taking out at at mile 8.3 at Butt Bridge on Doublehead Gap Road, check with locals at the bridge for parking information or use one of the many pulloffs alongside Dial Road in the next half mile on river right. It is more common to go on to the Forest Service canoe launch at Sandy Bottoms.

Getting there from Dahlonega Square: 27 miles. Take Main Street east 0.6 mile to Morrison Moore Parkway. Turn left and remain on Morrison Moore/Hwy 19/60 to Stonepile Gap in 7.3 miles. At the split in the road at the pile of stones, take Hwy 60 straight ahead for 18.8 miles. Turn left onto Deep Hole Campground Road and go .4 mile. Unload boats at the developed launch at the end of the road and move cars just back up the road to the Canoe Parking area. There is a campground at Deep Hole. Parking fee is \$3 per day.

ZZ) Butt Bridge and Dial Road pulloffs, (POLs and ROW), 5.5 miles, Class II. The river from Butt Bridge or the Dial Road pulloffs is easy long flat stretches with many shoals and some Class I and Class II rapids. This section follows Dial road closely until a half mile after going under the Dial Bridge. In the middle of the next 4 miles to Sandy Bottoms, pass a campground and tubing business on the left.

Getting there from Dahlonega Square: 32 miles. Take Main Street east 0.6 mile to Morrison Moore Parkway. Turn left and remain on Morrison Moore/Hwy 19/60 to Stonepile Gap in 7.3 miles. At the split in the road at the pile of stones, take Hwy 60 straight ahead for 30 miles. Turn left onto Doublehead Gap Road. Go 1.5 miles to Butt Bridge. If using the Dial Road pulloffs, .1 mile before Butt Bridge, turn right onto Silver Fox Trail. Go to end in .5 miles. Turn left onto Dial Road. In the next .7 miles, there are several pulloffs for river access on the left.

ZZZ)For the takeout at Sandy Bottoms Canoe Launch: 37 miles. Take Main Street east 0.6 mile to Morrison Moore Parkway. Turn left and remain on Morrison Moore/Hwy 19/60 to Stonepile Gap in 7.3 miles. At the split in the road at the pile of stones, take Hwy 60 straight ahead for 30 miles. Turn left onto Doublehead Gap Road. Go 1.4 miles and turn right onto Silver Fox Trail. Go to end in .5 miles. Turn left onto Dial Road. In 1.3 miles, Dial Road becomes Old Dial Road. After turning left from Silver Fox Trail, go a total of 3.7 miles to the USFS Sandy Bottoms Canoe Launch. There is a developed launch here with camping. Parking fee is \$3 per day.

Other streams and rivers in the area that are not included in this guide:

Due to lack of easy public access, these waterways are not listed in this guide. If interested in the possibility of paddling any of these, contact the Georgia Canoe Association or other local experienced paddlers. Check the information section below for additional resources.

Tesnatee Creek

Upper Chestatee River above Highway 52

Upper Yahoola Creek above Yahoola Creek Park

Upper Chattahoochee River above the confluence with Sautee Creek

Soque River

Mossy Creek

Lower Chattahoochee River below Buford Dam

Upper Toccoa River above Deep Hole Canoe Launch

Lower Toccoa River below Sandy Bottom

Resources:

American Whitewater: <http://americanwhitewater.org>

Canoeing & Kayaking Georgia, Menasha Ridge Press, 2004

Georgia Canoeing Association. <http://www.gapaddle.com/>

Appalachian Outfitters, call: 706-864-7117. <http://canoegeorgia.com>

Chestatee River Adventures, call: 770-540-9950. <http://chestateeriveradventures.com>

Georgia River Network. <http://www.garivers.org/gwtc/plan-your-adventure/georgia-rivers.html>

Etowah River Water Trail interactive map: <http://etowah.secondsitellc.com/interactiveMap.php>

Wildwood Outfitters, call: 706-865-4451. <http://wildwoodoutfitters.com/>

Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper. <http://www.chattahoochee.org>

Chattahoochee National Forest, call: 770-297-3000. <http://www.fs.usda.gov/recmain/conf/recreation>

USFS Toccoa River Canoe Trail site.

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/conf/recreation/hiking/recarea/?recid=10536&actid=79>

Fannin County Chamber of Commerce.

<http://www.blueridgemountains.com/printer%20friendly%20maps/12WaterToccoaRiverTrail-2013V1.2RGBweb.pdf>

Cartecay River Experience, call: 706-531-4746. <http://www.cartecayriverexperience.com/>

Ellijay River Outfitters, call: 706-889-8697. <http://www.tubeellijay.com/>

USFS Blue Ridge District office: 2042 Highway 515 West, Blairsville, GA 30512, Phone: 706-745-6928

Lumpkin County Sheriff's office: 706-864-0412

Gilmer County Sheriff's office: 706-635-5775

Fannin County Sheriff's office: 706-632-2044

Dawson County Sheriff's office: 706-344-3535

White County Sheriff's office: 706-865-5177

Hall County Sheriff's office: 770-531-6900

Forsyth County Sheriff's office: 678-513-5982

Medical Facilities: Chestatee Regional Hospital, 227 Mountain Dr, Dahlonega, GA

Union General Hospital, 35 Hospital Road, Blairsville, GA 30512

Fannin Regional Hospital, 2855 Old Highway 5, North Blue Ridge, GA

Northeast Georgia Medical Center, Northeast Georgia Medical Center - Gainesville, GA

Northside Hospital-Forsyth, 1200 Northside Forsyth Drive, Cumming, GA

This information compiled and prepared for
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