

INFORMATION

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FEES

There is no fee to put in at River Park Canoe Launch; however, Kelly Bridge Road take-out requires a fee of \$3 per person.

WHAT TO BRING

Wear life jacket at all times. Swim suits or t-shirts and shorts in the summer. Spring and fall paddlers need a change of clothes that will keep them warm when wet. Aqua shoes or old sneakers are best footwear. Hats, sunglasses, and sunscreen are always advisable, as are sunglasses straps.

Bug repellent, drinking liquids, a plastic bag or float bag that seals to prevent water in case of an upset, and a trash bag are also advisable.

SAFETY

This river float is an easy float; however, there are a few fast-water areas that do require care in maneuvering around the eddies.

Real-time water levels can be obtained from <http://waterdata.usgs.gov/nwis/uv?02389150>.

A staff gauge is located next to the stairs at the launch site.

River Levels:

Below 4 Feet = Low, Allow Extra Time

4 to 7 Feet = Optimal

Above 7 Feet = Trees Can be Hazardous

Above 9 Feet = Not Recommended

For your safety...

- Don't canoe alone
- Always wear your life jacket
- Avoid low hanging branches and fallen trees along the shoreline
- Wear appropriate shoes and pack a warm shirt or jacket
- Don't drink and boat!

PACK IN AND PACK OUT

Please remove all of your trash before leaving the river. There are several places along the river bank that can provide nice primitive picnic spots but there are no facilities for trash.

TIME OF TRAVEL

From River Park Canoe put-in to Kelly Bridge Road take-out, travel is approximately 9.5 miles. Travel time will vary 3-5 hours, depending on water level.

THE TAKE-OUT POINT ON KELLY BRIDGE ROAD IS ON PRIVATE PROPERTY. THIS IS A FEE AREA. PLEASE ADHERE TO THE SIGNING AT THE AREA AND RESPECT THE RIGHTS OF THE LANDOWNER. ALL TRASH, ETC. SHOULD BE REMOVED.

PLEASE NO ALCOHOL, STYROFOAM COOLERS, OR GLASS CONTAINERS!

THE SCENIC ETOWAH RIVER RIVER PARK TO KELLY BRIDGE LANDING

The Etowah River passes gently through the Dawson Forest Wildlife Management Area with only a couple of easy Class I-II rapids. This 9.5 mile "run" has a low "degree of difficulty" which allows the visitor ample time to enjoy the many sights and sounds of the river.

After launching from River Park Canoe Launch (at the 12.5 mile marker), you will pass under the first bridge. A short time later you will paddle beneath a piece of Dawson History...the remains of the Old Iron Bridge. Don't miss the opportunity to enjoy the hundreds of canopy trees lazily draping over the river. These include River Birch, Sycamore, Green Ash, Red Maple, the Mighty Hemlock and more. The canopy of the over-story trees houses the many varieties of birds and other wildlife that you are likely to encounter. These include the Kingfisher, Wood Duck, Blue Heron, Red Tail Hawk, Hummingbird, Brown Thrasher and many more.

The huge concrete abutments on either side of the river are bridge supports that once held the train tracks that moved materials during the Lockheed years. If you happen to get into any trouble, this is a good place for help to access the river. After passing the old train bridge abutments, the river deepens in more areas and many anglers have enjoyed catching River Catfish, Red Eyed Bass, Bream and many other species.

If you catch something and you don't know what it is, make sure and throw it back as the Etowah River is home to 76 species of fish. That is twice as many as any other river in the United States. It is one of the richest river habitats in the entire world and deserves our continued stewardship.

If you keep an eye open for a small creek on the left bank of the river, you may find a cascading 80 foot waterfall... "Barefoot Falls." The water in the creek is so clean that no slime forms on the rocks in the falls. This is due to the pristine watershed above Barefoot Creek. With no agriculture, roads, businesses or urban sprawl, the forest naturally cleans the water crystal clear.

Soon afterward, the Amicalola River joins with the Etowah. Just imagine, you are paddling a river where hundreds of Native American camps once dotted the landscape. The river provided their "expressway" as well as a wealth of fish and other food items. Try to leave the river as "native" as you can.

Look for the concrete bridge up ahead, just past the 22 mile marker. When you see the bridge, go to the right side of the river and take out at the concrete ramp. Be careful! It is slippery. Fasten your load, and drive safely.



The Etowah River contains a huge variety of understory plants and shrubs. Running the river in spring provides a stunning background of flowering mountain laurel all along the river. You will get to experience a piece of Dawson County history and the spectacular variety of birds, fish, and other wildlife.

The Scenic Etowah River promises to provide many amazing adventures! Bring your family and friends and enjoy this beautiful piece of Dawsonville, Georgia.



Operated by the
Parks & Recreation
Department



River Park Canoe Launch

Hwy. 9 South to Kelly Bridge Road



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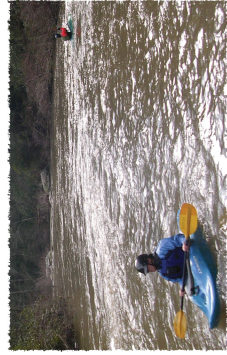
1) Big Savannah
Cherokee villages were scattered throughout the Etowah River floodplain here.

2) Dawson County Wetland Mitigation Bank
Dawson County has preserved the floodplain and wetlands here on river right and sell the "credits" to developers who wish to fill their wetlands.

3) Tree Revetment
Part of the wetland mitigation bank involved restoring degraded stream banks. The restored stream banks are visible on river right.

4) First Bridge, Water Intake Structure

This bridge signifies the entrance to Dawson Forest WMA and remnants of the former Lockheed Georgia Nuclear Laboratory, a top secret cold war facility that was used in the failed development of a nuclear powered aircraft. On river left below the bridge is an old water intake structure for the former Lockheed facility.



8) Shoal Creek
Shoal Creek enters the Etowah on river right, and is one of the most biologically diverse watersheds in the entire US.



Cherokee Darter

9) Remnants of Lockheed
Building foundations are visible on river left at the top of the hill. Road access on river left.



Amicalola River

12) Amicalola River, Bredtown Village

The Cherokee village of Bredtown was located at the confluence with the Amicalola River prior to the Trail of Tears in 1838. The village contained a grist mill, village and, for a short time, the Tinsawattee School, run by Moravian Missionaries in the 1820s.

10) Barefoot Falls
A short walk up this side stream leads to a beautiful waterfall.



11) Class II Rapid
An easy riffle/rapid requires some minor maneuvering to miss rocks and shoals.

13) "Funny Water"

The entire river is squeezed between a few large boulders here and makes some strong eddies and small whirlpools, before turning sharply to the left. A fun spot to play in kayaks or swim in the eddies.

14) Take-Out

When you see the concrete bridge just past the 22 mile marker, the take out will be soon on your right. It is the boat ramp, which is well above the bridge.

- Directions from River Park to Kelly Bridge Take-out
- Follow Highway 9 South (right out of River Park Canoe Launch)
 - Take A.T. Moore Road on the right (turns into Kelly Bridge Road)
 - Follow for approximately 8 miles
 - Cross the Etowah River and turn into the first drive on the right after the bridge
 - Remember to fill out your form and pay the fee

4) Shoal Creek Road

5) Remnants of Railroad Bridge #1
Used by Lockheed in the 1950s. Georgia DNR wildlife pond is on river left down the old rail bed.

6) Linear Stream Segment
These linear stream segments are geologically controlled and may signify ancient faults below ground here.

7) Remnants of Railroad Bridge #2
Road access on river left.

Bridge supports

Bridge supports

14) Kelly Bridge Road