LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The riverside lands of the Waccamaw River are home to several Eastern Siouan tribes, including the Waccamaw, Winyah, Pee Dee, Chicora, Sampit and others. American Rivers acknowledges the painful history of colonization, enslavement, removal, genocide and segregation they endured, and the diversity of their descendants who are still present on this land. We are educating ourselves about the environmental movement’s role in these atrocities and how to respect Native American peoples’ relationships with the land. We are committed to continuous learning and meaningful engagement with the Waccamaw Indian People and other Native American descendants along the Waccamaw River.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to American Rivers’ newly updated, waterproof Waccamaw River Blue Trail map! In this edition, you will find all of the essential information included in the previous version of the map with additional information that reflects the ever-evolving landscape of this beautiful region and the many ways that people connect with the Waccamaw River. We have updated information about boat landings and added points of interest to highlight the natural wonders, ethnic diversity and cultural history of the river. Lastly, we have included information about thousands of acres of newly protected land along the Waccamaw River Blue Trail, which is now open to the public. We hope that our map will help you explore the treasures of the Waccamaw River – old and new!
Considered one of the finest blackwater rivers in the Southeast, the Waccamaw River provides Carolinians and visitors with clean drinking water, flood protection, scenic landscapes, diverse plants and wildlife and outstanding recreation. As a federally-designated National Water Trail, the Waccamaw River Blue Trail is recognized as a national treasure that is vital to the health of natural and human communities in the Carolinas and beyond.

The Waccamaw River Blue Trail extends the entire length of the Waccamaw River. The Blue Trail begins in North Carolina near Lake Waccamaw, one of the world’s largest Carolina Bays, and meanders through the Waccamaw River Heritage Preserve, the riverfront city of Conway, South Carolina and portions of the Waccamaw National Wildlife Refuge. The lower reaches of the river merge with the Intracoastal Waterway, then widens as it passes by Brookgreen Gardens and Sandy Island. The river ends its journey to the Atlantic Ocean at Winyah Bay near Georgetown, South Carolina.

With over 140 miles of stunning blackwater, the Waccamaw River beckons adventure-seeking outdoor enthusiasts. The natural, historical and cultural features located along the Waccamaw River provide ample opportunity for exploration, education and relaxation. Its cypress swamps and tidal marshes are home to many unique species of plants and animals such as the Venus fly trap and Red-cockaded woodpeckers. The river is intertwined with the histories of Native American and Gullah Geechee people, rice and indigo plantations and Civil War sites. It also showcases many historic homes, churches, shops and remnants of industries that were once served by steamships.

To protect this important natural resource American Rivers, Waccamaw RIVERKEEPER® of Winyah Rivers Alliance and many local partners worked together to establish the Waccamaw River Blue Trail. A Blue Trail is a river adopted by a local community that is dedicated to improving family-friendly recreation and conserving riverside land and water resources. Just as hiking trails are designed to help people explore land, Blue Trails help people discover rivers. They promote recreation and tourism, support local businesses and inspire communities to protect river health for the benefit of wildlife, people and future generations.
The Waccamaw River Blue Trail asks visitors to follow the National Leave No Trace Code of Outdoor Ethics (www.lnt.org) that promotes the responsible use and enjoyment of the outdoors:

- Plan ahead and prepare.
- Obey all rules and regulations.
- Travel and camp on durable surfaces.
- Respect private property and wildlife.
- Dispose of waste properly (human and litter).
- Leave what you find.
- Minimize campfire impacts.
- Be considerate of others.

**SAFETY / GEAR**

- Avoid boating alone.
- Always wear a U.S. Coast Guard approved life jacket.
- Review relevant water quality and safety information before your trip. Contact the Waccamaw RIVERKEEPER® at (843) 349-4007 for more information.
- Leave information about your route and return time with a relative or friend.
- Be aware of wildlife and river hazards such as strainers (fallen trees), large vessels on the Intracoastal Waterway and bridge piers.
- When in a group assign a lead and sweep boat operated by experienced paddlers.
- Stay in your boat if it becomes stuck and carefully shift your weight as you push off with your paddle or pole.
- Never paddle farther from shore than you are prepared to swim.
- Bring a spare paddle or pole, and in an emergency, stay with your boat.
- North Carolina and South Carolina state law requires each boat to carry a life jacket, noise making device and a flashlight.
- Bring a first-aid kit, plenty of drinking water, sunscreen, sunglasses and bug repellent.
- Bring a copy of the Waccamaw River Blue Trail Map.
PLANNING

- Review the Waccamaw River Blue Trail map.
- Know where your trip will take you, where to get out and emergency routes.
- Allow enough time to complete your trip within daylight hours.
- Check river conditions. A flooded river can be dangerous and should be avoided. A low river may expose logs or rocks and require carrying your boat, which may make your trip slower and more difficult.
- Check weather conditions before your trip. Do not go if the weather is beyond the ability of the least experienced person in your group.

CAMPING INFORMATION

For most rivers in North Carolina and South Carolina, the land that lies below the normal high water line is public property. This makes camping legal on the many sandbars found along the river. Be aware that the Waccamaw River is a tidal river. High tides and prolonged rainfall can cause the river to flood sandbars and low-lying areas. It is important to note private property boundaries. Access and overnight camping are not allowed on private property unless you have the permission of the landowner.

Overnight stays are allowed at some of the public boat landings. For more information, contact Columbus County Parks and Recreation at 910-640-6624, NC Wildlife Resources Commission at 910-253-6299 for the Lake Waccamaw and Pireway landings, Horry County Parks and Recreation at 843-915-5330 and Georgetown County Parks and Recreation Department at 843-545-3275.

Lake Waccamaw State Park - Camping is allowed in designated areas by permit only. In most cases, campers register online or with a ranger on site. You must check in at the visitor center or with a ranger even if you have reserved a campsite.

North Carolina Game Lands - It is unlawful to camp on game lands, except at specific areas designated by the landowner. Contact NC Wildlife Resources Commission for more information at 910-253-6299.
CAMPING (cont.)

**Waccamaw River Heritage Preserve** - Boaters and backpack campers may camp overnight on the riverbank within preserve boundaries. However, the preserve is not contiguous and numerous private inholdings occur along the river. Contact SC Department of Natural Resources at 843-546-3226 ext. 13 for more information.

**Waccamaw National Wildlife Refuge (Waccamaw NWR)** - Waccamaw NWR does not allow camping on Refuge property. Exceptions to this policy will be made for individuals or groups who agree to pick up litter on designated sites along the Waccamaw & Pee Dee Rivers and will require a Special Use Permit issued by the Refuge. If you would like more information, please contact the Refuge office at 843-527-8069.

**Samworth Wildlife Management Area** - Temporary primitive camping is available to organized groups by permit. No camping will be allowed that may conflict with organized hunts. Contact SC Department of Natural Resources at 843-546-8665 for more information and to obtain a permit.

NATURAL, HISTORICAL & CULTURAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- Waccamaw River Heritage Preserve ([www2.dnr.sc.gov/Managed-Lands/ManagedLand/Location](http://www2.dnr.sc.gov/Managed-Lands/ManagedLand/Location))
- Waccamaw River Park
- City of Conway
- Bucksville and Bucksport
- Gullah Geechee Heritage Corridor ([www.gullahgeeecheecorridor.org/](http://www.gullahgeeecheecorridor.org/))
- Sandy Island
- Brookgreen Gardens ([www.brookgreen.org/](http://www.brookgreen.org/))
- Samworth Management Area ([www2.dnr.sc.gov/ManagedLands/ManagedLand/Location](http://www2.dnr.sc.gov/ManagedLands/ManagedLand/Location))
- Georgetown Waterfront
- Gullah Geechee Heritage Corridor
NEARBY PLACES OF INTEREST

- Green Swamp (www.nature.org/greenswamp)
- Lewis Ocean Bay Heritage Preserve (www2.dnr.sc.gov/ManagedLands/ManagedLand/Location)
- Waccamaw National Wildlife Refuge Visitor’s Center (www.fws.gov/waccamaw/)
HOW TO USE THIS MAP BOOKLET

The index map below can help you navigate to the appropriate map for the river reach of interest. Look on the bottom of each page for corresponding numbers. The top of each map is upstream regardless of the orientation and thus the bottom of each map is downstream.
WACCAMAW RIVER BLUE TRAIL MAP LEGEND

- Public Access Sites
- Camping
- Fishing
- Boating
- Disc Golf
- Hiking Trails
- Mountain Biking
- Picnic Areas
- Dining Facilities
- Cultural Tours
- Bed & Breakfast
- Kayak Rentals
- Public Parking
- Limited Parking
- Not Accessible by Vehicle
- Public Restrooms

US Highways
North Carolina State Highways
South Carolina State Highways
U.S. Geological Survey Gages
Important Information

Blue Heart Landings
Recommended for peak season kayakers who want to avoid the inconveniences caused by high volumes of traffic that occur at some boat launches. Due to their spacious parking, great launch conditions and limited use, these landings provide easy access to the Waccamaw River.
Lake Waccamaw is one of the largest Carolina Bays. One origin story of the lake centers around a meteor that fell and burned deep into the earth. For this reason, the local Waccamaw-Siouan are known as “People of the Fallen Star”.

Photo: Rick Squires
A thick swamp greets the paddler at the start of the Waccamaw River.

Photo: Julie Stocks
This stretch of river can be difficult to navigate during times of low and high water levels.
Babson’s Landing is a private access point. A small fee is required to use this landing.

Photo: Christine Ellis
Waccamaw Riverkeeper® Landing

Unimproved landing with limited parking. Canoes and kayaks only. Contact the Waccamaw Riverkeeper® for access.
Pireway is a historical baptism site and NC Wildlife Resources Commission public boat access on the Waccamaw River and Bristol Creek.

Photo: Christine Ellis
A fallen tree forms a natural arch across the river.

Photo: David Thebeau
The Waccamaw River Heritage Preserve is an important travel corridor for coastal black bears.

Photo: SC DNR
These brightly colored ducks can be found nesting along the river in natural tree cavities and in duck boxes maintained by local groups.

Photo: Frank Perrotta
The best time to see an alligator on the Waccamaw is during the spring mating season. It is illegal to feed or harass them.

Photo: Gator Bait Adventure Tours
Europeans settlers often named Native American groups according to the river where they were observed. Native American peoples often migrated to various rivers in the region. As a result, different names were often ascribed to the same group of people.

Photo: Janae Davis with the permission of Chief Harold Hatcher
The federally endangered Venus flytrap is native to the Carolina Bays and found along the Waccamaw in a few locations.

Photo: James Luken
Downtown Conway boasts several historical sites, shopping and dining opportunities, and the city's riverwalk and Riverfront Park.

Photo: Cara Schildtknecht
Waccamaw Riverkeeper

Launching from the Marina requires a small fee, but can launch from end of gravel parking lot for free.
Great access to Pitch Lodge Lake
P

Pitch Landing

Pitch Lodge Lake

WACCAMAW NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
US Fish and Wildlife Service (camping with permission)

Mile 96
33.805822
-79.05423

Mile 97
33.793669
-79.05104

Mile 98
33.781729
-79.057322

Mile 99
33.770455
-79.061246

Requires portage to launch

This 325-acre area inside the Waccamaw National Wildlife Refuge features nature and mountain biking trails, a boardwalk and weather shelter with picnic tables.

Photo: Staci Williams
From the river you can see the remnants of this saw mill chimney at Upper Mill, located on private property. There were also a middle and lower mill along the river that no longer exist.

Photo: Ben Burroughs
The historic town of Bucksville was named after the Buck family from Maine who established a shipbuilding and lumber business on the Waccamaw River. The company built the Henrietta, the largest wooden ship ever built in South Carolina.

Photo: Horry County Historical Society
Protected lands within the Waccamaw National Wildlife Refuge provide important habitat for the endangered swallow-tailed kite.

Photo: Craig Sasser

Enterprise once served as a ferry location for travelers who needed to cross the Waccamaw River.

Photo: Horry County Historical Society
The Waccamaw National Wildlife Refuge provides important habitat for several species that are classified as endangered in South Carolina including the bald eagle.

Paddlers at Bucksport Marina

Paddlers at Bucksport Marina get ready to explore the Waccamaw River Blue Trail at the Wake Up Paddle Series hosted by the Waccamaw Riverkeeper.

Photo: Cara Schildtknecht, Waccamaw Riverkeeper

Bald Eagle

The Waccamaw National Wildlife Refuge provides important habitat for several species that are classified as endangered in South Carolina including the bald eagle.

Photo: US Fish & Wildlife Service
Sandy Island was once home to slaves who worked in rice fields along the Waccamaw and Pee Dee Rivers. Today, some of their descendants still reside on the island and maintain the rich heritage of the Gullah Geechee people.

Photo: Brookgreen Gardens Collection
WACCAMAW NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
US Fish and Wildlife Service
(camping with permission)

Wachesaw Landing & Wacca Wache Marina
Limited parking at marina with additional parking nearby

Southern Lubber Grasshopper at Sandy Island Preserve
Most of Sandy Island is protected by Sandy Island Preserve. This 9,165-acre preserve is owned by The Nature Conservancy and managed in partnership with the Waccamaw National Wildlife Refuge.

Statue at Brookgreen Gardens
A National Historic Landmark, this botanical sculpture garden is a unique blend of art, culture and history.

Sandy Island Access #2
Island river access only Not accessible by vehicle
The children of Sandy Island are ferried to the mainland to catch a school bus each day. This vessel is only school boat in South Carolina.

Photo: Janae Davis

The long-leaf pine forests on Sandy Island Preserve provide critical habitat for the federally-endangered red-cockaded woodpecker.

Photo: Courtesy of TNC, Credit © John Moore
Enslaved African Americans and Native Americans constructed and cultivated rice fields along the Waccamaw River. Slave labor produced much of the region’s wealth.

Photo: Georgetown County Library Photograph Collection

Soft beach for kayak/canoe launch dependent on tide; very limited parking

Rice Cultivation
Many of the historic rice fields that were cultivated by enslaved people are still visible today.

Photo: Janae Davis
Mile 134
33.404207
-79.222073

Mile 135
33.392149
-79.231569

Mile 136
33.380645
-79.241801
The native Waccamaw people called this peninsula "hobcaw," meaning "between the waters". Native peoples were enslaved with Africans on 14 plantations that comprised Hobcaw. Today, the 16,000-acre site is internationally known for education, research and conservation. Tours of this historic landscape are available to the public for a fee.

Dine, shop, catch a few fish, take a tour or see a concert on Georgetown's beautiful waterfront.

Waccamaw River
Great Pee Dee River
Sampit River
Winyah Bay
HOBCAW BARRONY

Sunset on Front Street

Slave Church at Hobcaw Barony

Photo: Brandon Coffey Photography

Photo: Charles Slate

East Bay Street Landing

33.369071 -79.251287

17

33
The re-printing of this waterproof map was made possible through the generous support of the Waccamaw Community Foundation, the City of Conway, the Frances P. Bunnelle Foundation and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.

American Rivers would like to thank Winyah Rivers Alliance’s Waccamaw RIVERKEEPER®, the Lumber RIVERKEEPER®, Chief Harold Hatcher and 2nd Chief Cheryl Sievers-Cail of the Waccamaw Indian People, the Waccamaw National Wildlife Refuge, and the City of Conway’s Parks and Recreation program for providing valuable information presented in this edition of the Waccamaw River Blue Trail waterproof map.

American Rivers, through its Blue Trails program, partners with local communities who want to protect rivers and clean water for people and wildlife. A Blue Trail does not include additional regulations or restrictions associated with river access and use.

Visit www.americanrivers.org/conservation-resources/rrformer/waccamaw-river-blue-trail and www.americanrivers.org/waccamawstorymap to learn more about the Waccamaw River Blue Trail and the Waccamaw River.

Waterproof Map Booklet and Maps Designed by:

BGC
BI OGEOCREATIONS
www.biogeocreations.com
While considerable effort has been made to provide accurate information, American Rivers and BioGeoCreations take no responsibility for any errors or omissions. There is risk involved in river recreation. The ultimate responsibility for safety lies solely with the individual. River mileage was calculated using official National Hydrology Dataset information for the Waccamaw River.