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The Waccamaw River Blue Trail A Guide for Paddlers



American Rivers RIVERS CONNECT US*

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!



Cover Photo: Mac Stone



THE WACCAMAW RIVER BLUE TRAIL

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.

STEWARDSHIP



The Waccamaw River Blue Trail asks visitors to follow the National Leave No Trace Code of Outdoor Ethics (www.Int.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 level and safety information before your trip. (https://waterdata.usgs.gov/sc/nwis/rt, www.ncwildlife.org or www. eregulations.com/southcarolina/huntingandfishing/boating/).
- 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.
- USGS maintains gages on the Waccamaw River with information useful to paddlers. Visit http://waterdata.usgs.gov/nwis/rt for more information.

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

- Lake Waccamaw State Park (www.ncparks.gov/lake-waccamawstate-park/home)
- Waccamaw River Heritage Preserve (www2.dnr.sc.gov/Managed-Lands/ManagedLand/Location)
- Waccamaw River Park
- City of Conway
- Waccamaw National Wildlife Refuge (www.fws.gov/waccamaw/)
- Bucksville and Bucksport
- Gullah Geechee Heritage Corridor (www.gullahgeecheecorridor. org/)
- Sandy Island
- Brookgreen Gardens (www.brookgreen.org/)
- Samworth Management Area (www2.dnr.sc.gov/ManagedLands/ ManagedLand/Location)
- Georgetown Waterfront
- Gullah Geechee Heritage Corridor
- Hobcaw Barony (www.hobcawbarony.org/)

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/)

Photo: David Thebeau - Waccamaw River downstream of Pireway.

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



Mountain Biking

Picnic Areas

Dining Facilities

Cultural Tours

Bed & Breakfast

Kayak Rentals

Public Parking

Limited Parking

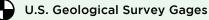
Not Accessible by Vehicle

Public Restrooms

501 US Highways

North Carolina State Highways

905 South Carolina State Highways





214

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

River Access at Lake Waccamaw Dam P 🖄 👬 -78.52361

Mile 0 34.26099 -78.52361

> LAKE WACCAMAW STATE PARK NC State Parks



Mile 1 34.249432 -78.530997

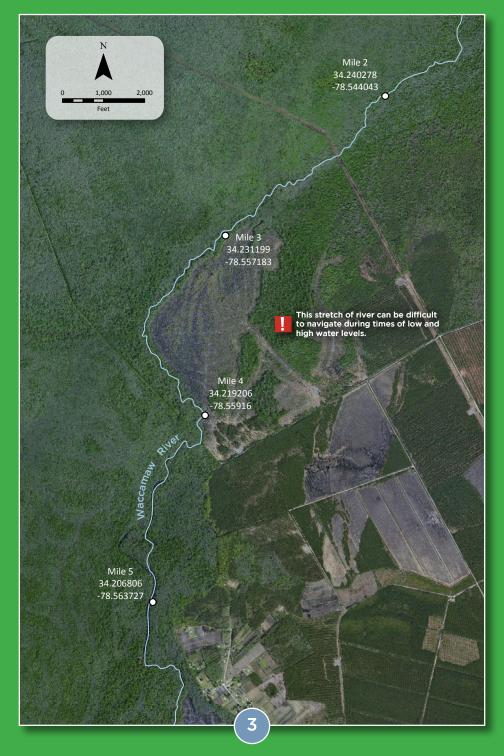
River

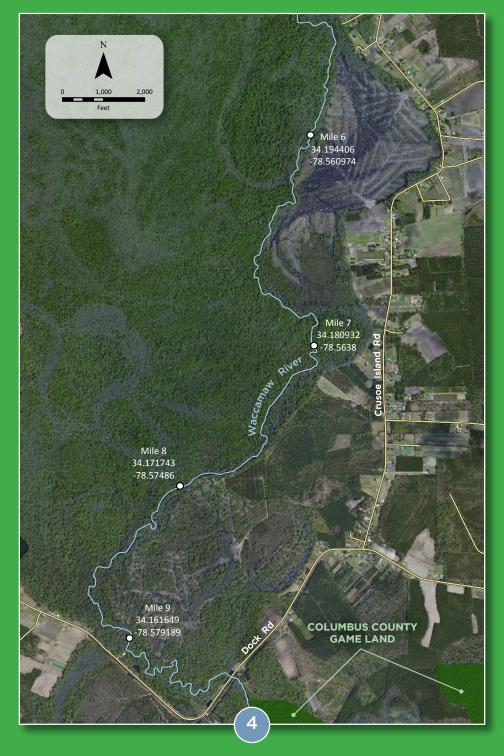
River Access at Lake Waccamaw Dam

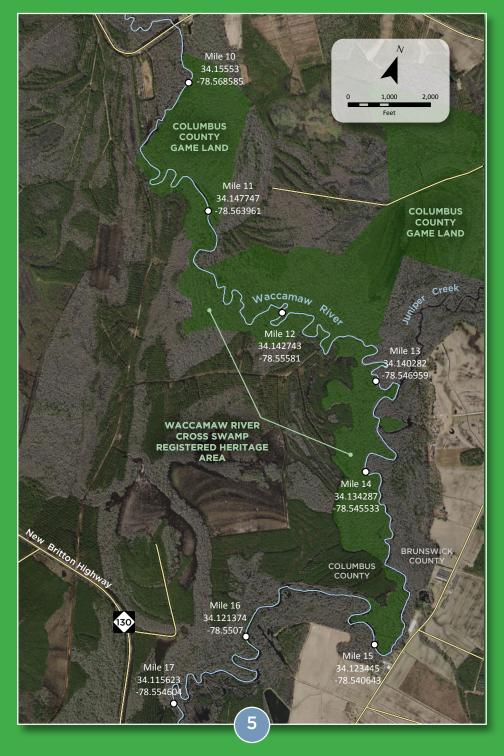


A thick swamp greets the paddler at the start of the Waccamaw River.

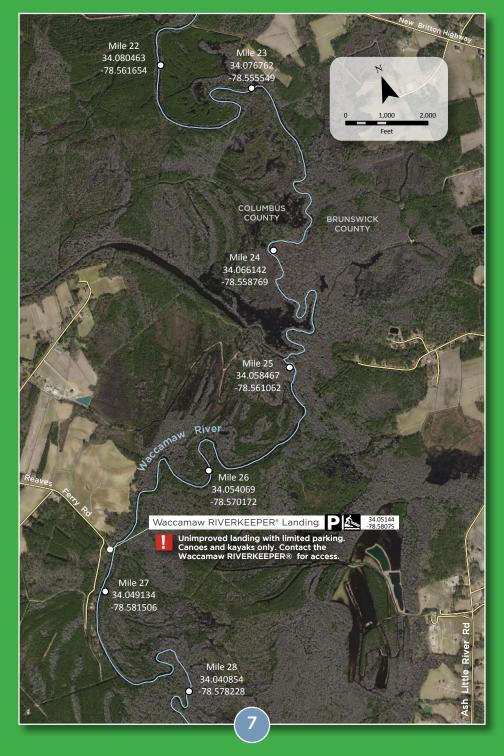
Photo: Julie Stocks



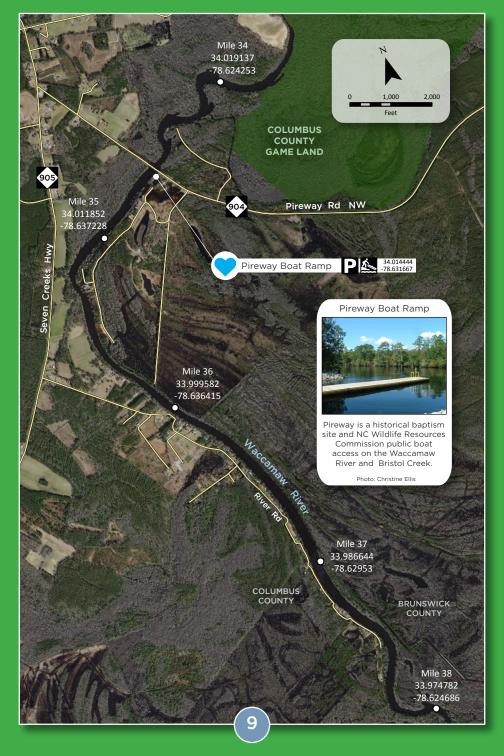


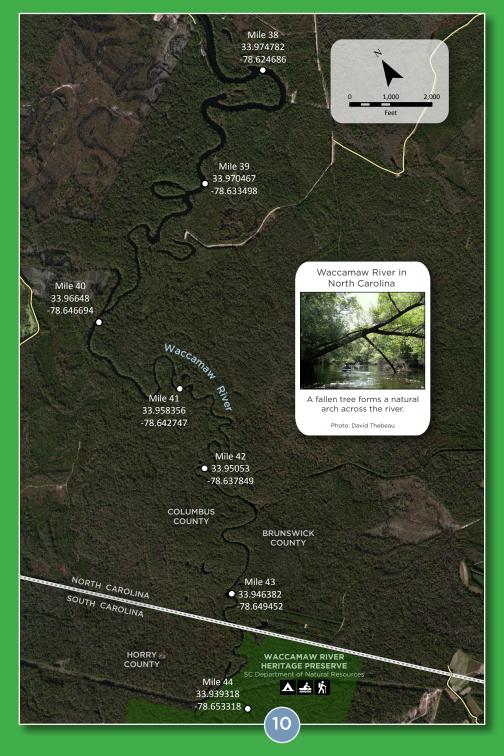




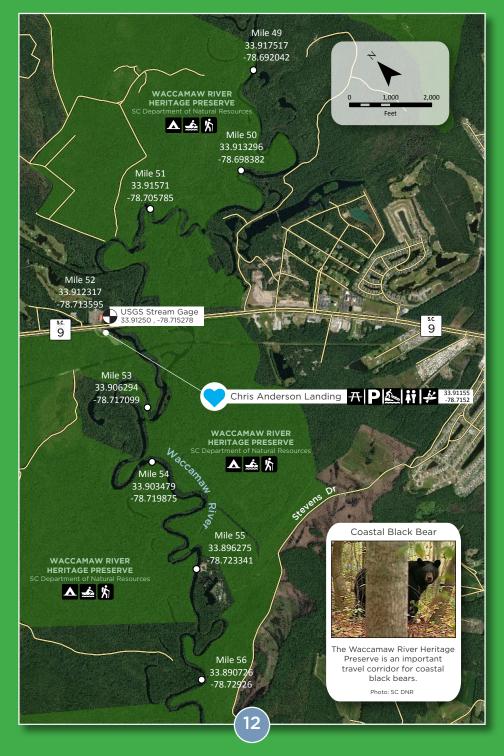




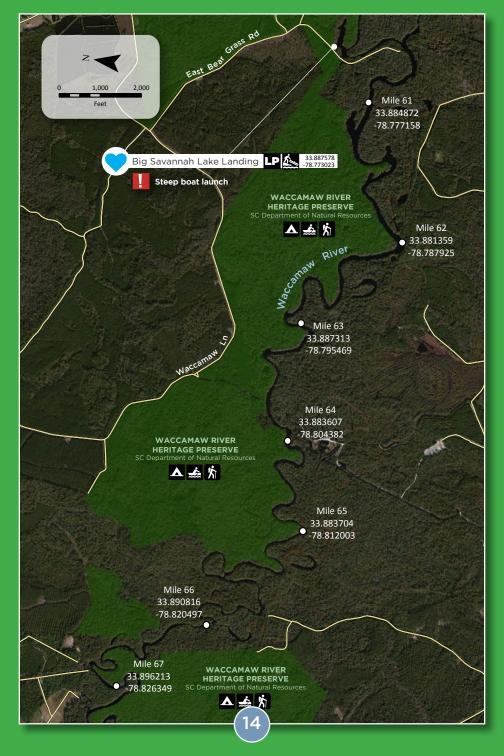


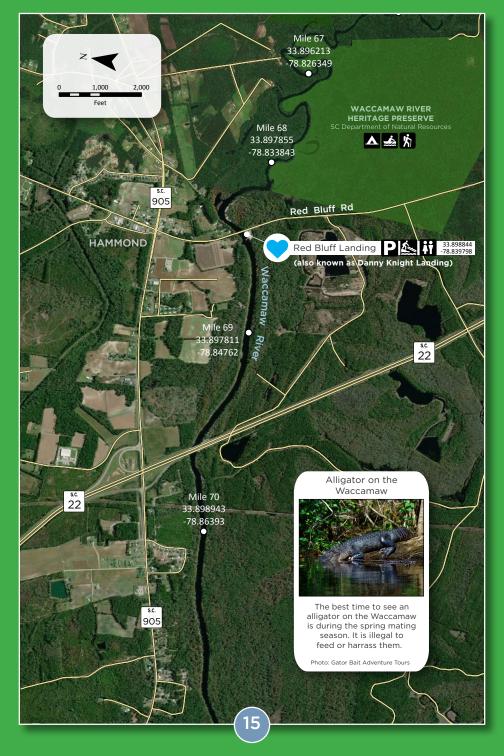


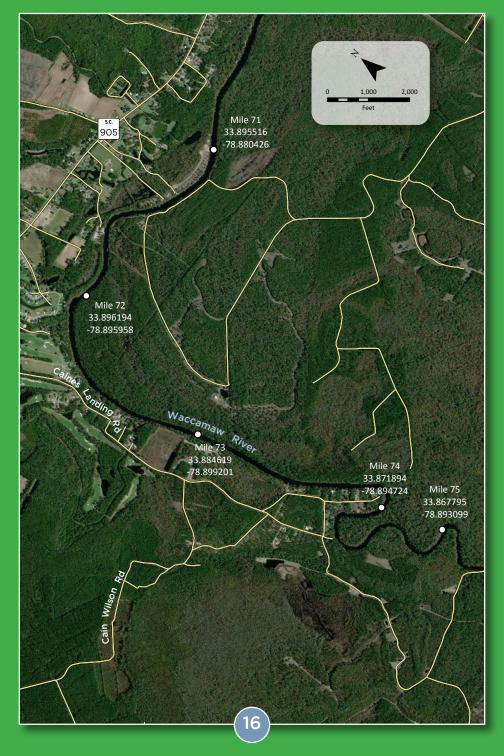


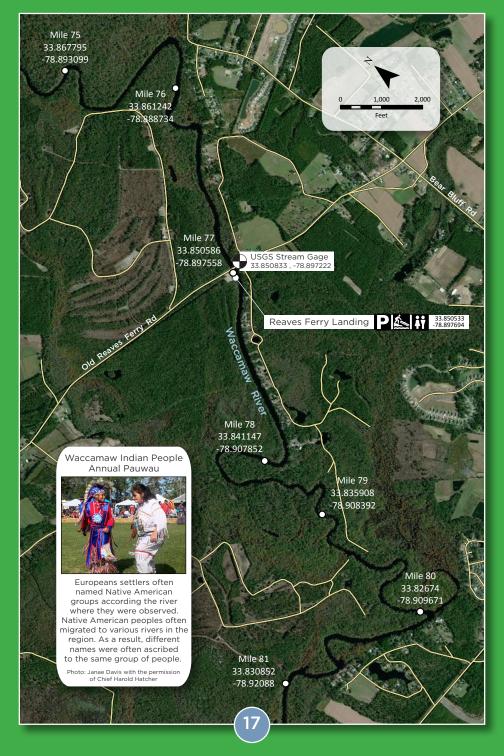


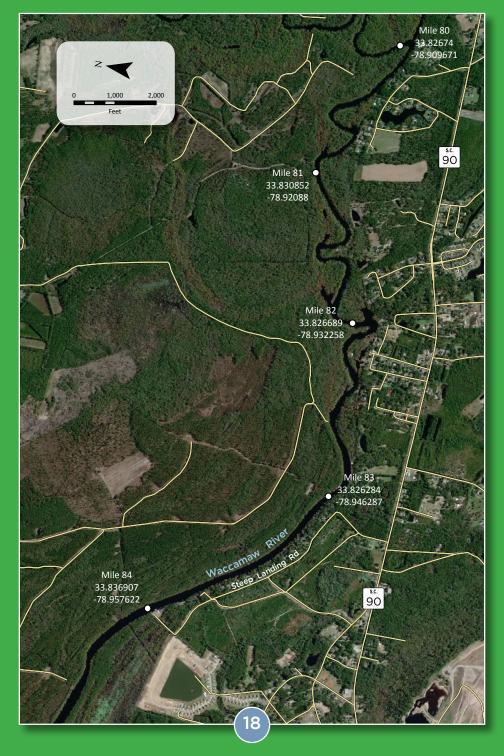


















Mile 99 33.770455 -79.061246

WACCAMAW NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE US Fish and Wildlife Service (camping with permission) 0 1,000 2,000 Feet

Toddville Access (Saw Mill Chimney at Upper Mill, private property)

Mile 100 33.758026 -79.066596

aw



Mile 101 33.748469 -79.067768



From the river you can see the remnants of this saw mill chinney 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

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

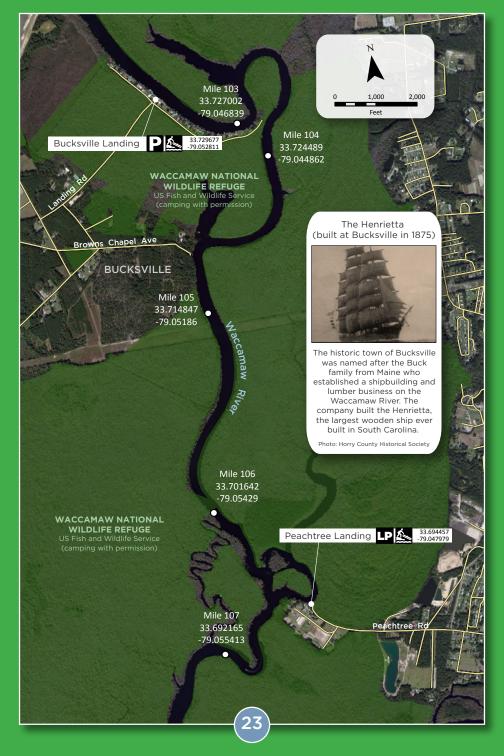
Mile 102 33.737255 -79.058194

Bucksville Landing

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

33.729677 -79.052811

22













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1.000 Feet



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Island river access only Not accessible by vehicle



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

> Mile 127 33.479269 -79.154153

Waccamaw Ri_{Ver}

SAMWORTH WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA SC Department of Natural Resou



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SAMWORTH WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA



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Rice Cultivation



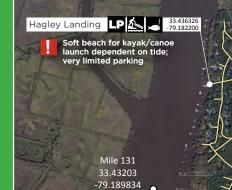
Enslaved African Americans and Native Americans constructed and cultivated rice fields along the Waccamaw River. Slave labor produced much of the region's wealth.

Photo: Georgetown County Library Photograph Collection Mile 129 • 33.453564 -79.167353

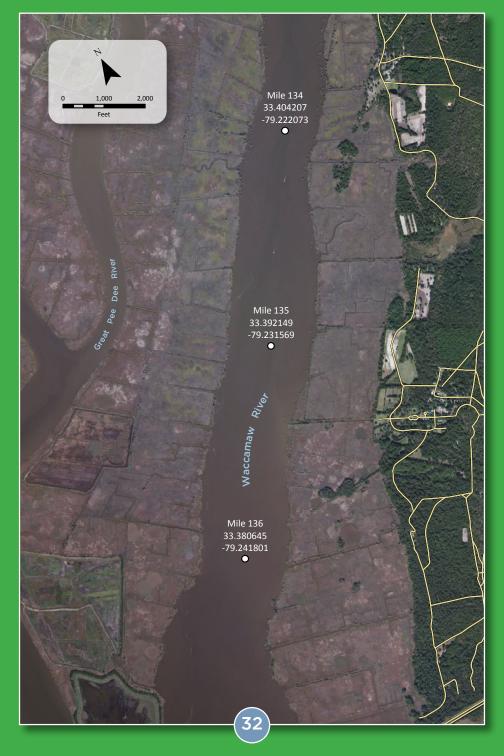
USGS Stream Gage 33.444444, -79.174167

Hagley Rd

Mile 130 33.442747 -79.17841









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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/conservationresources/rrformer/waccamaw-riverblue-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:





WACCAMAW RIVER



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.

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