

Indian Mounds

Length: 10.5 Miles (From base of Allatoona Dam to Henry Floyd's) Class: I Time: 4-6 hours

Minimum Level: River can be run year round, but releases from the Allatoona Dam can create unsafe conditions. Paddlers should use caution when paddling this section during hydro-power releases which cause rapid rises in water levels. Release schedules are issued by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at midnight every day and can be retrieved by calling 706-334-7213

River Gauge: Etowah River at Allatoona Dam <http://waterdata.usgs.gov/nwis/uv?02394000>

Launch Site: A large concrete boat ramp and paved parking area are located at the launch site near Allatoona Dam. Toilet facilities are in a nearby day use recreation area.

Directions: From I-75, take Exit 401 (Red Top Mountain Rd.) Go west 0.5 mile to US 41. Turn right and go one mile to Allatoona Dam Road. Turn right, and go 1 mile to entrance to boat ramp on left.

Take Out Site: Located on property owned by Henry Floyd, owner of Ladd's Farm Supply in Cartersville, this private land is made available for public use. Amenities include shelters and swings overlooking the river. Road and parking area are gravel.

Directions: From Main St. in Cartersville, go west on Main St. (Ga. 113/61) 2.5 miles to Euharlee Road on right. Turn right and go one mile to gravel road on left entering into a large pasture.

Description: Starting in the shadows of Allatoona Dam, this ten-mile section takes you from 20th century engineering (Allatoona Dam) to pre-history engineering (Etowah Indian Mounds and Fish Weir). Owing to Allatoona Dam and the cold, clear water it issues from the bottom of the lake, the water appears pristine and inviting. Shoals and rapids are limited to Native American fish weirs and small ripples with no obstacles exceeding Class I in difficulty. The lone hazard is the historic Thompson Weinman Dam, a low-head dam that MUST be portaged.

Outfitters:

Euharlee Creek Outfitters in Euharlee is the nearest canoe/kayak outfitter.

Points of Interest:

Mile 114.4—(34° 9'47.66"N 84°43'44.56"W)—Allatoona Dam—Located one mile upstream from the launch, Allatoona Dam was constructed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in the 1940s and became fully operational in 1950. It was built, in large part, to prevent flooding in downstream communities, particularly Rome, but serves multiple purposes, including hydroelectric power generation, water supply and water quality, recreation and fish and wildlife management. While the river looks clean and pure here, the dam and its operation have altered flow regimes, water temperature and oxygen levels in the Lower Etowah. The result has been the elimination of native freshwater mussel species in the Lower Etowah. Fish species have also declined from a pre-dam diversity of 80 species to an estimated 45 species today.

Mile 117.3--(34° 9'15.41"N 84°46'14.85"W)--Bridge Pilings—These pillars are all that remains of the Western and Atlantic Railroad bridge. Completed in the late 1830s and early 1840s by Cherokee Indian laborers, the bridge was burned during the Civil War. In late May, 1864, it was destroyed by retreating Confederate forces as Sherman's troops advanced to the western end of Allatoona Mountain during the Atlanta Campaign. Sherman's Union troops rebuilt the bridge in six days, continuing their march to Atlanta.

Mile 118.4 (34° 8'43.31"N 84°47'0.62"W)—Thompson Weinman Dam—This lowhead dam dating to the early 1900s provided Cartersville's first electricity. It was utilized by local industry as a power supply up until the late 1900s. The industrial complex adjacent to it is Chemical Products Corp. which processes barite—a mineral found in abundance in the Cartersville area that was mined on the south bank of the river on the hills above the portage route for more than a century. It is used in the manufacture of paper, glass, and rubber. A rich, white pigment is made from crushed barite and it is also used in radiology for x-rays of the digestive system. When crushed, it is added to mud to form barium mud, which is poured into oil wells during drilling. The brick

building next to the dam is the old City of Cartersville waterworks. The city now withdraws its drinking water supply directly from Lake Allatoona.

Mile 119.8—(34° 7'48.04"N 84°47'52.56"W)—Riverfront Development and Bank Erosion—A series of homes line the river bank here and many homeowners are engaged in an ongoing battle with Mother Nature and, in part, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers which controls Mother Nature (or at least flows from Allatoona Dam). The powerful releases for hydro-electric generation at the dam cause the natural process of bank erosion to accelerate. As a result many homeowners are literally losing their backyards. Many have constructed walls to prevent this erosion—with permission from the Corps and the State of Georgia—a solution that eliminates important riparian habitat and contributes to accelerated erosion at other locations. Interestingly, when Allatoona Dam was constructed, the Corps purchased “sloughage easements” from downstream riverfront property owners, knowing that operation of the dam would “take” property. This program is no longer in place; it is unlikely that the Corps would purchase the pricy homes and property that now stand where farm fields once spread.

Mile 119.9—(34° 7'48.48"N 84°47'50.53"W)—Fish Weir

Mile 120.4—(34° 7'26.28"N 84°48'20.78"W)—Etowah Indian Mounds & Fish Weir—Home to several thousand Native Americans between 1000-1550 A.D., this 54-acre site contains six earthen mounds, a plaza, village area, borrow pits and defensive ditch. This is the most intact Mississippian Culture site in the Southeastern United States. You'll see the mounds on river right just opposite the confluence of Pumpkinvine Creek. The tallest mound rises 63-feet above the former village site. During the Civil War, Union General William Sherman climbed to the top of this mound only to be fired upon by Confederate canons located across the river. The site cannot be accessed from the river without prior arrangement with Georgia Department of Natural Resources resource managers at the site. Additional mounds were once located across the river along Pumpkinvine Creek, but those mounds have been destroyed. A fish weir bisects the river near the mouth of the creek.

Mile 120.8—(34° 7'18.38"N 84°48'37.79"W)—Fish Weir

Mile 121.4—(34° 7'13.04"N 84°49'10.10"W)—Douthit's Ferry—Early pioneer James Douthit once operated a ferry near this location and lends his name to the modern-day Douthit's Ferry Road. The iron truss bridge that still exists here was built in 1886, atop the same rock piers that supported a wooden bridge that put Douthit out of the ferrying business prior to the Civil War. During the War, the bridge was destroyed and for a brief period, Douthit returned to ferrying until a new wooden bridge was built shortly after the War.

Mile 123.2—(34° 7'50.62"N 84°50'46.35"W)—Cartersville Airport—At this bend in the river, you'll be at the northern edge of the airport's runway. Don't be surprised to see low-flying aircraft.

Mile 123.7—(34° 8'15.95"N 84°50'28.55"W)—Petite Creek & Leake Site—Prior to the 1940s on river left opposite the mouth of Petite Creek, once stood three Indian mounds. They were razed and used for road fill when Ga. Hwy. 113 was constructed at its present location. Archaeologist who have excavated the remains of the mounds suggest that human habitation of the site began in 300 B.C.. It was abandoned around 650 AD.

Mile 124.5—(34° 8'53.45"N 84°50'35.54"W)—Fish Weir

Mile 125—(34° 8'55.37"N 84°50'59.66"W)—Fish Weir—Not distinct, but clearly visible in aerial photographs. The weirs on the Etowah vary in quality and preservation. Some were breached for navigational purposes while others were improved and subsequently maintained.