

Lake Allatoona

Length: 17 Miles (From Knox Bridge to Allatoona Dam)

Class: I

Time: 9+ hours

Minimum Level: This section is wholly on Lake Allatoona and can be run at any time of the year. Water levels on Allatoona vary according to the season and rainfall. Peak levels generally occur in the late spring and early summer, topping out at about 840 feet above MSL. From mid-summer to early winter the lake is drawn down to about 823 feet MSL to accommodate heavy rainfall in the winter and early spring. Full pool is 840 feet.

River Gauge: Allatoona Dam Lake Elevations can be found at <http://water.sam.usace.army.mil/actmain.htm#data>

Launch Site: A large concrete boat ramp and paved parking area are located at Knox Bridge on Ga. 20 5.5 miles west of Canton.

Directions: The launch is located between Cartersville and Canton on Ga. 20. From I-75 at Exit 290, take Ga. 20 east toward Canton 12 miles to Knox Bridge boat ramp on right.

Take Out Site: There are multiple access points on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers-operated Lake Allatoona. Lake users can create many trips utilizing Corps campgrounds and boat ramps as well as local and state parks. On the mainstem of the river, you'll find nine boat landings in the 17 miles from Knox Bridge to Allatoona Dam.

Description: With more than 12,000 acres and an estimated 270 miles of shoreline, Lake Allatoona offers almost limitless exploration opportunities. Of course, if you are in a person-powered vessel, you'll have to work for every mile. There is no current to push you along. Despite its location in the burgeoning suburbs of north metro Atlanta, the shoreline is surprisingly undeveloped, at least on the lake's northern shore where 9,300 acres is protected as a state wildlife management area. Beneath the lake's expansive waters is a landscape rich in history.

Outfitters:

Several private marinas operate on the lake including:

Little River Marina located on the Little River, is a full-service marina with boat launch/docks, ship's store, restaurant and powerboat rentals: 6986 Bells Ferry Rd., Canton, Georgia 30114, (770) 345-2900 www.littlerivermarina.com

Victoria Harbor Marina on the mainstem of the Etowah is a full-service marina with boat launch/docks, ship's store, groceries, restaurant and powerboat rentals: 1000 Victoria Landing Woodstock, GA 30189 (770) 926-7718 www.bestinboating.com/victoria

Harbor Town Marina on the mainstem of the Etowah is a full-service marina with boat launch/docks, ship's store, restaurant and powerboat rentals: 7370 Galts Ferry Rd., Acworth, GA 30102 (770) 974-6422 www.bestinboating.com/harbor

Park Marina on the mainstem of the Etowah is full-service marina located within Red Top Mountain State Park with boat launch/docks, ship's store and powerboat rentals: 651 Park Marina Road, Cartersville, GA 30121 (770) 974-2628 www.bestinboating.com/allatoona

Wilderness Camp Marina located just off the mainstem of the river on Stamp Creek offers boat launch/docks and groceries: 451 Wilderness Camp Rd. White, GA 30184 (770) 386-2170

Glade Marina located on Allatoona Creek provides boat launch/docks and restaurants: 5400 Kings Camp Rd., Acworth, GA 30102 (770) 975-7000 www.glademarina.com

Holiday Harbor Marina located on Allatoona Creek is a full service marina with boat launch/docks, ship's store, groceries, restaurant, cabin rentals and canoe/kayak and powerboat rentals: 5989 Groovers Landing, Acworth, GA 30102

Other outfitters offering canoe and kayak rentals include Lilydipper's in Canton and Euharlee Creek Outfitters in Euharlee.

Points of Interest:

Mile 97.4—(34°12'6.42"N 84°33'41.90"W)—Cherokee County Park & Fields Landing—Operated by Cherokee County, this small park offers picnic tables, playground, horseshoe court, fishing dock, boat ramp and portable toilets. It is also the location of one of Cherokee County's most successful early settlers. Jeremiah Field, already a successful planter and landowner in South Carolina, moved to Cherokee County around 1833 and settled in this area with his wife and six children. He farmed, operated a grist mill, owned some 39 slaves and in the 1850 census, his property was valued at \$50,000, making him the wealthiest man in the county. He and his family are buried across the lake in the Fields Chapel Methodist Church Cemetery.

Mile 98.6—(34°11'36.21"N 84°34'33.76"W)—Sweetwater Campground—A Corps of Engineers Campground, the facility boasts of 151 campsites, hot showers, coin laundry, restrooms, beach and boat ramp.

Mile 100.1—(34°10'40.83"N 84°35'41.88"W)—Little River Confluence and Cherokee Mills—Approximately one mile upstream on the Little River once stood Cherokee Mills, a grist mill, sawmill (and later a cotton gin). Sometime in the 1830s the first dam and mill were erected at the site, and enterprise continued there well into the 20th century. Imagine if you will the scene on the Little each fall when cotton was ginned at the mill. It was said that to rid the site of the mounds of cotton seed removed by the gin, the fluffy white seeds were disposed of in the river, undoubtedly creating a floating mass of white from the mill to the Etowah and beyond. The old mill site is now buried under Allatoona's water. Little River Marina sits at the approximate location of the mill.

Mile 102.4—(34°10'31.06"N 84°37'28.73"W)—Bottomland Corn and the Moonshine King of Georgia—In this vicinity, beneath the water of Lake Allatoona lies a tragic story that was played out in the bottomland once farmed by John Henry Hardin, a man known as the "Moonshine King of Georgia." The distillation of liquor was commonly practiced by farmers throughout the Southern Appalachians. The legend of the "King" suggests that the impetus for his entrance into the business was the temperamental Etowah that regularly spilled into Hardin's corn fields and spoiled his crop. During one monumental flood in the 1910s, a farm hand suggested to Hardin that the crop might yet still be suitable for the production of whiskey. Whether there is truth to that legend or not, by 1917 state and federal authorities were indicting Hardin on liquor charges. Before he died in 1943, 19 cases would be brought against him. Yet for all his trouble with the law, he was widely respected for his honesty and integrity in the community. At the peak of his moonshine empire, he employed more than 100 workers while at the same time serving as a deacon at nearby Sixes Methodist Church where he taught Sunday school and led singing. His life took a tragic turn in the summer of 1932. That year his son, Paul Henry who worked in the family business was arrested and faced serious federal charges. Out of jail on \$3000 bond, he began drinking heavily. On June 19, he shot and killed his young wife and their four children before turning the gun on himself. It is said that John Henry never recovered from the horrific tragedy. Multiple arrests, prison sentences, fines and the seizure of property by the government left him nearly penniless at his death.

Mile 104.1—(34° 9'20.12"N 84°37'19.66"W)—Victoria Harbor Marina & Victoria Campground—A private marina and adjacent Corps campground. The campground features 72 campsites, all with electric and water hookups, hot showers & restrooms, a coin laundry facility, a public beach/swimming area and boat ramp.

Mile 106.6—(34° 8'3.12"N 84°38'31.37"W)—Harbor Town Marina & Galts Ferry Beach Picnic Area—A private marina and adjacent Corps public day use area. One of the lake's more popular day use areas, Galts Ferry features a large beach and swimming area, picnic shelters, restrooms and boat ramp.

Mile 109.7—(34° 8'34.08"N 84°40'10.81"W)—Bartow-Carver Camp & Segregated State Parks—In the separate but equal days of the segregated south, what is now Bartow-Carver Camp was George Washington Carver State Park—established in 1950 as the state's first "park for Negroes." John Atkinson, a black man from Atlanta, arranged to lease the property from the Corps of Engineers for a private, blacks-only resort, but Bartow County refused him a license to run such an establishment. It was then that Gov. Herman Eugene Talmadge—feeling the heat of mounting protests from black veterans of World War II—offered to make the facility a "State Park for Negroes." It remained a state park until 1975 when Bartow County took over the lease and operation of facilities. During its 25 years as Carver State Park, it hosted entertainment events including appearances by Ray Charles and Little Richard. Future Atlanta Mayor Andrew Young and his family frequently water skied there and Coretta Scott King and her children also visited. Today, the park features two rental facilities for group events. The facilities and other amenities (including the beach) are open only to those renting the facilities, though there is no fee to use the boat ramp.

Mile 110.8—(34° 8'52.26"N 84°40'49.95"W)—Allatoona Wildlife Management Area—Allatoona's undeveloped north shore owes its wildness to its protection as the Allatoona Wildlife Management Area. The 9300-acre WMA stretches some 14 miles along the Etowah's course through the lake, and provides opportunities for hunting, hiking and a host of other activities. It also provides a stark contrast to the lake's southern shore some of which is heavily developed.

Mile 111.6—(34° 9'16.92"N 84°41'31.25"W)—Red Top Mountain State Park—This 1776-acre state park features 12 miles of hiking trails, four miles of cycling trails, rental cottages, an RV campground, primitive camping and even a yurt, but due to budget constraints, the 33-room lodge closed in 2010. The mountain and park derives its name from the rich red color of the soil caused by the high iron-ore content.

Mile 113.9—(34°10'2.49"N 84°43'15.99"W)—Bartow County Park—Operated by the Bartow County Recreation Dept, this park includes picnic areas, playground, campground, restrooms and showers, boat ramp and beach.

Mile 114.3—(34°10'9.76"N 84°43'44.80"W)—Cooper Branch Landing—Closest to Allatoona Dam, this boat ramp is located a quarter mile from the dam in the slough to the north. The Corps-operated park includes picnic tables and restrooms.

Mile 114.4—(34° 9'47.66"N 84°43'44.56"W)—Allatoona Dam & Town Of Etowah—At the deepest portion of the lake near the dam sit the remains of the town of Etowah—founded around the Cooper Iron Works. Etowah was a thriving, backwoods industrial complex from the early 1840s until the 1864 when the town was destroyed by Union forces during the Civil War. Etowah's founders utilized water power from the Etowah and the locally abundant iron ore deposits to create a mining and manufacturing center. At its heyday in the late 1850s, the town had a workforce of 600 which was serviced by a school, church, boarding house, bordello, bank, post office and brewery. The town produced railroad tracks from the iron ore extracted from nearby hills and the flour mill produced up to 300 barrels of flour a day. After the Civil War, the town was never rebuilt. Mark Anthony Cooper, the primary driving force behind the town, sold it to investors in 1862 and turned a tidy profit which he then invested in the Confederacy, ultimately losing his entire fortune by the War's end. Today, the town's remains, with the exception of the furnace located near the base of the dam, rests beneath the water of Lake Allatoona. Except for Canton's brief flirtation with name of "Etowah" this is the only settlement to ever bear the name of the river. The Indian word "Etowah" has never been successfully translated, thus historians do not know what, if any significance or meaning, is attached to the name.