The Waccamaw River Blue Trail extends the entire length of the river in North and South Carolina. Beginning near Lake Waccamaw, a permanently inundated Carolina Bay, the river meanders through the Waccamaw River Heritage Preserve, City of Conway, and Waccamaw National Wildlife Refuge before merging with the Intracoastal Waterway where it passes historic rice fields, Brookgreen Gardens, Sandy Island, and ends at Winyah Bay near Georgetown.

Over 140 miles of river invite the paddler to explore its unique natural, historical and cultural features. Its black waters, cypress swamps and tidal marshes are home to many rare species of plants and animals. The river is also steeped in history with Native American settlements, Civil War sites, rice and indigo plantations, which highlight the Gullah-Geechee culture, as well as 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®, and many local partners worked together to establish the Waccamaw River Blue Trail, providing greater access to the river and its recreation opportunities. A Blue Trail is a river adopted by a local community that is dedicated to improving family-friendly recreation such as fishing, boating, and wildlife watching and to conserving riverside land and water resources. Just as hiking trails are designed to help people explore the land, Blue Trails help people discover their rivers. They help communities improve recreation and tourism, benefit local businesses and the economy, and protect river health for the benefit of people, wildlife, 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.
- 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. (www.erh.noaa.gov/er/ilm/hydro/, www.ncwildlife.org, or www.dnr.sc.gov/boating.html)
- 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 manned 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 and South Carolina state law requires each boat carry a noise making device and a flashlight.
- A first-aid kit, plenty of drinking water, sunscreen, sunglasses, and bug repellent are among other trip essentials.
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 and South Carolina, the land that lies below the normal high water line is public property. This makes camping legal on the many sand bars found along the river. However, it is important to note private property boundaries as overnight camping is not allowed on private property unless given the permission of the landowner.

Overnight stays are allowed at some of the public boat landings. For more information, contact Horry County Parks and Recreation at 843-915-5330, Columbus County Parks and Recreation at 910-640-6624, Georgetown County Parks and Recreation Department at 843-545-3275, and NC Wildlife Resources Commission at 910-253-6299 for the Lake Waccamaw and Pireway landings. There are several private camping facilities near the Waccamaw. Visit local chambers of commerce or tourism websites for more information.

Lake Waccamaw State Park - Camping is allowed in designated areas by permit only. In most cases, campers register with a ranger on site or at an on-site registration box. You must register 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.

**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.

**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.

**NATURAL, HISTORICAL & CULTURAL POINTS OF INTEREST**
See map on following page for locations.

- Lake Waccamaw State Park
- Waccamaw River Heritage Preserve
- Downtown Conway
- Waccamaw National Wildlife Refuge
- Bucksville/Bucksport
- Sandy Island
- Samworth Wildlife Management Area
- Brookgreen Gardens
- Historic Rice Field
- Georgetown Harbor

**NEARBY PLACES OF INTEREST**

- Green Swamp ([www.nature.org/greenswamp](http://www.nature.org/greenswamp))
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.
Lake Waccamaw State Park

WRC Boat Launch

Columbus County Boat Launch

River Access at Dam

Lake Waccamaw at Sunset

A Carolina Bay - important for endemic wildlife species and recreation opportunities.

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 and a small fee is required to use this landing.

Photo: Christine Ellis
A natural arch provided by a downed tree across the river.

Photo: David Thebeau
Wortham’s Ferry

This is a historical access point with limited parking and few improvements.

Mile 44
33.939318
-78.653318

Mile 45
33.935891
-78.65955

Mile 46
33.9303
-78.668416

Mile 47
33.922293
-78.675657

Mile 48
33.920931
-78.681647

Mile 49
33.917517
-78.692042
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
Cypress trees are an important part of the Waccamaw’s wetland ecosystem, providing habitat for wildlife and helping store and filter water during floods.

Photo: Nancy Isenhour
These semi-aquatic mammals can be seen frolicking along the river banks.

Photo: Steve Berkowitz
The federally endangered Venus flytrap is native to the Carolina Bays found along the Waccamaw in a few locations.

Photo: James Luken
Downtown Conway boasts several historical sites and the riverwalk.

Photo: Ben Burroughs
From the river you can see remnants of this saw mill chimney at Upper Mill, located on private property.

Photo: Ben Burroughs
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 needing to get across the Waccamaw.

Photo: Horry County Historical Society
Bald Eagles soar above the river to the delight of bird watchers.

Photo: US Fish & Wildlife Service
Sandy Island was once home to many of the slaves that worked in the rice plantations. Today, some of their ancestors still reside on the island.

Photo: Brookgreen Gardens Collection
SANDY ISLAND

BROOKGREEN GARDENS

WACCAMAW NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Sandy Island Access #3

Mile 122
33.531983
-79.10602

Mile 123
33.521186
-79.117335

Mile 124
33.510689
-79.126221

Mile 125
33.504216
-79.139937

Limited Parking

Island River Access Only
Not Accessible by Vehicle

Upstream on Thoroughfare Creek 1.0 River Miles

Larry Paul Trail

Sandy Island Access #4

0 1,000 2,000 Feet

Feet

Waccamaw River

BROOKGREEN GARDENS

Sandy Island Rd

Sandy Island Rd
Sunset along Front Street in Georgetown

Photo: Charles Slate
This waterproof map booklet is made possible through the generous support of National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program.
American Rivers, through its Blue Trails program, partners with local communities who want to enhance recreation and protect rivers and clean water for people and wildlife. A Blue Trail is voluntary, locally-driven, and does not include additional regulations or restrictions associated with river access and use.

Learn more at AmericanRivers.org/BlueTrails

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.

Waterproof Map Booklet and Maps Designed by:

www.biogeocreations.com

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