Benefits of Water Trails

National Park Service
Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program
Southeast Regional Office--Atlanta
The Benefits

- Recreation
- Conservation
- Low investment
- Revenue generators
Recreation

- Georgia has a variety of water resources--lakes, rivers and the coast.
- Each offers a different kind of opportunity for healthy outdoor activity.
- In the U.S., participation increased 117% from 1995-2005.
- Water trails provide recreational opportunities for all sizes and ages--children, adults, seniors.
Conservation

- Water quality & quantity
- Wildlife
- Land use
- Canoe trails make connections between land, water, riparian edges and wildlife habitats.
Conservation

- Canoe trails create environmental stewards.
- They are a constituency that understands land use & watershed issues.
- Upstream issues = downstream problems.
- And paddle groups such as Georgia Canoe Association sponsor clean-ups of rivers.
The economics of the trail implementation:

- Inexpensive relative to other recreation projects.
- Not as much land to buy or structures to build.
- Access facilities can be minimal and inexpensive.
- Existing public land and facilities on rivers, lakes and the coast.
Economics

Revenue generation from the canoe trail:

- Increased spending in the local area.
- Existing businesses increase profits—restaurants, outfitters, lodging.
- New businesses develop to support the trail.
- Purchases of gear & equipment increase and support business.
- Festivals and events around the trail support the local community.
- More value from local government support.
- Improve local community with higher quality of life & improved tax base.
Some projects in Georgia
GA Canoe Trail Projects

- **Altamaha River** [www.altmahariver.org](http://www.altmahariver.org) trail starts near the end of the Ocmulgee river and goes to Darien.

- **City of Canton**—Greenway Master Plan (2000) includes blueway. Will become part of the Etowah River Blueway.

- **Chattahoochee Canoe Trail**—Upper section (proposed)—about 40 miles from Sautee Creek to Clarks Bridge at Lake Lanier.

- **Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area**, National Park Service 48 miles with access points along the river. [www.nps.gov/chatt](http://www.nps.gov/chatt)
GA Canoe Trail Projects

- Chattahoochee River Canoe Trail – Columbus — city is developing river access to go along with the new riverwalk. A small dam will be removed to allow for canoe and kayak access on the river.

- Chattahoochee River– West Point—planning started for section south of the dam.


- Chestatee -- outfitters and paddlers use several access points on about 33 miles of the river. Appalachian Outfitters, www.canoegreeorgia.com, 706-864-7117
GA Canoe Trail Projects

- **Chattooga** --- Wild and Scenic River managed by U.S. Forest Service.  28 miles open for paddling.
- **Conasauga River** --- Conasauga River Alliance, the City of Dalton and Dalton Utilities.
- **Etowah River** --- in planning process.  42 miles of blueway through Lumpkin, Dawson, Forsyth and Cherokee Counties and includes City of Canton.
- **Flint River**: some access points.  No formal trail. Flint Riverkeeper

*Georgia State Parks*---Park Paddlers Club---22 miles in 6 state parks.  [www.gastateparks.org](http://www.gastateparks.org)
GA Canoe Trail Projects

- **Ocmulgee River**, Macon — Ocmulgee Heritage Trail
  [www.ocmülgeeheritagetrail.com](http://www.ocmülgeeheritagetrail.com)  Blueway access at the
  former Water Works Site.
- **Ocmulgee River Blueway** -- Warner Robbins to
  Hawkinsville.
- **Oconee River** -- Oconee River Greenway Authority.
- **Rome** -- Coosa, Oostanala & Etowah Rivers.
- **South River Blueway & Greenway Corridor**: DeKalb and
  Rockdale Counties.
GA Canoe Trail Projects

- **Tallapoosa** -- Northwest Georgia Regional Commission in Rome is planning for canoe access on the Tallapoosa River.

National Park Service

- Technical Assistance provide to communities for conservation and recreation projects.
- Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program.
- Southeast Regional Office in Atlanta---9 southeastern states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.
- Georgia Program Assistance:
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