

McIntosh Marathon

July 1

Distance: 20 miles

Obstacles/Rapids: **Mile 0** McIntosh Reserve Shoals—There are many courses through these shoals, especially at higher water levels. The only tricky thing is that the shoals are right at the launch site. For best results paddle upstream from the launch site, ferrying your boat toward the eddies behind the boulders at the top of the shoals. From there turn your boat around and find your preferred course through the shoals.

Mile 16—The shoal is actually a small ledge that crosses the width of the river just downstream from the end of the islands (there are some small shoals at the very end of the islands) In high water, there are many routes over the ledge, but the best route (and only route in low water) is directly down the middle of the river. Make note of the tiny island (about 25 feet in length) located at the very tip of the island complex. If you take a course straight downriver from that island, the river will take you through the ledge's best chute.

Mile 18—Daniel Shoals—The largest natural rapid on the Paddle Georgia course. At the first island you encounter below Bushhead Shoals take the larger river channel to the left, and paddle through shallow, shoally water to river left. The best chute through Daniel Shoals is located on river left, about 20 feet right of a spit of rock and small tree that is visible from the upstream vantage point. Follow the largest “V” into the ledge. There will be a small drop and then lots of waves to ride through. Enjoy!

Restroom Facilities: Mile 0 McIntosh Reserve

Mile 8 Hollingsworth Ferry Boat Ramp

Mile 16 Barker Home at Bushhead Shoals Islands—To reach this rest stop take the channel on river left at the top of Bushhead Shoals Island

Mile 20 Riverside Park in Franklin

Points of Interest: **Mile 6**—Plant Wansley—Among Georgia Power's largest coal-fired facilities, Plant Wansley has a capacity of 925,550 kilowatts.

Mile 8—Hollingsworth Ferry—Now the site of a Georgia Department of Natural Resources boat ramp, this is the original site of one of the Chattahoochee numerous ferries which operated during the 1800s. In fact, Hollingsworth Ferry may be the last operating ferry on the river. For a while during the early-to-mid 1900s, the ferry here was in operation.

Mile 12—Hilly Mill Creek—Now owned by Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper board member Taylor Glover, a Newnan native, Hilly Mill Creek and the land surrounding it hold a special place in the hearts of many from Coweta and Heard counties. About 300 yards upstream from where the creek meets the Chattahoochee sit the 40-foot falls of the creek. Below the falls is a beautiful pool where many locals learned to swim. The spot has served as a baptismal for nearby Enon Grove Baptist Church and during most of the 1900s, Hilly Mill served as the top outdoor recreation spot for the area. On July 4th, hundreds would come here for picnics and fishing. And, reportedly, this is the spot that inspired country music superstar Alan Jackson's song “Chattahoochee.” Jackson grew up in Coweta County not far from Hilly Mill.

Mile 14—Red Bone Creek—Like Hilly Mill Creek, Red Bone offers a surprising waterfall that is visible from the mouth of the creek at the Chattahoochee. A short walk up the creek will reveal the falls in full, surrounded by blooming mountain laurel in mid-May. Again, these geological features that seem so out of place in the Piedmont are a result of the Brevard Fault.

Mile 16—Bushhead Shoals & Islands—Perhaps the largest island complex on the Upper Chattahoochee, these islands offer many opportunities for exploration. Sloughs cut through the islands by floods offer a nice break from the wide open paddling on the larger river. The islands cover 90 acres and were recently purchased as part of the Chattahoochee River Project led by the Trust for Public Land. The islands are beautiful but also trap an amazing array of detritus. Venture out on one of these flotillas of trash at the heads of the islands and no telling what you might find (I found a toilet seat once!) The shoals follow the islands. Watch for turtles and gar fish which seem to like the habitat here.

Mile 20—Franklin—The only true “river town” on the Chattahoochee between here and the river's headwaters in Helen. Franklin is reportedly the site of the Indian village from which the Chattahoochee takes its name. In 1799, Indian agent Benjamin Hawkins wrote: “The name of the river derived from Chatto, a stone, and hoche, marked or flowered; there being rocks of this description in the river above Hoithletigua at an old Chattahoochee town.” Experts believe that town was somewhere near present-day Franklin. If time permits, a stroll around town is worth the effort—especially a visit to the old jail museum.

Narrative: Perhaps the most rewarding stretch of the Paddle Georgia route, this 20-mile paddle offers hope for the Chattahoochee. Once considered a portion of “Dead River” because of Atlanta's continued pollution, this stretch of river teems with life and beauty. Much of the land on either side of the river has been permanently protected through the efforts of the Trust for Public Land and Nature Conservancy. In August 2004, TPL completed the 48th project in the Chattahoochee River Protection Initiative which has raised more than \$160 million and preserved more than 146 miles of river corridor and 13,427 acres of land.