Tiger Leap Tango–Paddle Georgia 2023

June 28—Savannah River

Distance: 16. 3 miles

Starting Elevation: 36 feet **32.628891, -81.418839**

Ending Elevation: 30 feet **32.532406, -81.275982**

Restroom Facilities:

Mile 0	Blue Springs Landing
Mile 14	Stokes Bluff Landing
Mile 16	Tuckasee-King Landing

Points of Interest:

Mile 0.8—Tiger Leap Bluff/Hudson Ferry—On river right is this high bluff that rises some 75 feet above the river. The stony base rises to a garden of ferns and, in wet weather, many seeps. Further up a mix of hardwoods and magnolias cover the rise. The outcroppings here are sedimentary in nature containing a mix of fossiliferous limestone and dolostone. Among the fossils found here are tiny planktonic foraminifera, single-celled organisms that date to the early Miocene, some 23 million years ago. A small stream, Ferry Branch, spills in along the bluff and marks the notable historic site of Hudson's Ferry, a crossing that dates to the colonial era. In 1779, British troops under the command of Lt. Col. Augustine Prevost constructed a fortified encampment around the ferry, and it was from here that Prevost orchestrated the movements that led to the British victory at the Battle of Brier Creek. During the Civil War, portions of the left wing of the Union Army camped at Hudson's Ferry as they marched from Atlanta to Savannah in the late fall of 1864. Then in 1898, Clarence Bloomfield Moore, the scion of a Philadelphia paper baron turned amateur archeologist, landed his steamboat, Gopher, at Hudson's Ferry to investigate a 74-foot-diameter Native American burial mound located a mile west of the landing. While the Hudsons may have been the original proprietor of the ferry, in 1839, the Georgia General Assembly authorized McLin Lunday to operate a ferry here. At that time, a horse and rider could cross for 12 cents.

Mile 5.9—Rabbit Bar Point—On river right is a river cabin, protected from the river by extensive riprap and bulkheads.

Mile 7.7—Porters Landing Fossils—On river right here, a bluff rises some 75-feet above the river. A former boat landing, the bluff is known for the diverse variety of fossils that have been found here. In 1989, researchers from Georgia Southern University sifted through more than 1,000 pounds of sediment from the bluff and found fossils of crocodiles, sea turtles and dolphins along with eight different species of sharks and rays as well as pinfish, barracuda and drum. They also uncovered fossils of terrestrial animals, including two species of rodents, several reptiles and a moschid camel (a hoofed animal and ancestor of modern camels). The fossils date to the Miocene, a period from 5 million to 23 million years ago during which plants and animals became recognizably modern. In 1887, the steamer Alice Clark caught fire a mile above the landing and was saved largely by the action of the crew of the steamer Ethel which came aside the Alice Clark and used steam-powered pumps and hoses to douse the flames. Three years later, two deck hands on the Ethel got into a fray while loading wood at Porters Landing—a spat that ended with one taking an ax to the head of the other. The long straight of way below Porters Landing is known as Goldwire Reach and is populated by numerous wooden navigational weirs. The weirs were installed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers beginning in the mid-1900s.

Mile 9.8—Mount Pleasant Landing/Cedar Bluff Landing—On river right atop the high bluff in the middle 1700s sat the Yuchi Indian community that came to be known as Mount Pleasant. Its proximity to the Salzburgers at Ebenezer soon set the colonists and the natives against one another. Settlers in Ebenezer planted crops on what was considered Yuchi land and when South Carolina colonists began grazing cattle on the western bank of the Savannah, tensions rose. In 1736, Gen. James Oglethorpe diffused the situation by sending the cattle back across the river, thus endearing himself to the leaders in this village. In 1739, when the founder of the Georgia colony began his 300-mile horseback journey to the Chattahoochee River near present-day Columbus, it began here.

Mile 13.7—Stokes Bluff Landing—On river left at the entrance to a small slough known as Camel Lake is this double concrete boat ramp. Along the banks of Camel Lake and further downstream along Stokes Bluff (also historically known as Parachucla and Palachcolas) are riverfront homes perched high on the bluff and protected by bulkheads and riprap. In the early 1700s, this bluff was the site of a Yuchi settlement. Unlike their modern-day counterparts, the Yuchi didn't armor this high bank, and thus, much of the potential archeological evidence of their existence has long since been washed into the river. In 1936-37, Marmaduke Floyd of Savannah reported to the Smithsonian Institution the existence of several burials, house floors, ceramics and beads eroding from the bluff into the river. In the 1800s, the bluff became an important landing for river vessels. In Dec. 1828, the *Savannah Republican* noted the delivery to Savannah via poleboat of a load of 155 bales of cotton and a quantity of rice from Parachucla. In March 1878, a correspondent with the *Savannah Morning News* described Parachula Landing as "thriving" and reported that steamers had delivered 2,584 sacks of guano to the landing and taken on an equal number of bales of cotton. Then in 1878, the *News* reported that the steamer Cumberland delivered to Savannah a load from Parachucla that included 90 bales of cotton, 79 barrels of rosin, 19 casks of spirits, and 2 coops of chickens. In December 1886, the steamer Mary Fisher sank here opposite the landing.

Mile 15.5—Hognose Point Cut Off—On river right riprap lines the river bank, evidence of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' work to eliminate this sharp, short oxbow to the northwest which can still be accessed via a narrow channel. Hognose Point Cut Off was one of more than 35 constructed by the Corps between 1959 and 1976 that eliminated some 40 miles of river channel. Though the cut offs were intended to grow commercial barge traffic, by 1979 shipping on the river had ceased. The engineered channel has contributed to reduced oxygen levels in the river. Coupled with wastewaster discharges from nearly 50 municipal and industrial water users and dredging of the Savannah harbor, oxygen levels in the Savannah became dangerously low for the federally protected Atlantic and shortnose sturgeon and other aquatic wildlife. Thus, in the early 2000s, when the Corps planned to dredge the harbor to accommodate larger ocean going vessels, environmental groups, including Savannah Riverkeeper, sued to force the federal agency to mitigate the impacts of the harbor deepening project. In 2013, the parties reached a settlement that included $15 million for wetlands protection and restoration, including the reconnection of oxbows, an effort that is currently moving forward.

Mile 16.1—Tuckasee King Landing/McDuffie-Cumming Duel—This landing is located up a narrow slough on river right. In South Carolina along the river near here on June 8, 1822, two politicians who would ultimately have a Georgia county and a Georgia city named in their honor, faced off in the first of a series of duels. During the summer and fall of 1821, George McDuffie (McDuffie County) and William Cumming (City of Cumming) traded insults in newspaper articles written under not-so-well-disguised pseudonyms. When McDuffie stooped so low as to label Cumming a "vapouring swaggerer," Cumming fired back with challenge to a duel. What followed provides comical insight into these "affairs of honor" that were not uncommon in American politics of the time. During their first meeting here at Tuckasee King, Cumming complained bitterly of McDuffie's choice of clothing—a frock lined with silk he believed was designed to divert bullets. Yet, Cumming's aim was true and he sent a bullet into McDuffie's back. This did not settle the feud. Additional insults were published: Cumming called McDuffie "an equivocating scoundrel and base coward," while McDuffie accused Cumming of using opium to brace his "cowardly nerves" on the ground of combat. Two more meetings were planned and scuttled—one because the two disagreed on how they should stand while firing, another because Cumming objected to the way McDuffie was holding his pistol. Finally, on Nov. 30, 1822, they convened the decisive duel. Cumming shot McDuffie in the arm, and with that the feud ended. Though the pair were both born in Georgia, South Carolina became their home as adults. Cumming served in the South Carolina state legislature while McDuffie served as governor as well as stints in Congress as a representative and senator for the Palmetto State. Tuckasee King was designated in 1784 as the first seat of government for Effingham County and was home to Morgan's Inn that offered overnight lodging for those traveling on the river or along the stagecoach road leading to Sisters Ferry.