

ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF WATER TRAILS



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Georgia River Network April 2011

What are water trails?

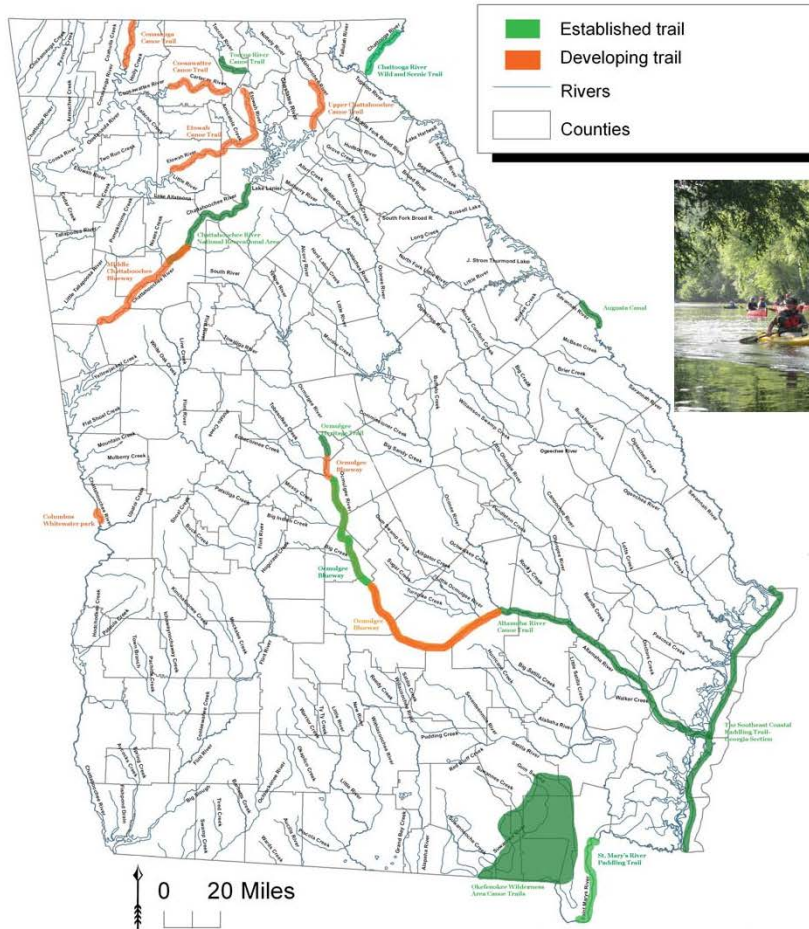
- Also known as blueway or canoe trail is comparable to a hiking trail or greenway
- Intended to encourage recreation on the water
- Well developed river access points and boat launches



Established Trail

- **Public access points** where paddlers can park and unload boats
- **Boat launches** are appropriately spaced to provide sections reasonably paddled in a day
- Depending on the length of the trail, water access to **overnight camping sites**
- Information about trail provided to paddlers through a **website** and **maps** created by the sponsoring entity
- Trail is **sponsored**, maintained and promoted by a local entity or partnership

Georgia Water Trails



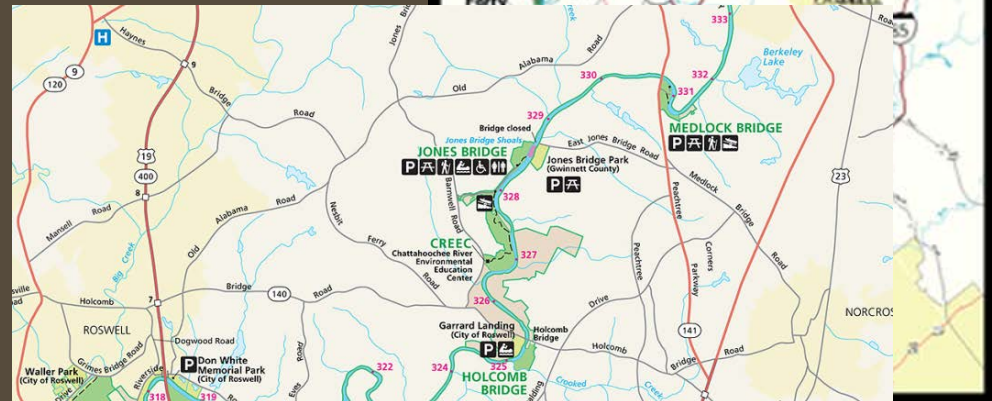
Created by Georgia River Network
February 20, 2011

- 10 established trails
- 7 under development

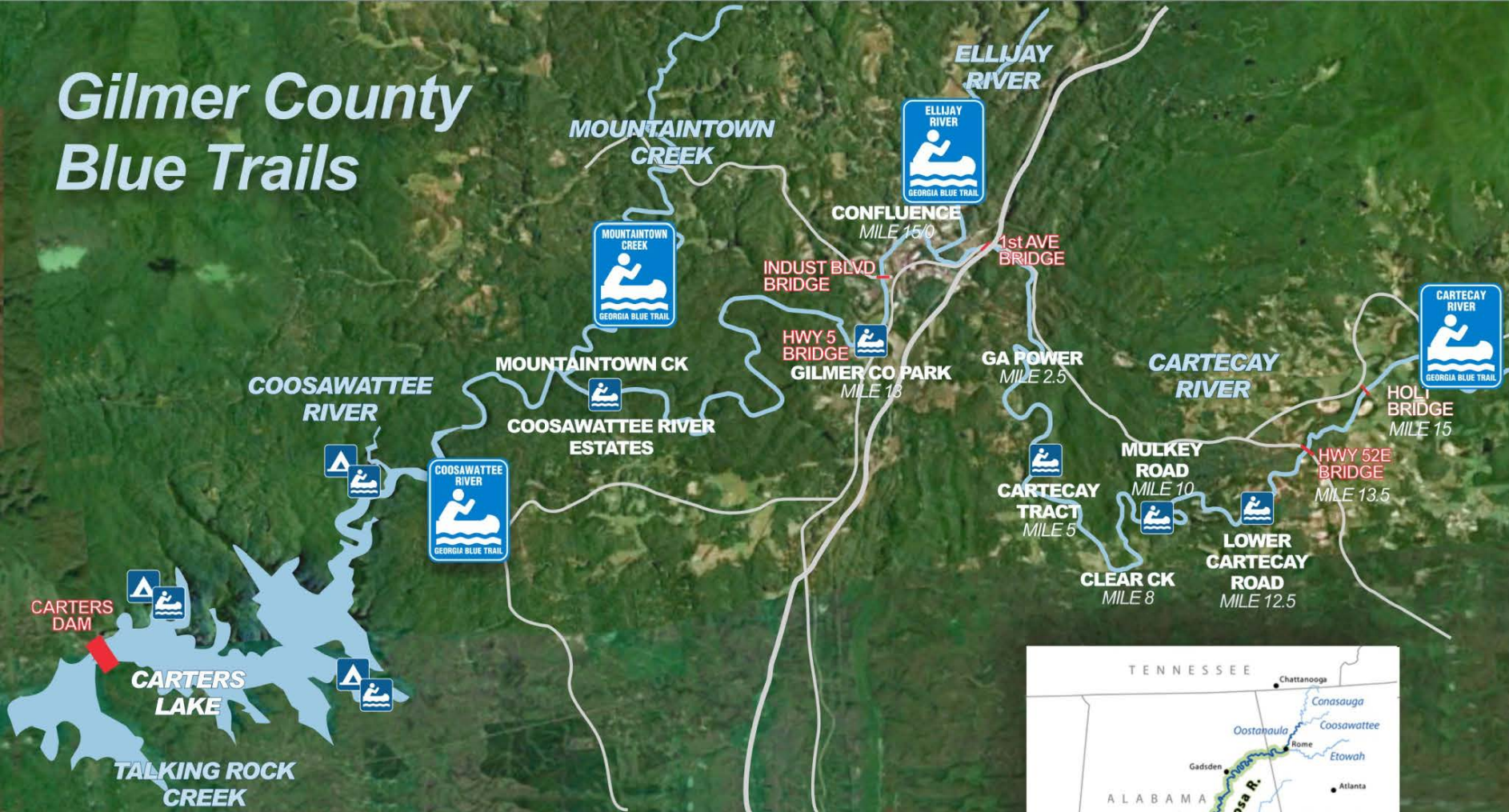
A water trail is a trail on a waterway with designated access points, a map and website, and sometimes interpretive signage and materials. Georgia River Network maintains the Georgia Water Trails Website to help people plan a trip on a water trail, plan your own adventure on a Georgia river or learn more about creating trails. Visit <http://garivers.org/gwtcl>.

Chattahoochee National Recreation Area

- Distance: 38 miles
- Access Points:
- Sponsoring Organization
 - Chattahoochee National Recreation Area



Gilmer County Blue Trails



- Approximately 57.5 miles of Blue Trail
- From headwaters to Gulf of Mexico - approx. 800 miles

Why Communities Building Water Trails?

- Potential for more river conservation
- Healthy Lifestyle Opportunities
- Economic Benefits




Water Trails Encourage Conservation

- River Clean-ups
- Volunteer Trail Keepers and Water Monitors
- Land Protection
- Dam Removal
- Improved Planning Efforts
- More Permanent Protection
 - ▣ Federal Protections
 - Wild and Scenic
 - Outstanding Natural Resource Water
 - National Recreational Trail
 - ▣ State Protection
 - State Scenic
 - Designated uses-recreation

Healthy Lifestyle

□ Great Outdoors Initiative



America's Great Outdoors
A Promise to Future Generations

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America's Great Outdoors: A Promise to Future Americans

President Obama launched the America's Great Outdoors (AGO) Initiative to develop a 21st Century conservation and recreation agenda. AGO takes as its premise that lasting conservation solutions should rise from the American people – that the protection of our natural heritage is a non-partisan objective shared by all Americans.

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- “It is easy for kids to go days without stepping on a single blade of grass.” Barack Obama

Value of Rivers

- Ecosystem Services
 - Water supply
 - Drinking water
 - Transportation
 - Water for irrigation
 - Supply of goods
 - Fish
 - Hydropower
- Non-extractive or in-stream benefits
 - Biodiversity
 - Water Filtration
 - existence and bequest values
 - River Recreation

Trails and Tourism

- Trail activity will be #1 activity worldwide in less than 10 years (not necessarily water trail but all trail)
- Tourism will be the #3 industry in the US in less than 10 years



Source - Trails Grewed Up Presentation by Mitch Barloga of NRPS and Diane Banta

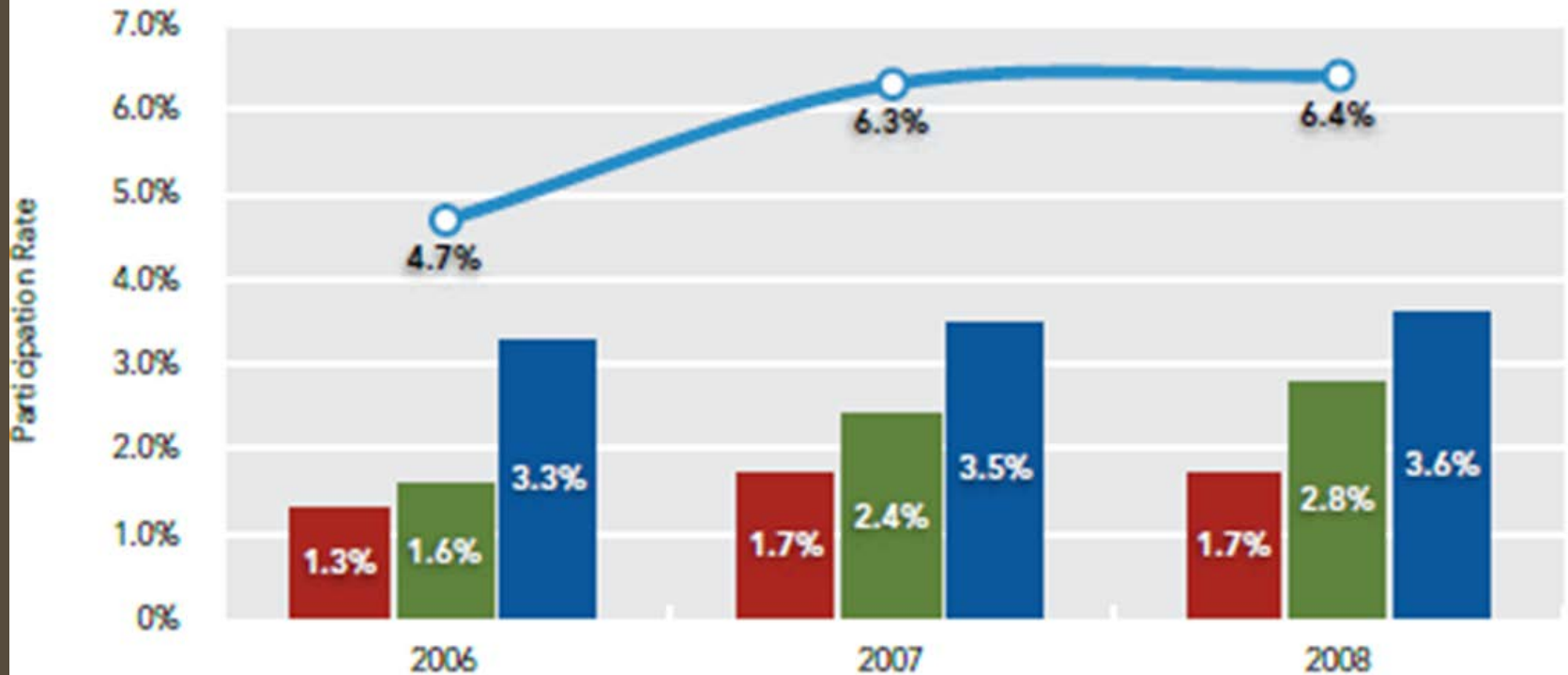
Paddling is a growing sport

- Projections on outdoor recreation use in 2050 predict significant increase of canoeing, rafting, fishing, and non-pool swimming (Bowker et al. 1999)
- Approx. \$200 million spent on purchasing canoes and kayaks
- 17.4 million people averaging 10 trips per
 - ▣ 174 outings a year

Participation in Paddlesports

All Participants Ages 6+

From: Outdoor Industry Association



2008 Participants

 Paddling (Any Type)	17.8 Million	 Kayaking (Any Type)	7.8 Million
 Canoeing	9.9 Million	 Rafting	4.7 Million

Overall Participation

PARTICIPANTS BY STATE

STATE	Participation Per Capita	Number of Participants
1 Idaho	86.8%	841,236
2 Wyoming	81.8%	312,379
3 Utah	81.7%	1,306,000
4 Montana	80.9%	567,451
5 Connecticut	77.9%	2,065,481
6 New Hampshire	76.7%	736,775
7 Oregon	76.5%	2,045,061
8 Colorado	76.4%	2,538,356
9 North Dakota	76.2%	382,658
10 Michigan	75.6%	5,766,897
11 Delaware	75.0%	457,702
12 Minnesota	74.6%	2,821,981
13 West Virginia	74.4%	1,082,795
14 Washington	72.7%	3,309,763
15 California	71.3%	18,252,283
16 Kansas	71.2%	1,465,644
17 Arizona	70.7%	2,762,621
18 Vermont	70.0%	335,484
19 Wisconsin	69.5%	2,888,843
20 Rhode Island	69.2%	572,612
21 Missouri	69.0%	2,989,037
22 South Dakota	68.8%	397,245
23 Maryland	68.5%	2,798,459
24 New Jersey	67.2%	4,339,647
24 New York	67.2%	9,943,775
26 Florida	66.9%	8,524,278
27 Ohio	66.7%	5,862,617
27 Nevada	66.7%	1,025,777
29 Oklahoma	65.2%	1,738,210
30 Pennsylvania	64.6%	6,262,314
31 Texas	64.5%	10,073,673
32 Illinois	64.1%	6,108,940
33 South Carolina	64.0%	1,993,683
34 Virginia	63.8%	3,527,780
35 Iowa	63.7%	1,452,998
36 Nebraska	63.2%	831,064
37 New Mexico	62.7%	869,074
37 Georgia	62.7%	3,919,194
39 North Carolina	62.5%	4,931,989
40 Maine	62.2%	628,390
41 Louisiana	62.0%	2,104,809
41 Arkansas	62.0%	1,285,026
43 Alabama	61.4%	2,119,274
43 Indiana	61.4%	2,874,989
45 Massachusetts	61.2%	3,064,900
46 Kentucky	58.5%	1,849,351
47 Tennessee	56.1%	2,494,199
48 Mississippi	44.2%	954,793

Canoe

PARTICIPANTS BY STATE

STATE	Participation Per Capita	Number of Participants
1 New Hampshire	37.2%	357,341
2 Vermont	30.0%	143,780
3 Wisconsin	20.4%	847,948
4 Michigan	19.7%	1,502,749
5 North Dakota	19.0%	95,413
6 Missouri	18.7%	810,072
7 Idaho	18.4%	178,327
8 Minnesota	14.9%	563,640
9 Florida	14.8%	1,885,790
10 Massachusetts	14.3%	716,145
11 Wyoming	13.6%	51,936
12 Maryland	13.5%	551,521
13 Washington	12.8%	582,737
13 West Virginia	12.8%	186,287
15 Arkansas	12.7%	263,223
16 Delaware	12.5%	76,284
17 New York	12.2%	1,820,066
18 Colorado	12.2%	405,340
19 Connecticut	11.8%	312,871
20 Utah	11.3%	180,634
21 Virginia	11.2%	619,297
22 Maine	11.1%	112,140
23 Tennessee	10.8%	480,167
24 Montana	10.6%	74,354
25 Georgia	10.5%	656,324
26 Ohio	10.1%	887,743
27 Pennsylvania	9.7%	940,317
28 New Jersey	9.6%	628,365
29 Alabama	9.4%	324,449
30 Indiana	9.1%	426,098
31 Illinois	8.6%	819,408
32 Kansas	8.2%	168,796
33 Nebraska	7.4%	97,308
34 Texas	7.0%	1,093,267
34 Louisiana	7.0%	237,640
36 Arizona	6.9%	269,619
36 Oregon	6.9%	184,457

Recreational Kayak

PARTICIPANTS BY STATE

STATE	Participation Per Capita	Number of Participants
1 New Hampshire	16.3%	156,577
2 Delaware	8.5%	51,873
3 Vermont	6.7%	32,111
4 Connecticut	5.9%	156,436
5 Washington	5.8%	264,053
6 Idaho	5.3%	51,366
7 Wyoming	4.5%	17,185
8 Massachusetts	4.1%	205,328
9 Rhode Island	3.8%	31,444
10 California	3.5%	895,975
10 Florida	3.5%	445,964
13 New Jersey	3.4%	222,544
13 Georgia	3.3%	206,273
14 South Dakota	3.1%	17,899
15 New York	2.7%	399,527
15 North Carolina	2.7%	169,862
17 Wisconsin	2.4%	99,759
18 Indiana	2.3%	107,695
19 Pennsylvania	2.2%	213,268
19 Maine	2.2%	22,226
21 Montana	2.1%	14,730
22 Maryland	1.8%	73,536
22 Iowa	1.8%	41,058
24 Arizona	1.7%	66,428
24 New Mexico	1.7%	23,292
26 Alabama	1.6%	55,225
26 Colorado	1.6%	53,159
28 Texas	1.4%	218,653
28 Illinois	1.4%	133,425
28 Utah	1.4%	22,379
31 Michigan	1.3%	99,166
31 Virginia	1.3%	71,883
33 Oregon	1.0%	26,733
33 West Virginia	1.0%	14,554
35 South Carolina	0.9%	28,036
36 Ohio	0.7%	61,527
36 Tennessee	0.7%	31,122
38 Missouri	0.6%	25,992

Whitewater Kayak

PARTICIPANTS BY STATE

STATE	Participation Per Capita	Number of Participants
1 Vermont	10.0%	47,927
2 Delaware	6.5%	39,667
3 New Hampshire	4.7%	45,148
4 Colorado	4.1%	136,221
5 Rhode Island	3.8%	31,444
6 Indiana	3.0%	140,472
7 Washington	2.9%	132,026
8 Utah	2.8%	44,759
9 Massachusetts	2.7%	135,216
10 Montana	2.1%	64,398
11 Georgia	2.0%	125,014
11 Virginia	2.0%	110,589
13 North Carolina	1.8%	113,241
13 Wisconsin	1.8%	74,819
13 Maryland	1.8%	73,536
16 New Jersey	1.7%	111,273
16 New Mexico	1.7%	23,292
18 New York	1.5%	221,959
18 Connecticut	1.5%	39,772
20 Pennsylvania	1.4%	135,716
21 Michigan	1.3%	99,166
22 California	1.2%	307,191
23 Wyoming	1.1%	4,201
24 Florida	0.9%	114,676
24 South Carolina	0.9%	28,036
24 Iowa	0.9%	20,529
24 Idaho	0.9%	8,722
28 Texas	0.8%	124,945
28 Alabama	0.8%	27,613
30 Illinois	0.7%	66,712
30 Tennessee	0.7%	31,122
32 Missouri	0.6%	25,992
33 Ohio	0.4%	35,158
34 Kentucky	0.3%	9,484
35 Louisiana	0.2%	6,790
35 Kansas	0.2%	4,117
37 Minnesota	0.1%	3,783
37 Oregon	0.1%	2,673
37 Mississippi	0.1%	2,160
37 Arkansas	0.1%	2,073
37 West Virginia	0.1%	1,455
37 Maine	0.1%	1,010

Impacts of River Recreation in Georgia

- Outdoor Industry Association-state by state participation in outdoor rec activities
 - 37th overall 67% participating in some activity
 - 25th in canoeing: 656,324 participants
 - 13th in recreational kayaking: 206,273 participants
 - 11th in whitewater kayaking: 125,014 participants
- Priority on river recreation in Georgia

Granola Myth

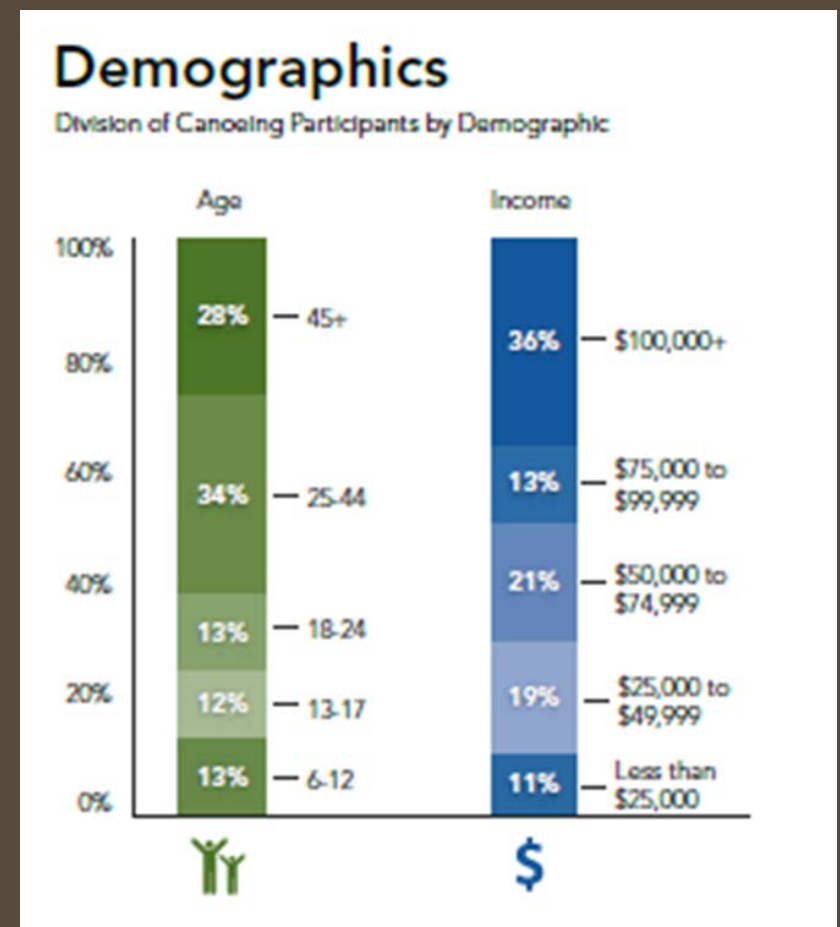
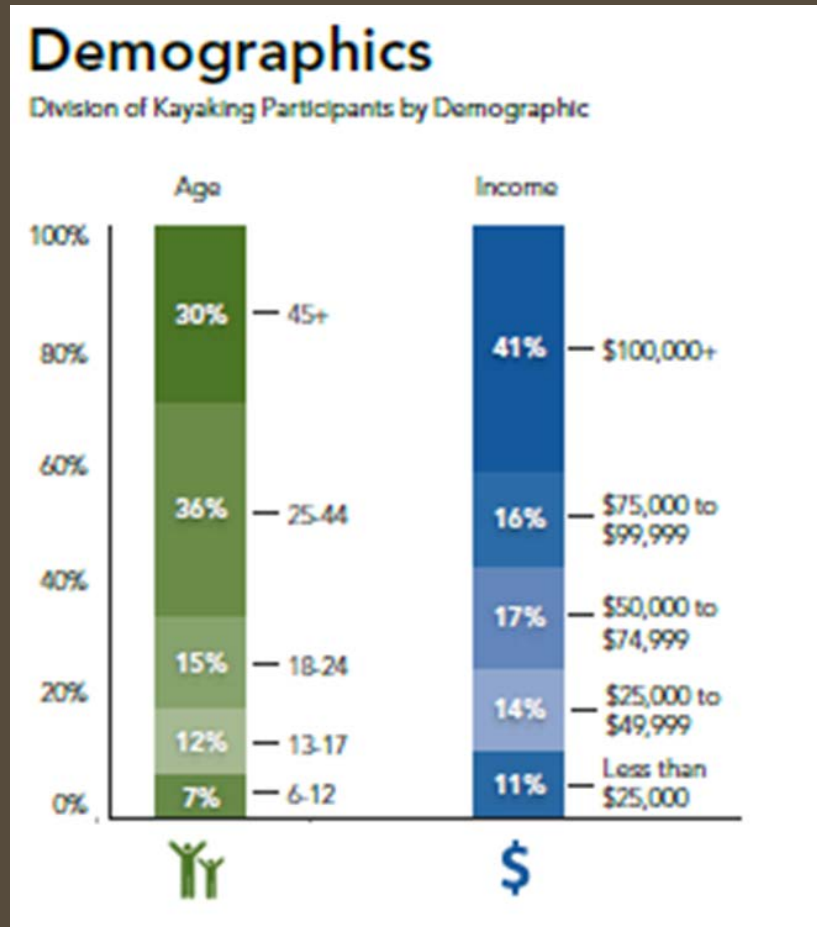
□ Perception

- Investing in infrastructure for access to natural amenities provides the community with little in return
- Hikers & paddlers bring water bottle and granola bar
- Leading communities to promote motorized recreation

□ Facts

- Outdoor Industry Association estimated \$11.3 billion non-motorized product sales by 2001
- Ohio found registered canoe and kayakers spent \$55 on food and lodging per trip
- Over a 2-year period individual paddlesport participants spent
 - \$409 on apparel
 - \$780 on equipment

Demographics of paddlers



Drawbacks

- ❑ Paddlers may have to pass by private land
- ❑ Tourism can be seasonal
- ❑ Water trails need maintenance
- ❑ Inviting paddlers and river enthusiasts can lead to increase in pollution and potentially overcrowding



River Recreation and Rural Areas

□ Problems

- Income gap between rural and urban areas

□ Solutions

- Marcouiller et al. 2005 determined areas with natural amenities experienced a decrease in income inequality
 - Especially river and lake related natural amenities
- Conclusion- increasing access to rivers could help diversify rural economies and bridge the economic gap



Here is a great case for water trails!

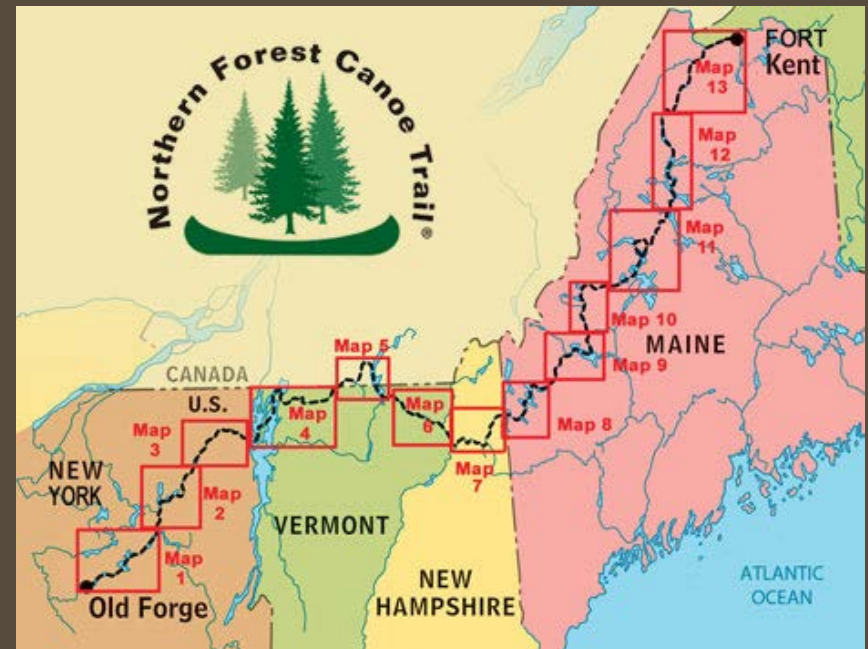
Who benefits from water trails?

- ❑ Outfitters
- ❑ Guides
- ❑ Anglers
- ❑ Retail
- ❑ Restaurants
- ❑ Lodging



NORTH FOREST CANOE TRAIL ECONOMIC IMPACT

- One of the most well know water trails in the United States
- 740 mile water trail that travels through 4 U.S. states, and 1 Canadian province
- Graduate student completed an extensive economic impact study on 6 regions



NFCT Results

- Paddlers infused local communities with \$12 million and supported 280 jobs.
- Local paddlers spent an average of \$5/day
- Non-local paddlers spent an average of \$46/day
- 12% paddlers used a guide service
- Found that this trail benefited existing businesses
 - ▣ Outfitters, restaurants, hotels, etc.
- Rather than creating new markets

What can we learn from this study?

- Length of river, even a short river can draw paddlers and local paddlers spend money too!
- Economic benefits can be seen quickly due to the relatively low overhead compared to other recreational attractions
- Can attract more users by promoting a designated water trail with signs, website, and maps

Lake Superior Water Trail

- Lake County, MN
- Approximately 3,078 paddling outings in 2000
- Paddler spending an average \$34.53 per day
- Blue trail visitors generated an estimated \$106,191 in revenue
- Trail began as a 20 mile pilot project in 1998 and has currently grown to over 80 miles of available trail.
- Now hosting the 14th Annual Two Harbors Kayak Festival



Roanoke River Trail

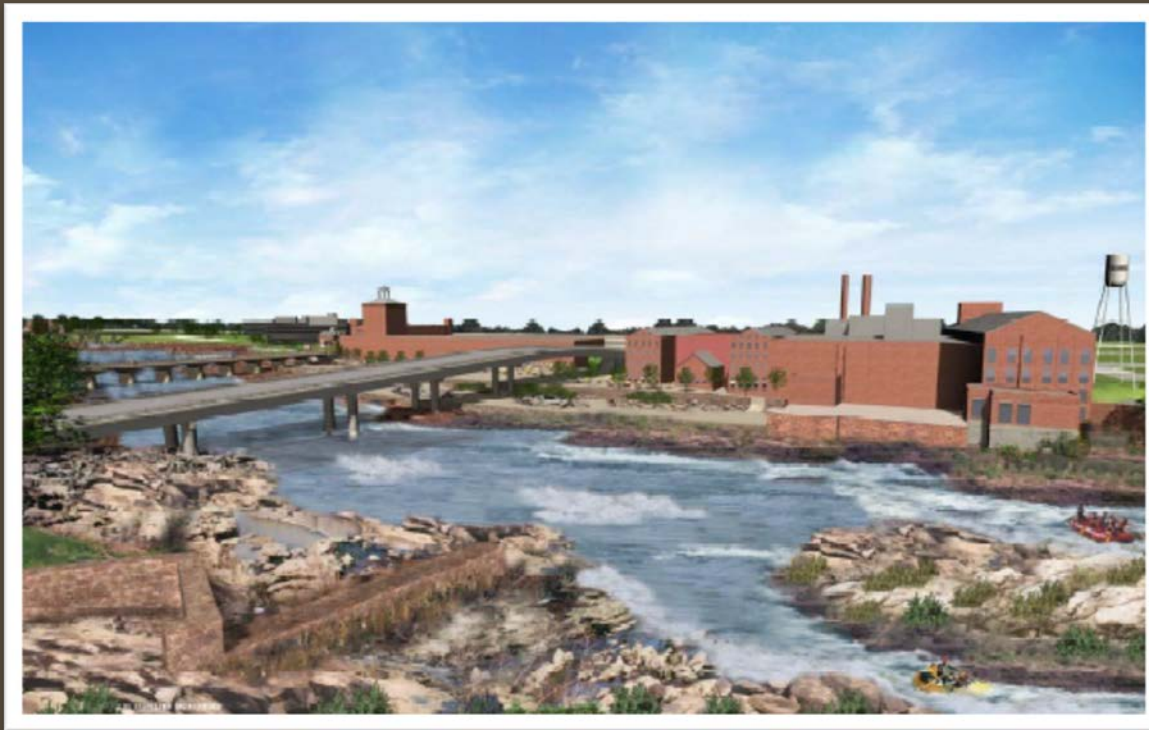
- Williamston, NC
 - Population: 5,843.
 - Median Income \$22,925.
- Approximately 2,220 paddling outings
- Paddler spent average \$87.25 per trip.
- Blue trail visitors generated an estimated \$193,695 annually
- First constructed in 1996
 - Now over 200 miles



Columbus Whitewater Park

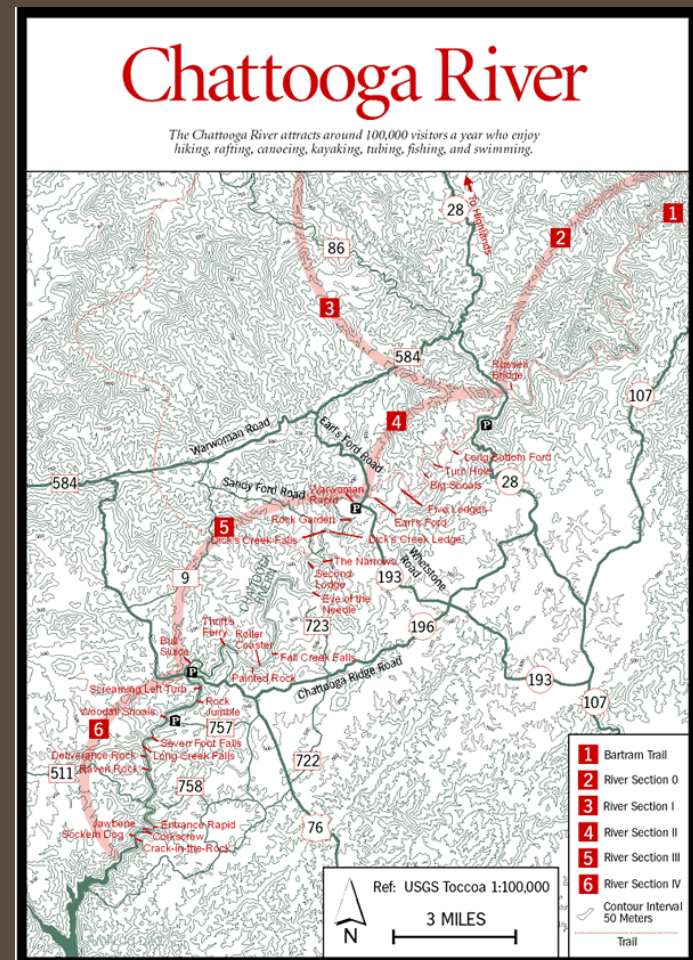
- ❑ Project price tag is estimated at \$23 million
- ❑ Study found its economic impact at \$42 million
- ❑ The plan is to divert the rivers flow, take apart the Eagle & Phenix dam
- ❑ Construct an engineered whitewater course that fits the rivers more natural flow.
- ❑ This project is expected to create 700 jobs and attract 18,000 visitors from out of town every year.
- ❑ The total economic impact will be \$2 million annually.

Columbus Whitewater Park



2001 Chattooga Study

- 43,000 people visited the Chattooga River.
- Boaters annually spent 1.8 million in a 6 county area
 - ▣ Average \$255 per trip
- Total economic benefit of roughly 2.7 million dollars
 - ▣ Fees, retail purchases, and restaurants



Day Trips vs. Overnight Trips

Study	Area	Day Trip	Overnight Trip
Pollack (2007)	NFCT	Local \$5/day	Non-Local \$414-498 per trip or \$46/day
Beedle (2008)	NC Paddle Tourism	Local (w/in 50mi) \$143.60 per party	Non-local \$503.62 per party
Johnson (2002)	Lake Superior Water Trail	Typical \$34/day	Paddlers who stayed in a resort \$63/day
Stynes and Sun (2003)	Grand Canyon		\$224 per trip in local communities
Moore and Sidereles (2003)	Chattooga	42% local paddlers	58% paddlers non local Average paddler spent \$255 per trip

Paddle Georgia Partnerships

- Often because rivers flow through a variety of jurisdictions, they require partnerships
- Ex. Paddle Georgia-annual week long GRN trip
 - UGA School of Environmental Design
 - Coca-Cola
 - GRN
 - Altamaha Riverkeeper
 - Oconee River Project
 - City of Athens

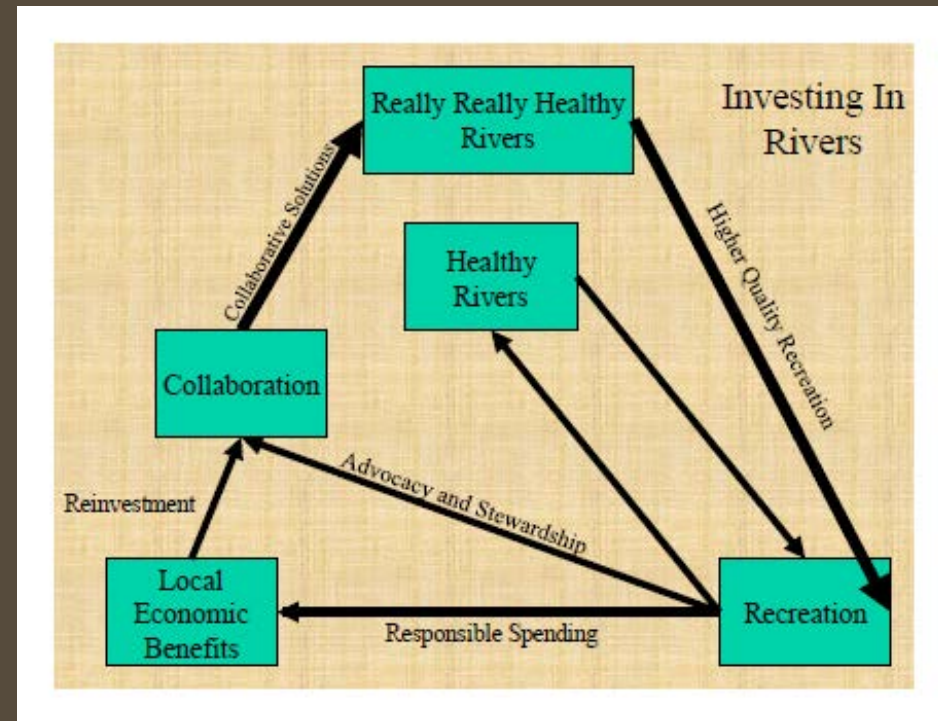


Take Home Points

- ❑ Water trails have many benefits for relatively little investment
- ❑ Water trails can help keep landowners appeased by providing safe public access
- ❑ Water trails can help diversify local economies
 - ▣ Adding return to already existing businesses
 - ▣ Potentially creating new markets

Take Home Points

- Longer trails could lead to more economic return
- Including multiple recreation activities could help draw visitors



Water Trails in Georgia

- If you are interested in learning more about water trails in Georgia

<http://garivers.org/gwtc/>

