

# Palisades Promenade

June 27

**Distance:** 16 miles

**Obstacles/Rapids:** **Mile 3--Morgan Falls Dam**—A sign at river left at the dam will direct you to the portage route around the dam. Paddle Georgia volunteers will be on hand to assist you with the portage. If you are carrying your boat, the next sign marking the portage is approximately 40 yards down the access road and directs paddlers to the right down a grassed slope. As you head downhill, go to the left of the substation you will see immediately in front of you. This will take you to the boat ramp on the river and a portable toilet.

**Mile 11--Devil's Racecourse Shoals**—This ¼-mile stretch of shoals and rapids is the gateway to the Palisades. After passing beneath the I-285 Bridge, begin keeping right. At the first sight of shoals, move to river right (toward apartment complex). Here the main current of the river will carry you through a playful shoal with a moderate ledge. Once through this obstacle, work your way toward the middle of the river where rock shoals on either side force the river into a narrow channel filled with waves. Paddle into that channel and enjoy the ride. Once through the "racecourse" begin ferrying to river left to maneuver through the final set of fast-moving water (avoid the slower moving water at river right—you'll get stuck in shallows).

**Mile 12--Thornton Shoals**—Beyond the "Diving Rock" at Palisades, another set of shoals blocks the river forcing the main current to far river right. Once through the initial shoals, begin ferrying to far river left to maneuver downstream through a second set of gentle shoals. Failing to ferry to river left will likely result in getting hung up in shallow shoals on river right.

**Mile 16--Take Out**—Not an obstacle, but there's a major one just below the take out. Upon seeing the City of Atlanta's water intake facility at river left, begin moving to river left and take out at boat ramp just before reaching the intake facility. A Class II rapid sits in front of the intake facility. We'll navigate (or portage) that obstacle tomorrow.

<b>Restroom Facilities:</b>	Mile 0	Chattahoochee River Park
	Mile 5	Johnson's Ferry
	Mile 10	Powers Ferry
	Mile 11	Palisades
	Mile 13	Paces Mill
	Mile 16	Atlanta Waterworks

**Points of Interest:** **Mile 3**—Morgan Falls Dam—Built between 1902 and 1904, at the time of its completion, Morgan Falls Dam was the largest hydroelectric facility in the South. The majority of its 10,500 kilowatt output was originally used to run the Atlanta street car system. Today, the facility still produces electricity, but only a fraction of the city's needs. In fact, Georgia Power's 20 hydropower plants across the state supply just 3 percent of the electricity it sells. The dam is more than 1000 feet long and 60 feet high. view is from far river left. A drought in 1925 caused a shortage of water to turn the dam's turbines, but the construction of Buford Dam upstream solved that problem in the late 1950s.

**Mile 11**—Devil's Racecourse Shoals—Supposedly boatmen during the 1800s blasted out some of the rock shoals here to create a more navigable river channel. The place got its name from these early travelers who considered getting through this obstacle "the devil."

**Mile 12**—Palisades—Perhaps the most scenic spot on the Chattahoochee's 436-mile course through Georgia, the high granite cliffs of the Palisades are a result of the Brevard Fault, a geographic fault line that the Chattahoochee follows some 100 miles (over virtually the same mileage as Paddle Georgia's course). A portion of the CRNRA, there are numerous trails along both sides of the river that are worth exploring. An overhanging rock known as "Diving Rock" is a popular spot for taking a thrilling leap into the river. A short trail opposite the Diving Rock leads from a sandy beach to restrooms.

**Mile 12**—Indian Cave—With some searching, you can find this unique geological feature used by Native Americans as a shelter. You can beach your boat on the left shore of the river anywhere between Palisades and Long Island. The Cave is located just downriver from the Palisades' cliffs, less than ¼-mile from the shore. A trail system leads along the river and back into the woods. By meandering along these trails you may well find it (its not on a marked trail).

## **Narrative:**

This stretch of river takes you through the crown jewel of the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area—the Palisades. During the early 1970s, protection of this spot in its natural state was the cause that rallied a small group of activists in the Atlanta area and ultimately led to the creation of the National Park. Spotting zoning notices along the river corridor, concerned citizens began investigating and found that both Fulton and Cobb counties had plans to run sewer lines along the river. Fulton County's plan called for a ledge to be blasted out of the Palisades' cliffs to accommodate the pipes. The River Rats, or Friends of the River as they were formally called, were successful in stopping the Fulton County line, preserving the Palisades as a state park and passing the 1973 Metropolitan River Protection Act. This state law established a 2,000 foot corridor on either side of the river in which development is allowed but restricted. During debates in US Congress over creation of the CRNRA, one Georgia congressman said the park would only provide refuge for "hooligans, drug users and nudists." I suppose he was partly right. Today, the CRNRA attracts 3 million users each year. Keep your clothes on!!!!!!