

## Savannah River Basin



Savannah River<sup>1</sup>

The Savannah River bears a Shawnee Indian name. The connection can be better understood by listing in sequence a few of the variations of the tribal name which appear in historical documents: Shawnee, Shawanee, Shawano, Shavano, Savano, Savannah. Possibly the final version was influenced by the unrelated word *savanna*, meaning “a meadow,” but this word itself is derived through Spanish from an Indian word.<sup>2</sup>

### Quick Facts

Map by US EPA



- The Savannah River basin is located primarily in eastern Georgia and western South Carolina and defines the state boundary between Georgia and South Carolina.
- The Chattooga and Tallulah Rivers join in the Savannah River headwaters to form the Tugaloo River. Further downstream near Hartwell, the Tugaloo River joins with the Seneca River from South Carolina to form the Savannah River. From here, the Savannah River flows southeasterly to the Atlantic Ocean. The Chattooga is one of the longest and largest free-flowing mountain streams in the Southeast, and on May 10, 1974, Congress designated the Chattooga a Wild and Scenic River.
- The size of the Savannah basin is 10,577 square miles, 5,821 in eastern Georgia, 4,581 in western South Carolina and 175 in southwestern North Carolina.

### Biological Resources

- There are 108 fish species representing 36 families. The Georgia DNR stocks approximately 203,200 catchable trout in 14 streams in the basin
- The state endangered Robust Redhorse, once thought to be extinct, was found in the Savannah River shoals in 1997. Prior to 1997, the Oconee River basin had the only known native population of this endangered sucker. Robust Redhorse stockings are currently directed at the Broad River, a major tributary of the Savannah River.
- There are 18 federally-listed species in the Savannah River basin - five are federally threatened and 13 are federally-endangered. In addition, there are 55 species that are either state-listed or of special concern.

- The [state] endangered Shoals Spider Lily grows in the shoals of the Broad River in Elbert, Wilkes, and Lincoln Counties. It can also be found in the shoals in the Savannah River near Augusta, in Steven Creek and in the Catawba River near Charlotte.

## Health of the River

### 305b/303d

Pursuant to section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act, states are required to develop a list of impaired waters (i.e. those waters that do not meet water quality standards required to protect designated uses such as, recreation, fishing, public water supply, etc...). In the Savannah River Basin, there are approximately 26 rivers and streams listed on the 303(d) list as waters not meeting their designated use of fishing (2002). These impaired waters include roughly 182 miles of rivers and streams in the Savannah River Basin.

### Fishing Advisories

For a complete listing of fish consumption guidelines for the Savannah River Basin and other river basins in Georgia see *Guidelines for Eating Fish from Georgia Waters, 2003* at <http://www.dnr.state.ga.us/environ>. Click GA's environment and scroll down.

### Drinking Water Supply

The River supplies drinking water to Augusta, Savannah, Hilton Head, and Beaufort, SC, and many smaller municipalities in the basin. As salt water intrudes into the aquifers near the coast, the freshwater of the Savannah becomes ever more important as a source of drinking water.<sup>2</sup>

### NPDES Discharges

The Clean Water Act (CWA), the basic federal law designed to control water pollution in the United States, prohibits the discharge of any pollutant into waters of the United States except in compliance with a National Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit issued pursuant to the Act. Currently, there are approximately 183 facilities, including industries and municipalities, authorized to discharge wastewater into the Savannah River Basin pursuant to NPDES Permits.

### Impoundments

The major impoundments in the basin are Hartwell Lake, Richard B. Russell Lake, and Clarks Hill Lake, all Corps of Engineers reservoirs. Hartwell Lake is a 56,000 acre reservoir located at the confluence of Tugaloo River and Seneca River. Richard B. Russell Lake is a 26,000 acre reservoir just downstream from Hartwell Lake. Clarks Hill Lake 70,000 acres, and is on the Savannah River northwest of Augusta. When these impoundments are all at full pool, there is only one mile of free flowing river between the upper reaches of Lake Hartwell and Clarks Hill Dam, about 80 miles downstream.

## Our Ties to the River

### Tourist Sites / Significant Parks Pertaining to River

Watson Mill Bridge State Park contains 1,020 acres and the historical covered bridge, which is on the National Register of Historic Places and was built in 1885.

**Bartram Trail** - *The following photo and excerpt are borrowed from [www.bartramtrail.org](http://www.bartramtrail.org).*

Exploring the Broad River, 1775

Bartram made a brief incursion into Georgia in June, 1775, before heading south with “a company of adventurers for West Florida”. While they were making preparations for the “long and hazardous...journey,” at Fort Charlotte, South Carolina, Bartram made “little botanical excursions toward the head of the Broad River, in order to collect some curiosities which I had observed.” No doubt Bartram here refers to his surveying trip of two years before, which took him near the Broad River.



*Shoals spider lilies at Anthony Shoals on the Broad River*

## How to Get Involved

### Watershed Groups in the Basin

#### **Broad River Community Watershed Association**

P.O. Box 661  
Danielsville, GA 30633  
(706) 795-5097  
[broadriverwa@earthlink.net](mailto:broadriverwa@earthlink.net)

#### **Chattooga Conservancy**

2368 Pinnacle Drive  
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(706) 782-60979  
[crwc@rabun.net](mailto:crwc@rabun.net)  
[www.chattoogariver.org](http://www.chattoogariver.org)

#### **Savannah Riverkeeper**

816 Mary Avenue  
Augusta, Georgia 30904  
(706) 231-4704  
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[www.savannahriverkeeper.org](http://www.savannahriverkeeper.org)

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Copies of this fact sheet can be found on our website at [www.garivers.org](http://www.garivers.org).

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<sup>1</sup> Augusta Chronicle

<sup>2</sup> [www.savannahriverkeeper.org](http://www.savannahriverkeeper.org)