

Indian Mound Meander

June 28

Distance: 17 miles

Starting Elevation/Coordinates: 706 feet/N34 09.666 W84 44.647

Ending Elevation/Coordinates: 670 feet/N34 08.615 W84 55.863

Obstacles/Rapids:

Mile 3.5--Thompson Weinman Dam—This lowhead dam poses a serious, dangerous threat if you go over it. There are no buoys to mark the dam so unless you know it is there, it is very easy to paddle right up to its lip without realizing you are about to go over a 20-foot drop. After going beneath the Ga. 293 bridge, keep to the left bank (south bank). Signs and safety boats will direct you to the portage path which is located about 10 yards upstream from an 8-foot by 8-foot white shed located on the south bank of the river. **DO NOT GO DOWNSTREAM BEYOND THIS SHED.** A trip over this dam (re: waterfall) could be fatal. Please allow the boat in front of you to land and move down the portage path before landing on shore. There is not a strong current here, so it will not be difficult to hold your spot along the bank of the river.

Restroom Facilities:

Mile 0 Riverside Park

Mile 5 Etowah Indian Mounds

Mile 17 Osborne Park in Euharlee

Points of Interest:

Mile 2--Bridge Pillars—These pillars are all that remains of the Western and Atlantic Railroad bridge. Completed in the late 1830s early 1840s by Cherokee Indian laborers, the bridge was burned six times during the Civil War. In late May, 1864, it was destroyed by retreating Confederate forces as Sherman's troops advanced to the western end of the Allatoona Mountains during the Atlanta Campaign. Sherman's Union troops rebuilt the bridge in six days.

Mile 3.5—Thompson Weinman Dam—This lowhead dam dating to the early 1900s provided Cartersville's first electricity. It was utilized by local industry as a power supply up until the late 1900s. The industrial complex adjacent to it is Chemical Products Corp. which processes barite—a mineral found in abundance in the Cartersville area that was mined on the opposite bank of the river (above our portage route) for more than a century. It is used in the manufacture of paper, glass, and rubber. A rich, white pigment is made from crushed barite and it is also used in radiology for x-rays of the digestive system. When crushed, it is added to mud to form barium mud, which is poured into oil wells during drilling. The brick building next to the dam is the old City of Cartersville waterworks.

Mile 4—The Great Wall of the Etowah—These walls were built to prevent bank erosion and prevent property from washing down river, and these structures epitomize the challenges facing the Etowah and those who wish to protect it. As more riverfront lots are developed in the fast-growing river corridor in Bartow and Floyd counties, this threat to water quality as well as the recreational enjoyment and historic resources of the river corridor will increase. It is illegal to build structures and remove vegetation within 25 feet of any stream or river in Georgia (50 feet on trout streams) without a variance issued by Georgia's Environmental Protection Division.

Mile 5—Etowah Indian Mounds/Pumpkinvine Creek—Home to several thousand Native Americans between 1000 A.D. to 1550 A.D., this 54-acre site contains six earthen mounds, a plaza, village area, borrow pits and defensive ditch. This is the most intact Mississippian Culture site in the Southeastern United States. You'll see the mounds on river right just opposite the confluence of Pumpkinvine Creek and you will paddle up to the mounds the same way the Native Americans of 1000 AD did. The tallest mound rises 63-feet above the former village site. During the Civil War, Union General William Sherman climbed to the top of this mound only to be fired upon by Confederate canons located across the river. A museum and gift shop holds an interesting array of Native American artifacts, restrooms and air conditioning! Additionally, you'll have the opportunity to assist park rangers as they build a dugout canoe using Native American hand tools and fire. On the river directly in front of the mounds is an intact fish weir. Additional Indian Mounds were once located across the river along Pumpkinvine Creek, but those mounds have been destroyed.

Mile 11—Valley View—Unlike the recently built riverfront homes on the Etowah upstream in Cartersville that are now threatened by bank erosion, the Sproull family had the good sense to site their home away from the river and above the floodplain. Thus, you can't see it from the river. A Greek Revival home built in the 1840s by James Caldwell Sproull, it survived Union occupation during the Civil War. Following the Battle of Atlanta, Union Gen. John Schofield occupied the house for about three months. Officers used the second floor for living quarters, but the parlor was used as a stable for horses and the piano was used as a trough (the horses were brought into the parlor because Confederate snipers were shooting them). The names of two Union soldiers scribbled on the walls are still visible in an upstairs closet. When the war threatened their home, the Sproull's refuged in Alabama. When they returned they came via river vessel from downstream on the Etowah and Coosa rivers from Rome. When they climbed the bank of the river, they were, no doubt, relieved to find their home still in tact. The walls of the house are three-feet thick, with the brick made on location by slaves—their fingerprints are still visible on some of the bricks. The home has been in the same family since its construction—ownership that now spans five generations, and it is on the National Register of Historic Places.

Mile 15—Plant Bowen—Among the largest coal-fired electric generating facilities in the country, Plant Bowen produces 20 percent of the electricity that Georgia Power sells. Because of its size, it is also one of the country's top emitters of air pollutants. Georgia Power is currently spending more than \$500 million dollars installing "scrubbers" to reduce sulfur dioxide emissions at the plant. The facility utilizes about 40 million gallons of water each day from the Etowah—most of which is returned with the temperature slightly elevated. You'll see the smoke stacks (tall skinny towers) and cooling towers (short, cylindrical structures) from the top of the Indian Mounds, but from the low vantage point on the river they are not as visible. The white "smoke" billowing from the cooling towers is actually evaporated river water—not coal-burning emissions—those come out the smokestacks. The cooling towers provide the advantage of requiring less water to be withdrawn from the river for the electric generating process.

In 2005, Plant Bowen was the second-largest source of carbon dioxide emissions in the country, emitting 22 million tons. Nationwide, power plants produced more than 2.5 billion tons of carbon dioxide in 2005. Carbon dioxide emissions are considered the primary contributor to global warming. Each person in the U.S. contributes 45,000 pounds of CO2 pollution to the atmosphere each year. The average household is responsible for 10.3 tons of CO2 releases, 54 pounds of sulfur dioxide releases and 37 pounds of nitrogen oxide releases each year. Most of these emissions can be attributed to heating and cooling of our homes. Paddle Georgia participants represent about 200 homes in Georgia and elsewhere. If this summer, each of us shut off our air conditioning units, we could reduce CO2 emissions by estimated 500 tons.

Mile 16—Milam's Bridge—The rock piers of this iron truss bridge date back to before the Civil War and supported a wooden bridge crossed by thousands of Union and Confederate troops during the Civil War. Locally, the iron bridge is best known as the site of a grisly murder in the 1950s. The murderer was sentenced to death—the last person from Bartow County to die in the state's electric chair.