

Dog River Trot– Paddle Georgia 2014

June 25—Chattahoochee River

Distance: 17 miles

Starting Elevation: 735 feet Lat: 33.6935°N Lon: -84.6303°W

Ending Elevation: 722 feet Lat: 33.5648°N Lon: -84.8230°W

Restroom Facilities: **Mile 0** Campbellton Road Boat Ramp
 Mile 10.5 Bear Creek (Private Residence)
 Mile 17 North Georgia Turf Farm

Points of Interest:

Mile 2.4—Camp Creek WRF—The wastewater discharge on river left here comes from this Fulton County facility. It handles the waste of nearby College Park, East Point, Fairburn, Hapeville, Palmetto and Union City, treating up to 24 million gallons daily.

Mile 4.5—Campbellton—Along the east bank of the river here between 1830 and 1835, the city of Campbellton sprang up as the county seat of newly formed Campbell County, named in honor of Duncan Campbell who negotiated the 1825 Treaty of Indian Springs with the Creeks Indians. That treaty ceded all Creek land in Georgia to the U.S. government. Campbellton thrived with farms along the banks of the river and a ferry across it, but in the 1840s when the townspeople declined construction of the Western & Atlantic Railroad (reportedly because of the noise created by the iron horse), the populace shifted to nearby Fairburn and the route of railroad. By 1870 that town would become the county seat. During the Great Depression, Campbell County went bankrupt and was folded into Fulton County. Despite the demise of the town, Campbellton Ferry (originally known as Francis Irwin’s Ferry), continued operation until 1958 when a bridge was constructed here. It was the last operating Ferry in the region.

Mile 4.8—Anneewakee Indian Mound—On the west side of the river once stood what is locally known as the Princess Anneewakee Indian Mound. In the mid-1800s, a traveling preacher, and amateur historian and archeologist, visited the site and described it thusly: “[The tomb was] opposite the village of Campbellton, on the western bank of the Chattahoochee, in a tuft of trees, on one of those mounds so common in Georgia; rests the remains of Anawaqua, an Indian Princess, the former proprietor of the soil. It is situated in a meadow, in a bend of the Chattahoochee...Ancient fortifications are traced all around the plain, extending from the river to the hill.” The mound was later destroyed by a landowner unaware of its significance. An excavation of the mound remains in 1972 turned up 1400-year-old potsherds. Anneewakee Creek, itself, is home to yet another sewage treatment plant, discharging up to 4 million gallons a day to the creek. Anneewakee is believed to be a Cherokee word meaning “cow people.”

Mile 5.2—Austell Family—A plantation and ferry near this location served as the home of one of Atlanta’s most notable Reconstruction leaders—General Alfred Austell. An Atlanta banker and member of the Georgia militia, he was one of eight men who rode out to the Union Army under a white flag on Sept. 2, 1864 to surrender Atlanta. After the war, he established the First National Bank of Atlanta—what would become the longest continually operating bank in the city. In the 1870s he purchased a plantation and ferry near here which his family operated until the 1930s. Instrumental in financing the railroad that went through Douglas County, he was honored in 1885 when the nearby community of Irvine was renamed Austell. Austell died in 1881, but his youngest son born just six years earlier, would return to this riverside plantation and become one of Douglas County’s more colorful residents. In 1902, he returned from graduation at Yale University driving a red, steam-powered automobile. The trip from Connecticut to the Chattahoochee reportedly took three months, but that vehicle is said to be the first to ever cross the river at Austell Ferry. The auto was quite the novelty, as were Alfred, Jr. and his longtime companion, Miss Mamie Wier, who were known for throwing all-night dances at their riverside home. After Alfred’s death in 1923, Mamie continued to manage the property and ferry. Fannie Mae Davis, author of *Douglas County—From Indian Trail to I-20* (1987) described Mamie as the “guardian angel of the river bottom.”

Mile 9.4—Smith’s Ferry & McCook’s Raid—Near this site on July 28, 1864 Union cavalry under the command of Brig. Gen. Edward McCook crossed the river aboard canvas pontoon boats and, later, a hastily assembled pontoon bridge to begin what became known as McCook’s Raid. The daring raid ranged all the way to the Flint River to the east and covered a total of 250 miles in just eight days. The destruction they wrought was extensive and brutal. At one point, the troops captured a Confederate wagon supply train numbering in the hundreds and promptly killed all the mules pulling the wagons. In his report to Sherman, McCook boasted of destroying two miles of railroad and burning two trains along with about 100 bales of cotton and over 500 wagons. The report also detailed the killing of 800 mules and the capture of over 400 prisoners. But, the raid that started out so successful, ended in disaster when the Confederate cavalry finally caught up with the hard-riding raiders, doggedly chasing them back to the Chattahoochee...but that’s a story for further downstream.

Mile 10.5—Bear Creek Reservoir—Just up Bear Creek sits Douglas County’s Bear Creek Dam. The reservoir created by the dam supplies 4 million gallons a day to county residents. Completed in 1980, the county quickly outgrew its capacity and in 1992 the county’s water authority built another dam on Dog River just to the west. A short paddle up Bear Creek will bring you to a lively little shoal. Just downstream from the mouth of Bear Creek is a large rock outcropping that marks our pit stop for the day. The portable toilet is located on private land along a path leading downstream from the rock outcropping.

Mile 10.8—Rivertown—In the 1820s, Walter Colquitt, one of the area’s first white landowners established a plantation and ferry here and in 1829 lobbied the Georgia legislature to declare Pumpkintown as the county seat for Campbell County. His pleas went unheeded, and soon thereafter, he pulled up stakes and moved to Columbus. Rivertown, like Campbellton, has faded into history, but as late as 1886, according to the *Georgia State Gazetteer and Planter’s Dictionary* there lived here a population of 300 serviced by two churches, schools and several gins and mills powered by steam and water.

Mile 11.6—Proposed Bear Creek Reservoir—Getting confused yet? In fact, there are two Bear Creek tributaries to the Chattahoochee within one mile of each other. This Bear Creek flows through Fulton County and if the cities of Fairburn, Palmetto and Union City have their way, this Bear Creek will also be dammed to create a water supply reservoir. The \$100 million project would create a 440-acre reservoir by pumping up to 32 million gallons a day (MGD) from the river. Proponents say the project will provide 16 MGD to the South Fulton cities and help solve the region’s water needs. Opponents claim the reservoir is expensive and unnecessary. A 2012 report by Chattahoochee Riverkeeper showed that the metro Atlanta area could save as much as 34 MGD by replacing the region’s water-wasting toilets. Likewise, expansion of the Dog River reservoir across the river in Douglas County could produce similar yields at half the cost of the new reservoir.

Mile 13—Dog River Reservoir—Completed in 1992, this dam and reservoir provides up to 23 million gallons a day to Douglas County residents. Originally designed to provide 6 MGD, the county quickly outgrew its capacity and in 1998 the Douglasville-Douglas County Water & Sewer Authority initiated plans to raise the dam by 10 feet. The work was completed in 2009, and today the 256-acre reservoir holds 1.9 billion gallons of water. It is possible to paddle into the mouth of the Dog and up to the base of the dam located within sight of the Chattahoochee.

Mile 15.5—Chattahoochee Hill Country—This bridge at Capps Ferry sits near the center of the Chattahoochee Hill Country and the 33,000-acre City of Chattahoochee Hills. Incorporated in 2007, the idea for the city began when major landowners in the area gathered to discuss ways to control the inevitable development headed to South Fulton and preserve the rural character of the area. The Chattahoochee Hill Country stretches from near Anneewakee Creek in Douglas County 20 miles down river to Ga. 16. The City’s development plans call for 98 miles of trails though the property and along the river, including riverfront parks. The nearby community of Serenbe typifies Chattahoochee Hill’s vision. The goal of the 1000-acre development is to preserve 70 percent of the acreage as greenspace while concentrating residential and retail development within a walkable community that includes restaurants,

conference facilities, shops, commercial space, horse stables and even a 30-acre organic farm. In 2009, the New York Times dubbed Serenbe the “Sonoma of the South.”