

Indian Mound Mosh—Paddle Georgia 2017

June 21—Etowah River

Distance: 16 miles

Starting Elevation: 692 feet **Lat:** 34.16123°N, **Lon:** -84.74419°W

Ending Elevation: 640 feet **Lat:** 34.14722°N **Lon:** -84.92189°W

Restroom Facilities:

Mile 0	Riverside Park
Mile 8.6	Leake Mound Site
Mile 16.5	Euharlee Road Boat Ramp

Points of Interest:

Mile 0—Allatoona Dam—Constructed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in the 1940s, the dam became fully operational in 1950. While the water coming off the bottom of the lake looks clear and clean, the dam and its operation have altered flow regimes, water temperature and oxygen levels in the Lower Etowah, resulting in the elimination of native freshwater mussel species downstream of the dam. Fish species have also declined from a pre-dam diversity of 80 species to an estimated 45 species. From the early 1840s until 1864, the dam site was the location of the town of Etowah—founded around the Cooper Iron Works. Etowah’s founders utilized water power from the river and the locally abundant iron ore deposits to create a mining and manufacturing center. In the late 1850s, the town had a workforce of 600 that was serviced by a school, church, boarding house, bordello, bank, post office and brewery. Destroyed during the Civil War, it was never rebuilt.

Mile 1.8—Western & Atlantic Railroad—These pillars are all that remains of the Western and Atlantic Railroad bridge. In late May 1864, it was destroyed by retreating Confederate forces as Sherman's troops advanced to the western end of Allatoona Mountain during the Atlanta Campaign. Sherman’s Union troops rebuilt the bridge in six days, continuing their march to Atlanta.

Mile 3.1—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 south bank of the river on the hills above the portage route for more than a century. It is used in the manufacture of paper, glass, and rubber.

Mile 4.5—Fish Weir

Mile 4.6—Riverfront Development and Bank Erosion—Many homeowners here are engaged in an ongoing battle with Mother Nature and, in part, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers which controls Mother Nature (or at least flows from Allatoona Dam). The powerful releases for hydro-electric generation at the dam cause the natural process of bank erosion to accelerate. As a result many homeowners are literally losing their backyards. Walls constructed to prevent erosion actually contribute to accelerated erosion at other locations, worsening the problem. Interestingly, when Allatoona Dam was constructed, the Corps purchased “sloughage easements” from downstream riverfront property owners, knowing that operation of the dam would “take” property. Thus far, the feds have offered no such purchases to the owners of these expensive homes.

Mile 5.1—Etowah Indian Mounds & Fish Weir—Home to several thousand Native Americans between 1000-1550 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. 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.

Mile 6—Douthit’s Ferry—Early pioneer James Douthit once operated a ferry near this location and lends his name to the modern-day Douthit’s Ferry Road. The iron truss bridge that still exists here was built in 1886, atop the same rock piers that supported a wooden bridge that put Douthit out of the ferrying business prior to the Civil War. During the War, the bridge was destroyed and for a brief period, Douthit returned to ferrying until a new wooden bridge was built shortly after the War.

Mile 7.5—Richland Creek Reservoir Intake—The massive construction site on river left will soon be the water intake for Paulding County’s Richland Creek water supply reservoir. The structure will pump water from the river to fill the 305-acre reservoir located 3.5 miles to the south. Currently, Paulding County gets its water from Cobb County-Marietta Water Authority (CCMWA) but conflicts with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers over how much water CCMWA can remove from Allatoona have led to uncertainty over future water supplies, precipitating construction of this \$200-million project. Opponents of the reservoir argue that the project may not be needed, depending on how much water can be taken from Allatoona. The Cartersville Airport is also on river left.

Mile 8.6—Petite Creek & Leake Site—Prior to the 1940s on river left opposite the mouth of Petite Creek and our pit stop, once stood three Indian mounds. They were razed and used for road fill during construction of Ga. Hwy. 113. Archaeologists who have excavated the remains suggest that human habitation of the site began in 300 B.C. It was abandoned around 650 AD.

Mile 10.8—Valley View Farm—This circa 1848 antebellum plantation home sits on a knoll overlooking the Etowah. 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 feed 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. 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.

Mile 12.6—Raccoon Creek & Paulding Forest—The headwaters of this tributary are protected as part of the Paulding Forest, a 6,500-acre tract of land, making Raccoon Creek one of the few streams below Allatoona Dam that supports healthy populations of the federally protected Cherokee & Etowah darters. Restoration projects on this stream directed by The Nature Conservancy aim to improve habitat and expand populations of these rare fish which are found only in the Etowah River Basin.

Mile 13.3—Etowah Cliffs—on river right atop the high bluff here once stood Etowah Cliffs, the antebellum plantation home of William Henry Stiles, a former U.S. Congressman from Savannah. Stiles built the home as a summer retreat to escape the Georgia coast, but eventually moved to the home in the 1830s. Juliette Gordon Lowe, founder of the Girls Scouts and a relative of the Stiles, visited the home as a child and swam in the river here. At the base of the bluff you’ll find several clear, cold springs.

Mile 15.4—Georgia Power Co.’s Plant Bowen Water Intake & Discharge—Among the largest coal-fired electric generating facilities in the country, Plant Bowen produces 20 percent of the electricity that Georgia Power sells. The facility utilizes about 40 million gallons of water each day from the Etowah—about half of which is returned to the Etowah after use at an elevated temperature. You can feel the temperature difference as you paddle past the plant’s discharge. The water that does not get returned to the river is lost in the cooling process. The large white plumes you’ll see coming off the cylindrical cooling towers are actually water vapor. More water is used to produce energy in Georgia than any other single use—including agriculture.

Mile 15.7—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 the discovery of the grisly murder of a 12-year-old girl in the 1950s. Her body was bound in chains and thrown into the river here. The murderer was sentenced to death—the last person from Bartow County to die in the state’s electric chair.

Mile 16.1—Euharlee Creek—About 0.4 mile up Euharlee Creek sits the Euharlee Creek Covered Bridge and the town of Euharlee. The bridge was built by Washington King, the son of freed slave and notable bridge builder, Horace King, in 1886 and carried passengers until 1976. The remains of a grist mill dating to the 1840s can be seen just downstream from the bridge. This grist mill provided the area’s first population boom, and in 1852 the settlement known as Burgess Mill incorporated as Euharleeville. Residents dropped the “ville” in 1870. The Indian word “Euharlee” translates to “she laughs as she runs.”