

Request for Board of Commissioners' Action

From: John Quarterman, WWALS Watershed Coalition Date: March 30, 2021

Subject: Watershed Planning & Monitoring Item Number: W/S Discussion A

Attached are documents that Mr. John Quarterman, WWALS, has presented for the Board's review.

Mr. Quarterman has offered correspondence and a Resolution that was drafted by himself (on behalf of WWALS Watershed Coalition) to be sent to GA EPD. In the correspondence and Resolution, your support has been offered in the WWALS Watershed Coalition's request for the EPD's designation use of the Little River and Withlacoochee Rivers to be set at a higher water standard. Due to the recreational activities that both the Little River and Withlacoochee River offer – WWALS feels strongly in the request to require a higher standard in water quality.

Mr. Quarterman has offered to come before the commission at your next meeting to give more detail on the request.

Motion made by _____

Second made by _____

Any discussion: _____

Votes _____ yes _____ no

Motion carried/ failed

EPD.Comments@dnr.ga.gov
Elizabeth Booth, Environmental Protection Division
Watershed Protection Branch,
Watershed Planning & Monitoring Program,
Suite 1152 East, 2 Martin Luther King, Jr., Dr., Atlanta, GA 30334

Re: Georgia Triennial Review of Water Quality Standards

It has been brought to our attention that WWALS Watershed Coalition has requested an upgrade to GA EPD's designated use of the Little and Withlacoochee Rivers from Fishing to Recreational, which would set higher water quality standards for these bodies of water. Cook County is in favor of that redesignation, applied uniformly, year-round.

These rivers provide public opportunities for canoeing, boating, overnight camping, fishing, wildlife observation and photography, and education. They also boast many waterfalls along their banks and some quite pleasant rapids, depending on the water level.

The Withlacoochee and Little River Water Trail (WLRWT) is a "blue trail" organized by WWALS. See: <https://wwals.net/maps/withlacoochee-river-water-trail/>

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources (GA-DNR) recently through a grant funded WWALS to produce physical signs at the water at many WLRWT locations, including five locations in Cook County. <https://www.wwals.net/pictures/2020-09-26--drafts-metal-signs/> The GA-DNR grant funded the Georgia Department of Transportation printing road signs for WWALS to go at numerous locations on the Little and Withlacoochee Rivers, including at six locations in Cook County. GA-DNR has also invested in two boat ramps on the Little River in Cook, at Reed Bingham State Park and Cook County Boat Ramp at GA 76. Cook County maintains public access to the Little River at three other locations plus to the Withlacoochee River at GA 76.

All these public river access locations and nearby river beaches are also popular swimming locations. However, it is quite common for people to get out of their boats and swim at any point in the river, not just at specific locations.

That GA-DNR grant also funded WWALS to design and print 10,000 copies of z-fold WLRWT brochures, which Cook County is helping to distribute. <https://wwals.net/?p=50614>

The Withlacoochee and Little River Water Trail as local and regional recreational, economic, and conservation assets is mentioned in the Comprehensive Plan of Cook County and its cities.

WWALS provides red and green indicators on Swim Guide, an international water quality advisory smart phone app, including for Cook County Boat Ramp in Cook County, where WWALS tests the Little River water. WWALS provides an ongoing online composite spreadsheet of numerous sources of water quality testing. <https://wwals.net/issues/testing/> Valdosta tests water quality three times a week on Okapilco Creek in Brooks County and at six locations along forty river miles of the Withlacoochee River, and publishes the results on the city's website as part of a GA-EPD Consent Order. Madison County, Florida's Health Department tests twice a week starting at State Line Boat Ramp and extending into Florida, and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection publishes those and other Florida results online. Per request from GA-EPD, Lowndes County has implemented a county-wide Stream Monitoring Program to test bacterial and other water quality at numerous locations on the rivers and creeks that are not covered by other monitoring efforts. WWALS' volunteer water quality monitoring program covers times and locations others do not. We know of no other local area in Georgia (or Florida) with such a mass of frequently-updated water quality data, which lets everyone know when our rivers are clean and when they are not.

Reed Bingham State Park has even been featured in Forbes, "Be sure to spend some time exploring the banks of Reed Bingham Park Lake—this idyllic water feature is a popular local spot for kayaking and fishing." <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jaredranahan/2020/08/07/nature-lovers-southern-road-trip/?sh=711923b03ef7>

In June 2019, Cook County held a centennial celebration at Reed Bingham State Park, with free boat rental from the park. WWALS and Friends of Reed Bingham State Park helped about 50 people try out boating, including many children. https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=456792108483221&id=293673894795044 WWALS holds an annual

BIG Little River Paddle Race at Reed Bingham SP, the last Saturday in April, drawing people from many counties around and from other states. It had to be canceled in 2020 due to the virus pandemic, but it's back on for April 24, 2021.

<http://wwals.net/pictures/2021-04-24--blrpr/>

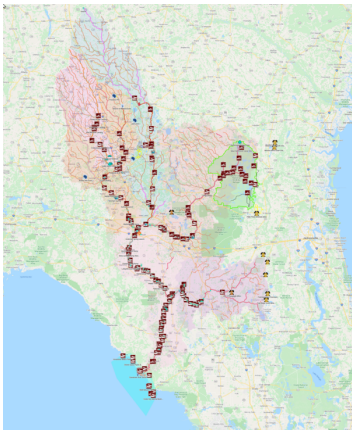
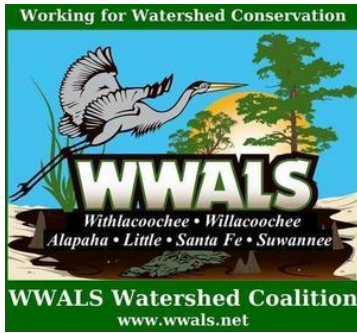
In our subtropical climate, people boat and swim year-round: it can be 80 degrees in January. Some people even prefer to be on the water in the winter because there are fewer insects. Thus the proposed second-class Recreational designation with overall lower bacterial contamination limits and even lower winter limits is inappropriate for waterways in Cook County.

The Cook County Commission believes that the higher standards designated for Recreational waterbodies are appropriate. Therefore, the Commission is in full support of this change. Further, Cook County is in support of the same higher, first-class, Recreational standards year-round, and for the entire extents of the Little and Withlacoochee Rivers in and along Cook County.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input to this decision.

Signed....

March 17, 2021



PO Box 88, Hahira, GA 31632
850-290-2350

wwalswatershed@gmail.com

www.wwals.net

WWALS is an IRS 501(c)(3) nonprofit
charity est. June 2012

WWALS Watershed Coalition advocates for conservation and stewardship of the Withlacoochee, Willacoochee, Alapaha, Little, Santa Fe, and Suwannee River watersheds in south Georgia and north Florida through education, awareness, environmental monitoring, and citizen activities.

Suwannee RIVERKEEPER® is a program and a paid staff position of WWALS.



To: Cook County Clerk Vicki Parrish
<vparrish1@windstream.net>

Re: Water Trails, Recreational classification for rivers, and WWALS waterways vision
Dear Clerk Parrish,

Thanks again for the assistance of you and the Commissioners with the Withlacoochee and Little River Water Trail (WLRWT) by authorizing the WWALS purchase of road signs and signposts from the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) to go at five locations in Cook County. One set of the Red Roberts Landing road signs just started at a WWALS festival booth. We hope to get them planted next weekend.

Please let me invite you, Commissioners, and Staff to the BIG Little River Paddle Race at Reed Bingham State Park on Saturday, April 24, 2021, starting at Red Roberts Landing. <http://wwals.net/pictures/2021-04-24--blrpr/>

Before that, please come paddle with us on the Little and Withlacoochee Rivers from Troupville Boat Ramp to Spook Bridge, on Saturday, March 27, 2021. <https://wwals.net/?p=54923> Perhaps you or someone else from the Cook County Commission would like to speak at this paddle?

Several opportunities have come up at the same time to promote cleaner waterways and eco-tourism in Cook County. This letter outlines each, with the relevant details attached. I will be happy to speak to the Commission if that would help.

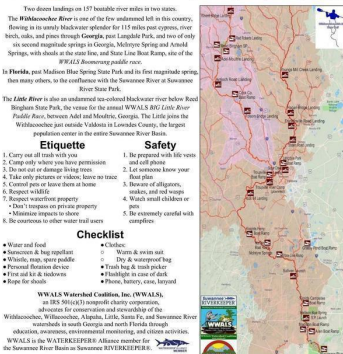
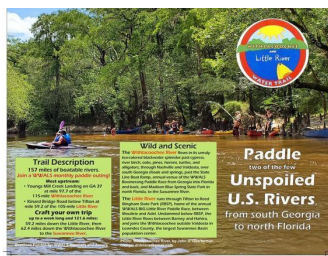
- 1) Withlacoochee and Little River Water Trail (WLRWT) resolution. It includes WHEREASEs that explain it. A copy in PDF and Word formats is attached.
- 2) Recreational Reclassification of rivers in Triennial Review of Water Quality Standards. The federal government requires this review every three years. GA-EPD is wrapping up. For background, see: <https://wwals.net/?p=54768>

All nine Riverkeepers of Georgia proposed reclassifying our rivers from Fishing to Recreational designation for stricter limits on pollution in them. GA-EPD would like letters of support from elected governments.

Please find attached a draft template letter, for Cook County to consider revising to send to GA-EPD. The deadline is the end of April.

- 3) Meanwhile, downstream, the Valdosta-Lowndes County Parks & Recreation Authority (VLPRA) is updating its Master Plan. WWALS provided a WWALS vision for Lowndes County Waterways that is being incorporated into that Plan. A copy is attached, and is online here: <https://wwals.net/?p=54946>





Due to the same generous grant from the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (GA-DNR) that funded the road signs, WWALS has printed 10,000 copies of a z-fold brochure for the WLRWT. We would be happy to get you some copies at no cost to Cook County. <https://wwals.net/?p=50614>

The grant also funded printing and posts for WLRWT signs to go near the water at each public landing. <https://wwals.net/?p=54243> The top sign is the same at all WLRWT locations, with a map and description of the entire water trail, as well as etiquette, safety, and a checklist.

<http://wwals.net/pictures/2020-09-26--drafts-metal-signs/WLRWT-Sign-0001.html>

The bottom sign is different for each location, with a map, list, and distances for what can be found upstream and downstream. Five new pairs of signs will go in Cook County:

- Red Roberts Landing @ Rountree Bridge Road on the Little River

<https://wwals.net/pictures/2020-09-26--drafts-metal-signs/Red-Roberts-Landing-Sign-0001.html>

- Reed Bingham State Park East Ramp on the Little River

<https://wwals.net/pictures/2020-09-26--drafts-metal-signs/Reed-Bingham-SP-East-Sign-0001.html>

- Antioch Road Landing on the Little River

<https://wwals.net/pictures/2020-09-26--drafts-metal-signs/Antioch-Road-Landing-Sign-0001.html>

- Cook County Boat Ramp @ GA 76 on the Little River

<http://wwals.net/pictures/2020-09-26--drafts-metal-signs/Cook-County-Boat-Ramp-Sign-0001.html>

- Youngs Mill Creek Landing @ GA 76 on the Withlacoochee River

<https://wwals.net/pictures/2020-09-26--drafts-metal-signs/Youngs-Mill-Creek-Landing-Sign-0001.html>

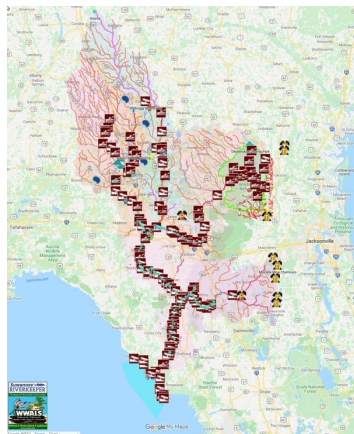
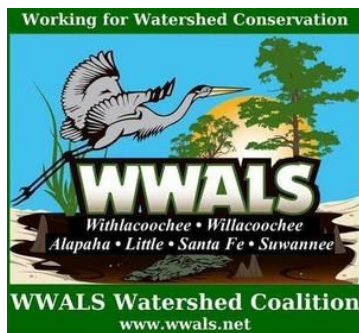
Thank you again for your letter to GDOT that authorized the WWALS purchase of metal signposts for these at-water signs, as well as purchase of the road signs and signposts.

Thank you for your consideration,

John S. Quarterman
Suwannee RIVERKEEPER®

/s

WWALS Watershed Coalition, Inc.



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Suwannee RIVERKEEPER® is a program and a paid staff position of WWALS.



December 31, 2020

To: David Barth
Barth Associates
david@barthassoc.com

Cc: George Page, Executive Director
Valdosta-Lowndes County Parks & Rec. Authority
gpage@vlpra.com

Re: WWALS vision for Lowndes County waterways

Dear Dr. Barth and Director Page,

Thank you for the invitation to provide suggestions for resource protection and recreational access for the Rivers and other waterways of Lowndes County, including access, water quality, land acquisition, etc.

Please see below a list of such suggested improvements.

For the rivers and the aquifer,

John S. Quarterman
Suwannee RIVERKEEPER®
/s
WWALS Watershed Coalition, Inc.

Health and Safety

What	Why	Cost
Tamper-proof trash cans and timely pickup at all boat ramps and public landings	People will put trash in a trash can: see Naylor Beach in Naylor Boat Ramp Park.	\$250 - \$1500/each
Fishing line collection containers at all boat ramps and public landings	To encourage fishing, while fish, turtles, other wildlife, and people, don't get snagged on old fishing line.	~\$100/site for supplies, make your own
Cameras at selected problem areas, such as Knights Ferry Boat Ramp	They discourage problem activities such as leaving trash and shooting up signs	~\$200+/ per site
More cleanups at more locations	Removes trash and gets people involved	Mostly volunteer hours, plus trash pickers, safety vests, trash removal, and overhead organizational staff time.
Extend the USGS Flood Inundation Mapper (FIM) to the Little River Confluence.	Need to cover Troupville Boat Ramp Park and future Troupville River Park. https://wwals.net/?p=54161	Valdosta and Lowndes County already paid for LiDAR, so FIM for another mile or two would cost little.
Publicize TMDLs (mercury, lead, Fecal coliform, etc.) Most people fishing do not know about these.	Important for people to know limits on eating fish, and so they will help fix those problems.	Minimal. Include in other press releases, etc.

Water Quality

What	Why	Cost
Fund the USGS Okapilco Creek at GA 333 Gauge north of Quitman in Brooks County.	Its rainfall and water level and flow metrics would assist in determining what is getting into the Withlacoochee River and when, as well as help convince the sources to ameliorate the problem.	\$15,100 total However, USGS provides \$900 towards each of the Skipper Bridge (Withlacoochee River) and Folsom Bridge (Little River WMD provides \$5,900 towards Skipper Bridge, so perhaps they or Brooks County could assist. https://wwals.net/?p=50447 http://www.l-a-k-e.org/blog/?p=21402
Timely publish the results of Lowndes County's Stream Monitoring program.	That program tests areas nobody else does, such as Franks Creek, location of the Hahira LAS.	Minimal, since the county presumably gets the data in electronic form from its contractor Lovell Engineering Assoc. http://www.l-a-k-e.org/blog/?p=21727
Timely publish Valdosta's chemical tracer and DNA marker water quality test results.	Would help localize sources by type (cattle, horse, pig, human, other).	Minimal, since Valdosta already has the data, which could be added to Valdosta's online publishing of their bacterial test results. https://preview.tinyurl.com/ya7ksaur
Fund more bacterial water quality testing .	To cover gaps such as Sugar Creek, One Mile Branch, Two Mile Branch, and Three Mile Branch See for context: https://wwals.net/?p=53260	~\$100/site* times 10 to 50 sites *based on SGRC costs, could be significantly reduced with volunteers; WWALS spends about \$10/site/test. The SGRC Regional Water Quality Assessment Project will gather preliminary numbers for areas that have old or no data, all to be uploaded to the AAS website, but there is more to do.
Fund and implement water quality testing for chemical tracers and DNA markers .	Need to test after each big rain to help narrow down the possible sources.	\$5,000 = \$125/test (Jonah Ventures) * 4 sites * at least 10/year. That's DNA tests. Chemical markers \$? See: https://wwals.net/?p=53340
Assist the SGRC 319 grant proposal to GA-EPD about agricultural river contamination of Okapilco Creek.	Affects the Withlacoochee River in south Lowndes County downstream from Okapilco Creek. Many people fish as Knights Ferry, Nankin, and State Line Boat Ramps.	SGRC would be seeking significant in-kind (volunteer) hours for this (WQ testing, landing and paddle clean-up events, etc.) Perhaps people who fish could help.
GIS water quality mapping of test stations, rainfall, NPDES and other wastewater permits, stormwater permits, and sewage spills.	Ongoing sporadic river contamination events have been revealed by the wealth of water quality data from WWALS, Valdosta, FDEP, Lowndes County, Quitman, and other sources.	Mostly staff time to automate and augment the WWALS composite spreadsheet with more data, plus analysis time, to find more sources and work on getting them fixed, as well as to alert the public when and where. SGRC is already working on GIS layers for septic tanks and animal agriculture production facilities.
Water well testing .	TMDLs, fecal bacteria, arsenic, PFOAs, etc.	Ranging from small to quite significant.
Fish contamination testing .	TMDLs, fecal bacteria, PFOAs....	Unknown.

River Access

What	Why	Cost
Troupville River Park on GA 133 across from Val Tech Road, in the historic site of Troupville, former Lowndes County seat, on the Little and Withlacoochee Rivers down to Little River Confluence. https://wwals.net/?p=53453	Purchase the 74.14 acres of Land Between the Rivers to add to 49.36 acre VLPRA park, to create 123-acre nature preserve and multi-use destination park. Outdoor classes on botany, forestry, geology, archaeology, art. Can be implemented in phases.	\$123,000 to purchase the land, up to \$1.5 million total capex, with GORA as likely grant source, leaving around \$150,000 cash match. Plus up to \$450,000 annual opex, with reductions possible from in-kind implementation and volunteer maintenance, and could be partly offset by park entrance fee. <i>See also WLRWT.</i>
Troupville River Camp , part of Troupville River Park, on both the Little and Withlacoochee Rivers. https://wwals.net/?p=51512	Encourage paddle access and overnight camping, thus promoting eco-tourism. Improve water quality with bathrooms.	Up to \$600,000 for the River Camp facilities: air conditioned bathrooms, hot and cold water, 5 screened sleeping platforms, picnic tables, benches, fire pits, paddle boat racks and river access. Opex could be mostly handled by a live-in (six month term) camp host in an RV, and volunteer assistance. <i>See also WLRWT.</i>
Little River Road Landing on the Little River.	Public access to the Little River on Lowndes County's acre on Little River Road would break up the 25-mile paddle from Folsom Bridge to Troupville Boat Ramp, thus encouraging more paddlers.	Road grading, slight improvements to river access (no boat ramp needed) trash can, fishing line container, trash pickup. Or put in a boat ramp, from \$2,000 (Berrien County model) to \$250,000 (GA-DNR model). <i>See WLRWT.</i>
Fix Folsom Bridge Landing access road off GA 122 to the Little River. A popular fishing spot.	Many potholes. Fixing them would encourage paddling downstream 17 miles to Little River Road Landing, or the 25 miles to Troupville Boat Ramp.	Probably a few thousand dollars of road grading plus perhaps some fill dirt. <i>See WLRWT.</i> Add fishing line collection containers and tamper-proof trash cans.
Fix Hagan Bridge Landing access road off GA 122 to the Withlacoochee River. This is a popular fishing spot.	In better shape than Folsom Bridge Landing, but room for improvement. Encourage paddling the quite interesting 5 river miles downstream to Franklinville Landing.	Probably a few thousand dollars of road grading plus perhaps some fill dirt. <i>See WLRWT.</i> Add fishing line collection containers and tamper-proof trash cans.
Improve parking and access at Franklinville Landing on the Withlacoochee River. Tyler Bridge is popular for fishing.	Encourage paddling from Hagan Bridge and 5.5 mi. downstream to Staten Road or 5.5 more to Langdale Park Boat Ramp.	Probably a few thousand dollars of road grading plus perhaps some fill dirt. Maybe a bit of riverside access improvement. <i>See WLRWT.</i> Add fishing line collection containers and tamper-proof trash cans.
Provide access at Staten Road Landing on the Withlacoochee River. Old access is on private land and posted now.	Encourage paddling from Franklinville Landing, or farther downstream 5.5 river miles to Langdale Park Boat Ramp.	Need stairs or ramp or something at very steep riverbank under southmost bridge, plus posted and graded road right of way access to the river. <i>See WLRWT.</i>
At-water signs, Staten Road Landing , with maps of entire water trail and etiquette, safety, checklist, etc.	So people can know what to expect upstream and down, with example pictures.	\$65 per set. WWALS already printed and is planting at-water signs for most other access points on the Withlacoochee and Little River Water Trail using a GA-DNR grant. <i>See WLRWT and At-Water Signs.</i>

Improve access to Shadrick Sink from the Withlacoochee River and by land in Lowndes County's 96.61 acres at 3526 River Chase Drive. Could be a good fishing location.	Teaching opportunity about sinkholes transferring surface water for miles underground, at least as far as Valdosta's water wells on Guest Road. Only 1.5 miles upstream from Langdale Park Boat Ramp.	A paddle boat ramp at the river, in the \$2,000 Berrien County model, plus some dirt road grading and fill dirt. Also some at-water signs and road signs. See WLRWT and At-Water Signs and Road Signs . Add fishing line collection containers and tamper-proof trash cans.
Clear sandbar and deadfalls at Langdale Park Boat Ramp on the Withlacoochee River.	Encourage paddling from Franklinville and Staten Road Landings or 3.1 mi. to Sugar Creek Landing; 6.8 to Troupville.	Mostly volunteer time. See WLRWT . Add fishing line collection containers.
Sugar Creek Landing at Gornto Road on the Withlacoochee River, next to the YMCA.	Convenient short paddle downstream from Langdale Park Boat Ramp, and onwards 4 miles to Troupville Boat Ramp.	Lowndes County already owns a strip of land from Gornto Road to the river. Needs boundaries posted, and improvements to riverside and access across a thousand feet of cypress knees. See WLRWT and At-Water Signs .
At-water signs, Sugar Creek Landing , with maps of entire water trail and etiquette, safety, checklist, etc.	So people can know what to expect upstream and down, with example pictures.	\$65 per set. WWALS already printed and is planting at-water signs for most other access points on the Withlacoochee and Little River Water Trail using a GA-DNR grant. See WLRWT and At-Water Signs .
Spook Bridge Landing at Old Quitman Highway on the Withlacoochee River. Downstream 8.24 miles down to Knights Ferry Boat Ramp.	Good distance 11.3 river miles from Troupville Boat Ramp, greatly preferable to highway abutment access at US 84.	Land purchase or easement from Langdale Company, significant entrance road and river access improvements, plus trash can, trash pickup. Add fishing line collection containers and tamper-proof trash cans.
At-water signs, Spook Bridge Landing , with maps of entire water trail and etiquette, safety, checklist, etc.	So people can know what to expect upstream and down, with example pictures.	\$65 per set. WWALS already printed and is planting at-water signs for most other access points on the Withlacoochee and Little River Water Trail using a GA-DNR grant. See WLRWT and At-Water Signs .
Clear Grand Bay Canoe trails in Grand Bay Wildlife Management Area.	They're not practical to paddle now. If they were, more people would paddle.	Probably volunteer hours with clippers and chainsaws. See ARWT .
At-water signs, Grand Bay Boat Ramps (both of them), with maps and description of entire water trail plus etiquette, safety, checklist, etc.	So people can know what to expect upstream and down, with example pictures.	\$65 per set. WWALS already printed and is planting at-water signs for most other access points on the Alapaha River Water Trail using a GA-DNR grant. See ARWT and At-Water Signs .
Water Trail road signs , pointing to turnoffs to reach the water access. Different from WWALS at-water signs.	So people know river and swamp access is available. See Staten Road, Sugar Creek, and Spook Bridge Landings, and Grand Bay.	Lowndes County Public Works already planted road signs at Knights Ferry (stolen), Nankin, and State Line Boat Ramps. Need to finish road signs for public landings. See WLRWT and Road Signs .

ARWT: Alapaha River Water Trail <https://wwals.net/maps/alapaha-water-trail/> See also [Figure 2](#).

WLRWT: Withlacoochee and Little River Water Trail <https://wwals.net/maps/withlacoochee-river-water-trail/> See also [Figure 1](#) and [Figure 1.1](#).

At-Water Signs: <https://wwals.net/?p=54270> See also [Figure 1.2](#), [Figure 1.3](#), [Figure 2.1](#), and [Figure 2.2](#).

Road Signs: WWALS already paid for and planted ARWT road signs. <https://wwals.net/?p=42782> WWALS purchased WLRWT road signs for upstream locations from GDOT with GA-DNR grant money. <https://wwals.net/?p=54281>

Figure 1: Withlacoochee and Little River Water Trail in Lowndes County. See [WLRWT](#).

Lowndes County's Little River Road acre is highlighted.

Spook Bridge is just south of US 84 Landing.

https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?mid=1n4Q4zSxir_T8o4kdkOCRxCeOrA&ll=30.79523696530492%2C-83.27210285173685&z=11

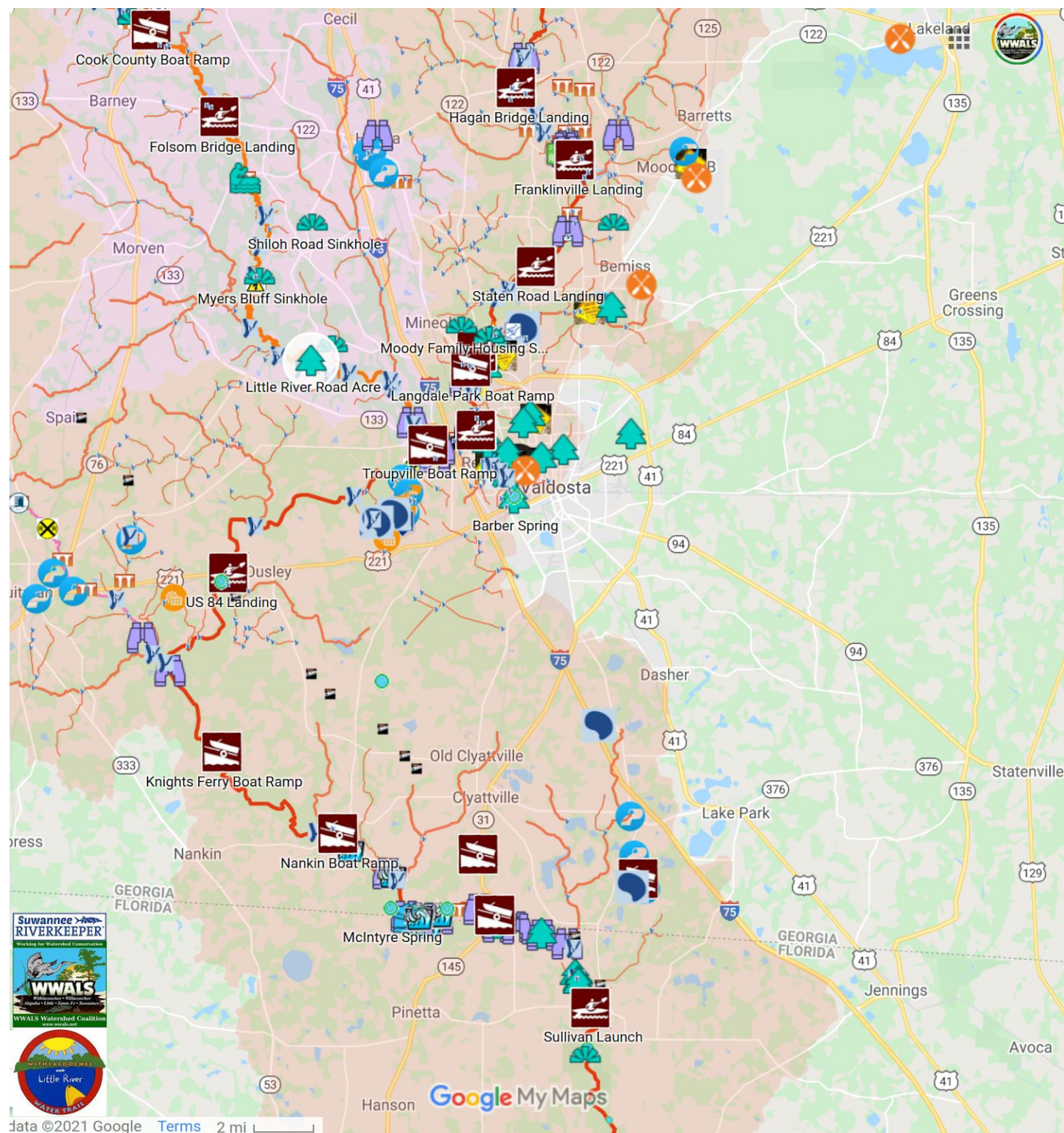


Figure 1.1: Shadrick Sink, Langdale Park Boat Ramp, Troupville Boat Ramp, in WLRWT map. See [WLRWT](http://www.wlrrwt.com).
https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?mid=1n4Q4zSxir_T8o4kdkOCRxeCeOrA&ll=30.873939837166613%2C-83.32937848935636&z=14

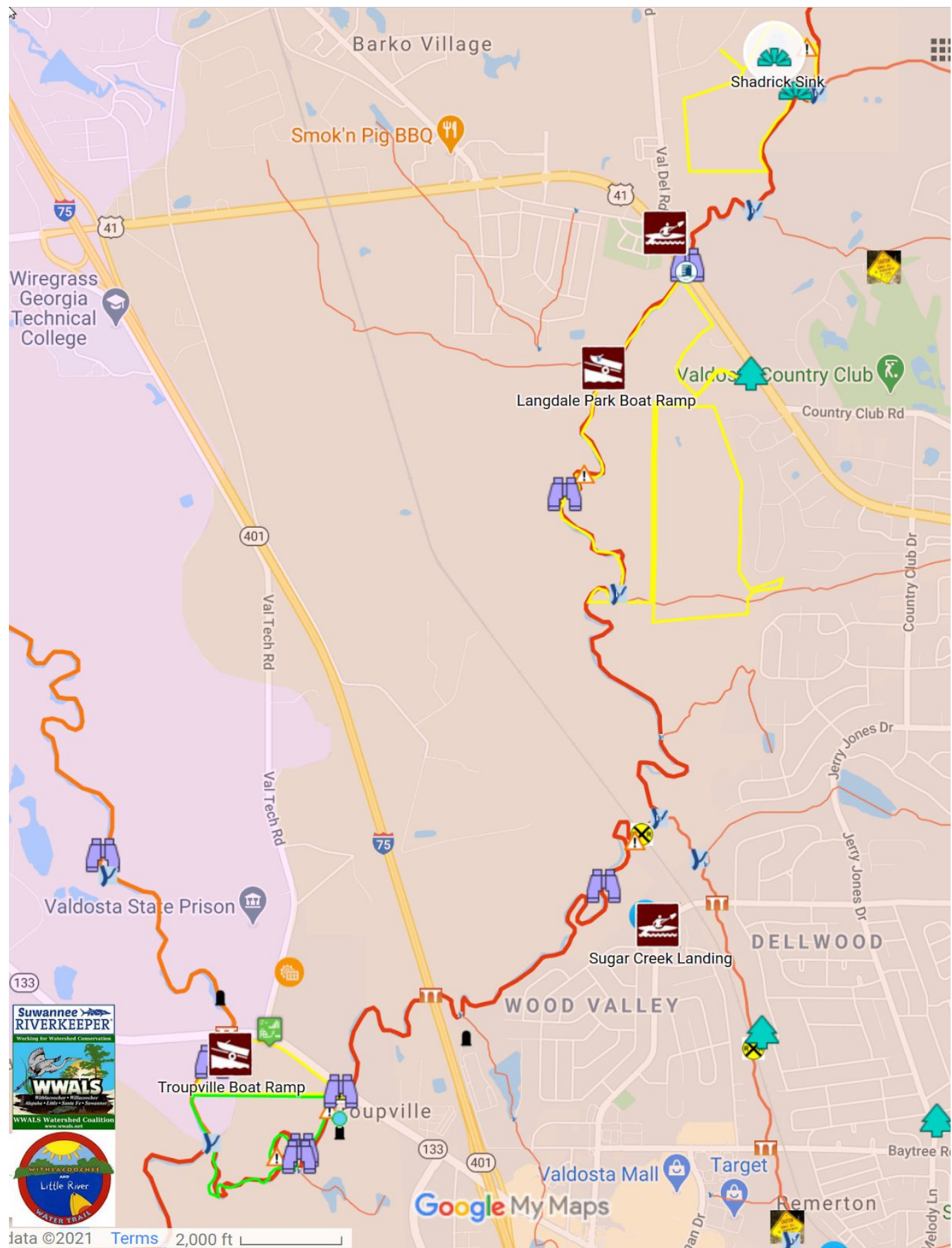
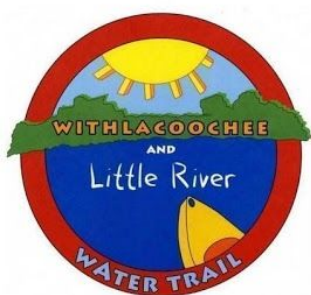


Figure 1.2: Top at-water sign for Withlacoochee and Little River Water Trail. Each location will have these. See [At-Water Signs](#) and [WLRWT](#).



Withlacoochee and Little River Water Trail

Unspoiled Blackwater Rivers
in south Georgia and north Florida

Join a WWALS monthly paddle outing!



gawatertrails.org



wwals.net

Two dozen landings on 157 boatable river miles in two states.

The **Withlacoochee River** is one of the few undammed left in this country, flowing in its unruly blackwater splendor for 115 miles past cypress, river birch, oaks, and pines through **Georgia**, past Langdale Park, and two of only six second magnitude springs in Georgia, McIntyre Spring and Arnold Springs, with shoals at the state line, and State Line Boat Ramp, site of the *WWALS Boomerang paddle race*.

In **Florida**, past Madison Blue Spring State Park and its first magnitude spring, then many others, to the confluence with the Suwannee River at Suwannee River State Park.

The **Little River** is also an undammed tea-colored blackwater river below Reed Bingham State Park, the venue for the annual WWALS *BIG Little River Paddle Race*, between Adel and Moultrie, Georgia. The Little joins the Withlacoochee just outside Valdosta in Lowndes County, the largest population center in the entire Suwannee River Basin.

Etiquette

1. Carry out all trash with you
2. Camp only where you have permission
3. Do not cut or damage living trees
4. Take only pictures or videos; leave no trace
5. Control pets or leave them at home
6. Respect wildlife
7. Respect waterfront property
 - Don't trespass on private property
 - Minimize impacts to shore
8. Be courteous to other water trail users

Safety

1. Be prepared with life vests and cell phone
2. Let someone know your float plan
3. Beware of alligators, snakes, and red wasps
4. Watch small children or pets
5. Be extremely careful with campfires

Checklist

- Water and food
- Sunscreen & bug repellent
- Whistle, map, spare paddle
- Personal flotation device
- First aid kit & tiedowns
- Rope for shoals
- Clothes:
 - Warm & swim suit
 - Dry & waterproof bag
- Trash bag & trash picker
- Flashlight in case of dark
- Phone, battery, case, lanyard

WWALS Watershed Coalition, Inc. (WWALS), an IRS 501(c)(3) nonprofit charity corporation, advocates for conservation and stewardship of the Withlacoochee, Willacoochee, Alapaha, Little, Santa Fe, and Suwannee River watersheds in south Georgia and north Florida through education, awareness, environmental monitoring, and citizen activities.

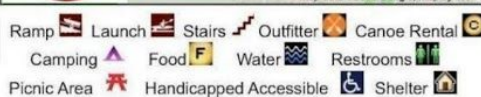
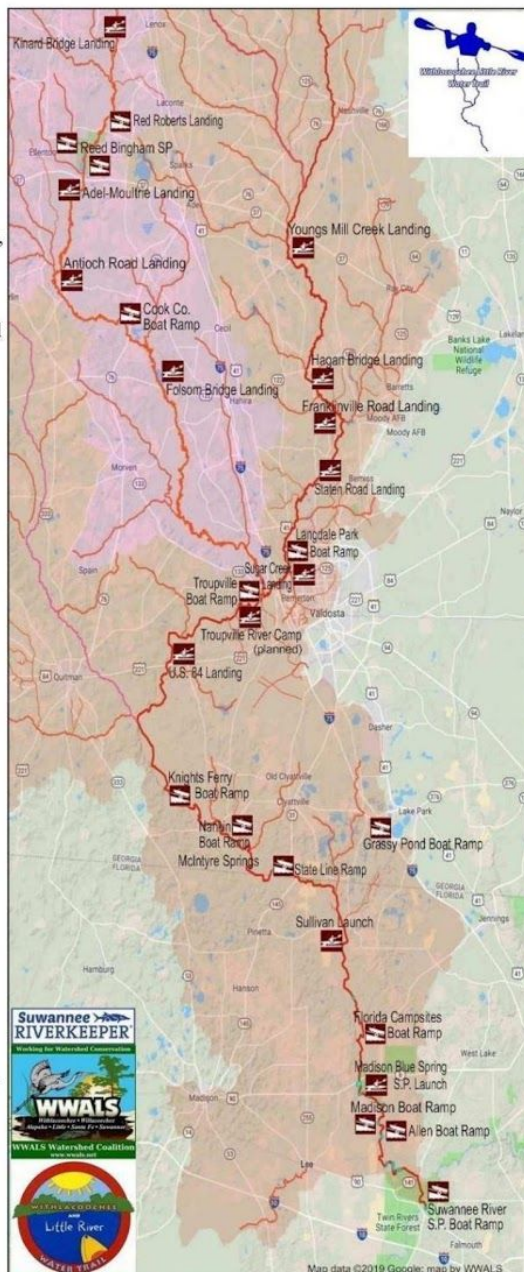
WWALS is the WATERKEEPER® Alliance member for the Suwannee River Basin as Suwannee RIVERKEEPER®.



Sponsors of this Water Trail:



wwals.net/maps/withlacoochee-river-water-trail



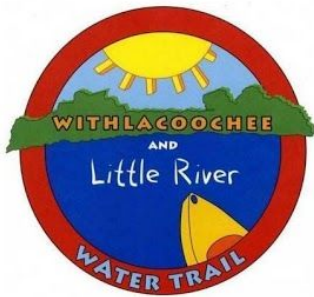
For outfitters, see wwals.net/water-trails/outfitters/

Always file a float plan so emergency responders can locate you

Help Protect Your Watershed

Become certified to perform Water Quality Testing
Report invasive species to www.EDDMapS.org

Figure 1.3: Bottom at-water sign for Langdale Park Boat Ramp on Withlacoochee and Little River Water Trail.
Each location will have a different bottom sign. See [At-Water Signs](#) and [WLRWT](#).



Langdale Park Boat Ramp

Lowndes County, Georgia

Withlacoochee River, east bank

3781 N. Valdosta Rd., Valdosta, GA 31602

30.88747, -83.32395



wwals.net



gawatertrails.org

EMA: Lowndes County 229-671-2790; Brooks Co. 229-263-4262

Except for the highways, a railroad, and downstream trash heaps on logjams, mostly you wouldn't know you're paddling next to the most populous city in the Suwannee River Basin, starting at this Valdosta-Lowndes County Parks & Rec. (VLPRA) Park. If Park is closed, use US 41 Landing. Join us for frequent cleanups at Sugar Creek and Troupville Boat Ramp. Earliest, expect yellow jessamine, then wild native azaleas (*Rhododendron canescens*). In spring, see red maple and white Grancy Greybeard and dogwood. Year-round, see loblolly pines, live oaks, water oaks, cypress, river birch, willow, and Spanish moss.

Water Levels, Valdosta (US 41) USGS Gauge 02317755: 113.8' (3.5') lowest boatable; 123' (12.7') highest safe

Downstream: Left and right bank (l or r): facing downstream

- 0.51 miles, 30.881988, -83.325054, **Hairpin Turn Deadfall**
- 0.65 miles, 30.880947, -83.326223, **Tire Pile**
- 1.17 miles, 30.875734, -83.323024, **Three Mile Branch**, l, drains Five Points
- 2.04 miles, 30.868327, -83.320487, **What is this** 03110203004620, l
- 2.64 miles, 30.864144, -83.320596, **Sugar Creek**, l, drains much of Valdosta, notorious for sewage spills, deadfall, trash
- 2.73 miles, 30.863296, -83.321576, **Norfolk Southern RR Bridge**
- 2.77 miles, 30.862972, -83.321996, **Railroad track deadfall**
- 3.15 miles, 30.860605, -83.323848, **Sugar Creek Landing**, left bank, 2410 Gornito Rd., Valdosta, GA 31602, difficult to find, long takeout through cypress knees
- 4.24 miles, 30.853877, -83.332607, **Sheri Branch** 03110203000485, l
- 4.40 miles, 30.854919, -83.334328, **I-75 Bridge**, near exit 18.
- 5.14 miles, 30.850019, -83.339628, **GA 133 Withlacoochee Bridge**, West of Valdosta off I-75 exit 18, notorious for high *E. coli*.
- 5.15 miles, 30.84985, -83.3399, **GA 133 Power Line**
- 5.24 miles, 30.848977, -83.340493, **GA 133 Deadfall**
- 5.43 miles, 30.846835, -83.342166, **Troupville Cutoff**, l
- 5.61 miles, 30.846499, -83.343668, **Meander Deadfall**
- 5.69 miles, 30.846504, -83.342311, **Troupville Cutoff end**, l
- 5.75 miles, 30.845776, -83.3424, **Loch-Winn Run** 03110203004651, l
- 6.34 mi., 30.847172, -83.347652, **Little River Confluence**, r
- 6.78 miles, **Troupville Boat Ramp**, left bank of Little River, 19664 Valdosta Hwy, Valdosta, GA 31602, on GA 133 off I-75 exit 18, Lowndes County, in VLPRA park.

Upstream: has some interesting sites within a few miles

- 0.05 miles, 30.887978, -83.324256, **Corinne Coleman Creek** 03110203000782, r
- 0.53 miles, 30.89262, -83.3189, **US 41 Bridge**
- 0.54 miles, 30.89285, -83.3188, **US 41 Landing**
- 1.03 miles, 30.895699, -83.31483, **Stillhouse Branch**, l
- 1.54 miles, 30.902192, -83.312247, **Cherry Creek Sink**, l
- 1.65 miles, 30.901774, -83.31094, **Cherry Creek**, l
- 1.85 mi., 30.9042, -83.31157, **Withlacoochee Slough at Cherry Creek**, r
- 3.00 miles, 30.91849, -83.309506, **Sermons Branch**, r
- 3.75 miles, 30.921932, -83.303605, **Bay Branch**, r

Photographs: Bobby McKenzie (center), Gretchen Quarterman (lower left), Bret Wagenhorst (flowers), John S. Quarterman (others).
Map background data © google; Maps by WWALS

- 5.01 miles, 30.9288, -83.292668, **Thomasville-Valdosta Power Line**
- 5.45 miles, 30.933004, -83.289189, **Fender Bridge site**
- 5.45 miles, 30.932989, -83.288971, **Staten Road Bridge**
- 5.48 miles, 30.932805, -83.288878, **Staten Road Landing**, l, 4556 Staten Road, steep road abutment; not recommended
- 7.24 miles, 30.946538, -83.272011, **Ziegler Creek** 03110203000495, l
- 7.44 miles, 30.949028, -83.271885, **Skipper Bridge**, no takeout
- 7.78 miles, 30.952758, -83.268467, **Reed Road Creek** 03110203004488, l
- 8.14 miles, 30.95705, -83.269801, **Old Skipper Bridge**
- 8.21 miles, 30.957999, -83.269871, **McTier Branch** 03110203004438, r
- 9.83 miles, 30.973678, -83.263525, **Cooper Carter Creek** 03110203004407, r
- 10.04 miles, 30.975406, -83.261484, **Cat Creek**, l
- 10.78 miles, 30.98182, -83.26493, **Tom's Branch** 03110203000541, l
- 10.78 miles, 30.981854, -83.264984, **Redeye Creek**, l
- 10.95 miles, 30.981369, -83.267676, **Tyler Bridge**
- 10.96 miles, 30.981249, -83.268027, **Franklinville Landing**, r, 6560 Franklinville Road, road entrance from the west.



Figure 2: Alapaha River Water Trail in Lowndes County. See [ARWT](#).

Naylor Boat Ramp is highlighted: the only public access to the Alapaha River in Lowndes County.

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?mid=1xo8NYUn9oGVnelSxq0W3WR99Iyw&ll=30.82475983541852%2C-83.23119507631178&z=11>

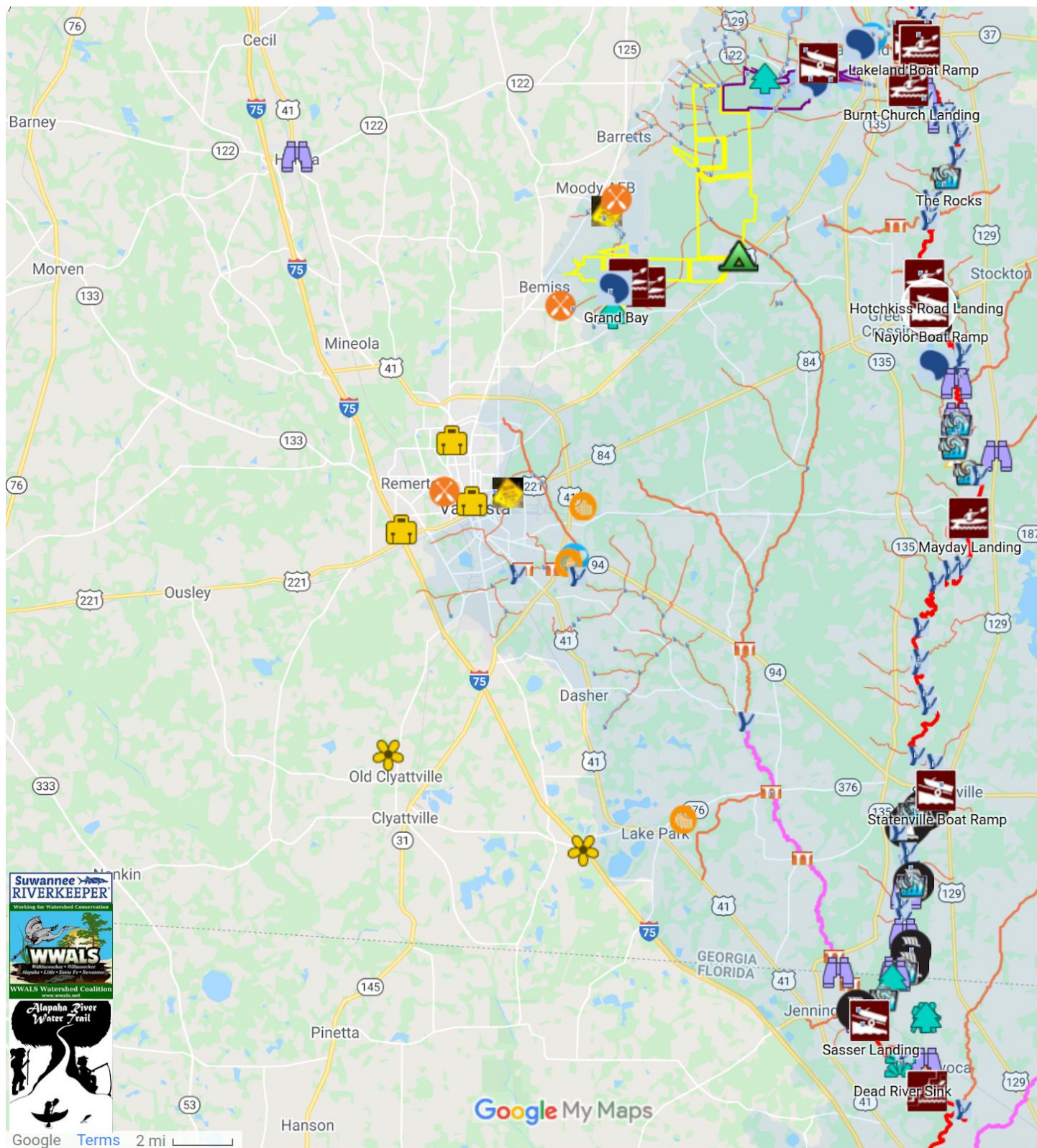


Figure 2.1: Top at-water sign for Alapaha River Water Trail. Each location will have these.
See [At-Water Signs](#) and [ARWT](#).



Alapaha River Water Trail

**Paddle wild and scenic Blackwater
from south Georgia to north Florida**

Join a WWALS monthly paddle outing!

A dozen landings on 129 boatable river miles in two states:
about 107 in Georgia and 22 in Florida.



gawatertrails.org



wwals.net

The Alapaha's tea-colored tannin waters class it as a blackwater river, flowing below bald cypress, longleaf, slash, and loblolly pines, and majestic oaks, with great blue herons, snapping turtles, alligators, and fish. Mostly flat, the Alapaha River also contains rapids, many springs, and the Alapaha Sink and the Dead River Sink where it goes underground until it comes back up in the Alapaha Rise on the Suwannee River in Hamilton County, Florida. Covering its entire flood plain in the rainy season, and less than a foot deep in spots during dry spells, the Alapaha River is a treasure and a challenge. The Alapaha River Water Trail also includes the Alapahoochee River, as well as many lakes, ponds, and swamps that are boatable year round.

Etiquette

1. Carry out all trash with you
2. Camp only where you know you have permission
3. Do not cut or damage living trees
4. Take only pictures or videos; leave no trace
5. Control pets or leave them at home
6. Respect wildlife
7. Respect waterfront property
 - Don't trespass on private property
 - Minimize impacts to shore
8. Be courteous to other water trail users



Help Protect Your Watershed

Become certified to perform Water Quality Testing
Report invasive species to www.EDDMapS.org

Checklist

- Water and food
- Sunscreen & bug repellent
- Whistle, map, spare paddle
- Personal flotation device
- First aid kit & tie-downs
- Rope for shoals
- Clothes:
 - Warm & swim suit
 - Dry & waterproof bag
 - Trash bag & trash picker
 - Flashlight in case of dark
 - Phone, battery, case, lanyard

Always file a **float plan** so emergency responders can locate you.

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is an IRS 501(c)(3) nonprofit charity corporation.

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WWALS is the WATERKEEPER® Alliance member for the Suwannee River Basin as **Suwannee RIVERKEEPER®**.



Sponsors of this Water Trail



Safety

1. Be prepared with life vests and cell phone
2. Let someone know your float plan
3. Beware of alligators, snakes, and red wasps
4. Watch small children or pets
5. Be extremely careful with campfires



Ramp, Launch, Stairs, Lake, Sinkhole, Rapid

For more icons, water levels, etc. see: wwals.net/maps/withlacoochee-river-water-trail/



Figure 2.2: Bottom at-water sign for Naylor Boat Ramp on the Alapaha River Water Trail.

See [At-Water Signs](#) and [ARWT](#).



Naylor Boat Ramp

Lowndes County, Georgia
Alapaha River

6955 US 84 E, Naylor, GA 31641
30.92507, -83.03867

Emergency Management: Lowndes County, GA 229-671-2790

Lanier County, GA: 229-482-2595; Echols County, GA: 229-559-8500; Hamilton County, FL: 386-792-6647



wwals.net



Downstream Water Levels:

Statenville USGS Gauge 02317500:

78.1' (2.0') lowest boatable before walking

82.1' (6.0') highest safe to not get lost

Right and left bank facing downstream.

- East bank, **Lola Tract VPA**
- Just below ramp, **Naylor Park Beach**
- Visible from beach, **US 84 Bridge**
- Just below US 84, **CSX RR Bridge**, historic *Atlantic & Coast Line RR*, caused Troupville to move to Valdosta
- Just below RR bridge, right bank, house sites on Lake Alapaha
- 1.4 miles, 30.918022, -83.036568, **River Run Waterfall** drops 3 to 8 feet at low water. Many rapids nearby, dangerous even for the experienced
- 3.8 miles, 30.9039230, -83.020189, left bank, **Foreman Creek** (03110202000597), comes down across US 84
- 4.1 miles, 30.8928264, -83.0215647, left bank, **Reedy Creek**, from beyond Stockton
- 4.7 miles, 30.8891300, -83.0231900, either bank, **Reedy Creek Sandbars**, string of sandbars; good lunch stop; beware brush with chiggers
- 5.8 miles, 30.8735600, -83.0229000, **Hairpin Willows**, lining the river
- 6.1 miles, 30.8728313, -83.0232544, **Hairpin Cutthrough**, just upstream from Ray Branch, water through neck of peninsula
- 6.15 miles, 30.871679, -83.023848, right bank, **Ray Branch**
- 7.05 miles, 30.8710346, -83.0227203, **River Bend Rapids**, scout before paddling
- 7.15 miles, 30.8602066, -83.0246277, **River Straight Rapids**, between branches of River Bend Rd, Stockton, Lanier Co.
- 8.25 miles, 30.8585421, -83.0237533, **Lee Bridge**, River Bend Rd, Stockton
- 8.85 miles, 30.8486577, -83.0169370, **Cow Shoals**, past end, s. branch of River Bend Rd.
- 9.65 miles, 30.847489, -83.011499, Left bank, **Cow Creek**. (Inset photo: John S. Quarterman, 2016-05-07) Upstream at US 129: Indian Wars battle site
- 9.95 miles, 30.8308411, -83.0183334, **Howells Rapids**, last before takeout
- 11.14 miles, 30.828749, -83.01864, site of **Howells Ferry & Bridge**
- 11.25 miles, **Howell Road Bridge**



Photo: John S. Quarterman for WWALS, Naylor Beach, US 84 Bridge, 2016-05-07



Map background ©2020 Google; Map by WWALS.

Downstream Take Out:

11.25 miles, 5.5 hours: left bank, **Mayday Landing @ Howell Road**, 749 Howell Road, Stockton, GA 31649, Echols County, GA.



Photo: John S. Quarterman for WWALS, Howell Road Bridge and Mayday Landing, 2016-05-07

Upstream Take Out:

1.24 miles upstream to **Hotchkiss Road Landing**, At end of Hotchkiss Road, in Lanier County, GA, off US 84. Another 12.5 miles to **Burnt Church Landing**, 217 Burnt Church Road (GA 135), Lakeland, GA 31635.

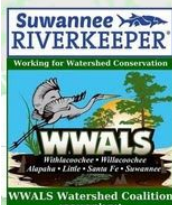
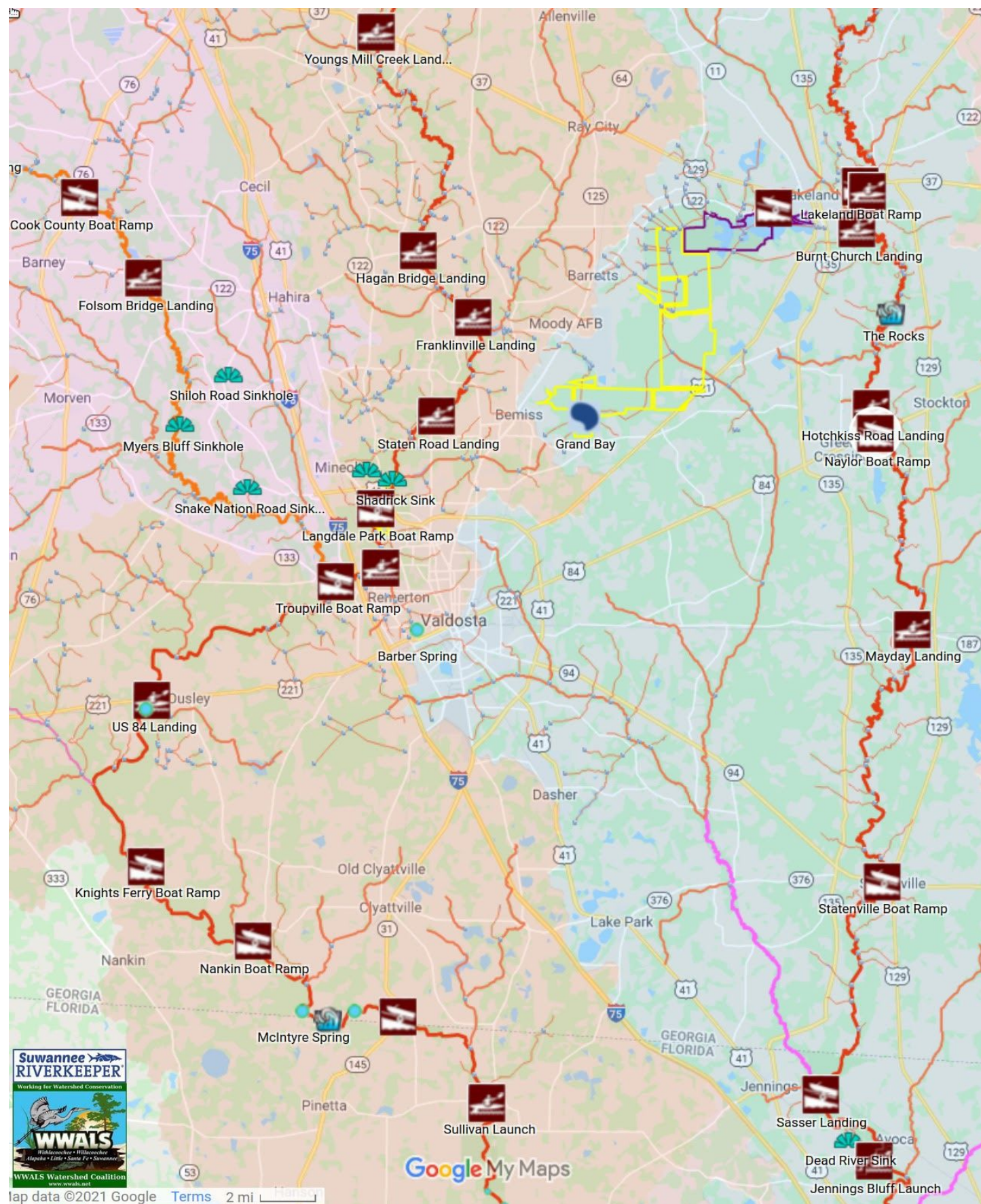
Supporting This Boat Ramp:



Figure 3: All Landings, Lowndes County. See [WLRWT](#), [ARWT](#).

Naylor Boat Ramp is highlighted: the only public access to the Alapaha River in Lowndes County.

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?mid=1dnRr3ATEwReknyLZq26-316FydbER2K&ll=30.88316323290958%2C-83.25915452619034&z=11>



Map data ©2021 Google [Terms](#) 2 mi

A RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT
THE WITHLACOOCHEE AND LITTLE RIVER WATER TRAIL
FOR THE COUNTY OF COOK, GA
Draft of March 17, 2021

WHEREAS, the Little River running north to south forms the western boundary of Cook County, and the New River flowing into the Withlacoochee River north to south forms the eastern boundary of Cook County; and

WHEREAS, the Little River and the Withlacoochee River are described in various guidebooks as “Intimate, shaded in its northern reaches) mysterious in its beauty,” with abundant wildlife, limestone shoals, and sandbars; and

WHEREAS, the citizens of Cook County value the natural resources and outdoor recreation opportunities afforded by the Little and Withlacoochee Rivers and their watersheds such as fishing, swimming, boating, and birding; and

WHEREAS, the citizens value the Withlacoochee and Little Rivers for water quality and habitat protection; and

WHEREAS, the citizens of the County will greatly benefit from the recreational and natural experiences provided by a water trail or blueway; and

WHEREAS, the Little and Withlacoochee River watersheds also include creeks, lakes, ponds, swamps, wetlands, and Reed Bingham State Park that are included in maps, brochures, and guides for the Withlacoochee and Little River Water Trail; and

WHEREAS, existing hiking and biking trails, such as the Georgia Grown 37/41 Bicycle Trail and the Red Roberts Loop and the Yearling Trail at Reed Bingham State Park, can be linked to the Water Trail to encourage more multi-purpose participation; and

WHEREAS, this water trail is consistent with the comprehensive land use plan of Cook County regarding its Conservation Character Area objectives of efficient land use, resource management, and regional cooperation, and its implementation measure of establishing blueway corridors, as well as in its goal to promote historic and cultural areas and resources as passive-use tourism and recreation destinations through websites, pamphlets and advertising efforts; and

WHEREAS, the Withlacoochee and Little River Water Trail is promoted in the Cook County Comprehensive Plan as valuable resources for recreation with existing boat ramps and parking areas, as well as Economic Development Policy 1.4: “Continue to market the Withlacoochee and Little River Water Trails.”

WHEREAS, the economy of the County will benefit from visitors to the Water Trail, and a Water Trail is a feature of quality of life that is attractive to businesses and employees and so may contribute to the economic development of the county; and

WHEREAS, the citizens of Cook County and visitors from throughout the State of Georgia and the United States have for more than twenty (20) years regularly and openly enjoyed and exercised a right of passage by boat on the Little and Withlacoochee Rivers as they travel along Cook County, thereby establishing a public easement of passage on the river; and

WHEREAS, the citizens of Colquitt, Brooks, Berrien, and Lowndes Counties, as well as Madison and Hamilton Counties, Florida, all share in this valuable resource and have provided

for access to one or both of the Withlacoochee or Little Rivers and to other streams or waterbodies in its watershed; and

WHEREAS, the citizens of Cook County have indicated their support for the water trail at Cook County Commission meetings; and

WHEREAS, the County has assisted WWALS Watershed Coalition (WWALS) regarding the Withlacoochee and Little River Water Trail by sending a letter to the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) authorizing WWALS purchasing road signs for five locations on that water trail in Cook County; and

WHEREAS, the County also authorized WWALS purchasing from GDOT metal signposts for at-water informational signs at five locations on the Withlacoochee and Little River Water Trail, all funded by the same grant from the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (GA-DNR) that funded the road signs; and

WHEREAS, the County is helping distribute the 10,000 copies of z-fold brochures for the WLRWT that the same GA-DNR grant funded WWALS designing and printing; and

WHEREAS, the County has repeatedly supported parks and recreation with funding;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Commissioners of Cook County, Georgia;

Section 1: The concept of the Withlacoochee and Little River Water Trail as outlined by the website <http://www.wwals.net/maps/withlacoochee-river-water-trail/> is approved and hereby incorporated by reference; and

Section 2: That the public easement of passage established by more than twenty (20) years of regular and open travel by boat on the Little and Withlacoochee River along the boundaries of Cook County is hereby recognized and accepted by the Commission on behalf of the citizens of Cook County, and visitors from throughout the State of Georgia and the United States; and

Section 3: That this Resolution shall take effect immediately upon its adoption; and

Section 4: That we hereby direct each department in the County to work individually, together, and with other governments and organizations to support and implement the water trail.

PASSED AND ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF COOK COUNTY, GEORGIA, this ____ day of _____ 2019.

By: _____

Attest: _____