

About the Floatway

The Bear Creek Scenic Floatway beginning below Upper Bear Creek Dam and ending at Bear Creek Reservoir, is very popular for canoeing and kayaking, featuring scenic undisturbed forests and fast moving waters and rapids. A 26-mile float stream makes the Floatway one of the top trips one can take in Alabama. Releases from Upper Bear Reservoir are always cool and provide adequate flow on weekends and holidays from Memorial Day to Labor Day. Except for holidays, releases from the dam are shut off at 4:00 p.m. on Sundays. To plan your trip check current flow conditions by downloading the TVA Lake Info app for smartphones, visit www.TVA.com/environment/lake-levels, or call 1-800-238-2264. The Floatway is generally considered a Class I course with a few obstacles approaching Class II. The exception is Upper Factory Falls, ranked as a Class IV and Lower Factory Falls, ranked a Class VI. Both falls are dangerous, should not be attempted and require mandatory portage.

The Lower Bear Creek Canoe Trail begins downstream from Bear Creek Dam at the Dixie Youth Park in Red Bay, Alabama. The park provides seasonal primitive camping and restrooms. This is a flat water Class I stream winding into Mississippi through undeveloped forests, bottomlands and farms. It provides a more leisurely float requiring paddling for most of the 34 miles to Bishop Bridge. Or the trip can be extended 8 miles to the backwaters of Bear Creek Embayment of Pickwick Reservoir ending at the ramp off County Road 1. The only other improved access sites are located at Tishomingo State Park, Colbert County Highway 1/Allsboro Bridge, and Hayes Landing off Riverton-Rose Trail. Other road crossing sites may be accessible, but should be scouted ahead of planning a float trip.



Know Before You Go

- Bear Creek Development Authority permits required for recreational activities on the Bear Creek lakes.
- Check stream gauges and reservoir release information at www.tva.com/environment/lake-levels.
- Paddle with someone more experienced than you when possible.
- State boating, fishing and hunting rules and regulations at www.outdooralabama.com and www.mdwfp.com.
- Obey all local, state and federal rules and regulations.
- Respect private property. Public land is limited to the access sites only.

Boater Safety Reminders

- Wear a properly fitted U.S. Coast Guard-approved lifejacket at all times while on the water.
- Be visible! Wear bright clothing.
- Never paddle alone. File a trip plan. Notify family or friends of your route and planned time and location of return.
- Check water levels and the weather forecast before departing.
- Dress appropriately.
- Know how to safely enter, exit and paddle your canoe or kayak. Know how to get out of, hang on to and re-enter your capsized boat.
- Do not paddle under the influence of drugs or alcohol which impair the coordination and balance you need to control a canoe, kayak, raft or paddleboard.
- Paddling at night is not recommended. Federal and state regulations require that you must carry a white light that you can display between sunset and sunrise.

Reminders

- Remove all trash before departing.
- Pack out what you pack in.
- Leave what you find – do not remove plants, animals, or other materials.
- Respect wildlife.
- Be considerate of other visitors.



The Bear Creek Watershed consists of four dams creating reservoirs that are managed cooperatively by the Tennessee Valley Authority and the Bear Creek Development Authority. Operation and management objectives for the projects are flood damage reduction, recreational opportunities and water supply in northwest Alabama.

Bear Creek Dam was the first of the four dams with construction completed in 1969, with a reservoir surface area of 620 acres. Little Bear Creek Dam was completed in 1975, with a reservoir surface area of 1,680 acres. Upper Bear Creek Dam was completed in 1978, with a reservoir surface area of 1,860 acres. Cedar Creek Dam was completed in 1979, with a reservoir surface area of 4,200 acres.

In addition to the reservoirs, a scenic floatway was developed below Upper Bear Creek Dam with developed access points for paddle sport enthusiasts.

Fishing, hunting, camping, hiking, picnicking, birdwatching, sightseeing, boating, including canoeing and kayaking, are popular activities in the Bear Creek area.



Bear Creek Development Authority
1111 County Rd 88, Hodges, AL 35571
www.bearcreeklakes.com



www.tva.com/river/recreation
1-800-882-5263 • www.tva.com/plc

Please follow appropriate Mississippi and Alabama laws, including fishing and boating rules and regulations.

For information about floating the Lower Bear Creek Canoe Trail and canoe rentals, please visit Mississippi's Tishomingo State Park web page at www.mdwfp.com/parks-destinations/ms-state-parks/tishomingo.aspx.

BEAR CREEK SCENIC FLOATWAY





Highway 5/13 Access

- Site is about a half mile below Upper Bear Creek Dam, which provides the extra flow on weekends to allow the recreational float.
- Water is moving fast – don't hesitate when boarding your canoe or kayak.
- Water from the nearby dam is always cool in the hot summer months.
- The old abandoned Highway 5 Bridge can be seen just upstream. It has unique style and architecture no longer found in today's modern bridge design.
- Class IV Upper Factory Falls is approximately one mile downstream. Portage left.



HIGHWAY 5/13 ACCESS



UPPER FACTORY FALLS PORTAGE

Things to Bring

- Life jacket
- Floatway map
- Whistle or other sound signaling device
- Photo identification
- Fishing license (if fishing)
- Drinking water
- Flashlight
- First aid kit
- Camping gear (tent, food, etc.) – to be used only at designated campgrounds nearby
- Sun protection and insect repellent
- Cell phone in protected case
- Waterproof bags and extra dry clothing

Mill Creek Access – Highway 241

- Site is about 2.5 miles below Upper Bear Creek Dam.
- Mill Stream enters Bear Creek just below.
- Water is moving fast – don't hesitate when boarding your canoe or kayak.
- Water from the nearby dam is always cool in the hot summer months.
- Class VI Lower Factory Falls is 2.8 miles downstream. Portage right.
- Spotted bass fishing is excellent in this reach.



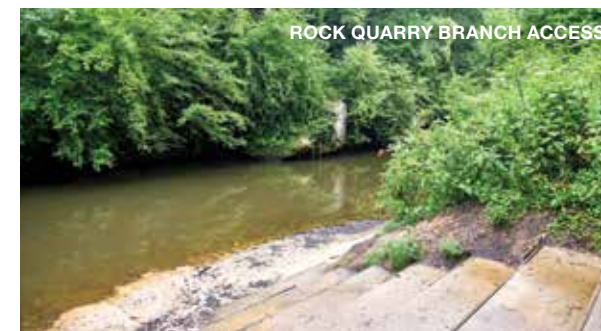
MILL CREEK ACCESS



LOWER FACTORY FALLS PORTAGE

Rock Quarry Branch Access – Highway 172

- Named for the nearby abandoned rock quarry.
- Spotted bass fishing is excellent in this reach.
- There is an open area available for picnics.



ROCK QUARRY BRANCH ACCESS



BELOW ROCK QUARRY

Military Bridge Access – Co. Rd. 53

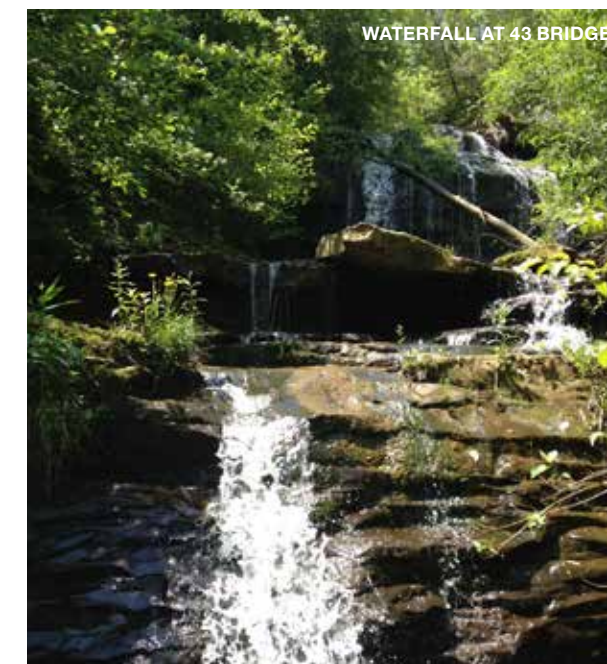
- Site is adjacent to the Jackson Military Road, which Andrew Jackson built through the wilderness to connect Nashville, Tennessee, and New Orleans.
- Below this point the creek transitions to more of a flat deeper water stream with slower flows.
- Spotted bass fishing is excellent in this reach.
- Access or portage left on sand bank or walk canoe through shoal to steps by bridge.



MILITARY BRIDGE ACCESS

Scott Bridge Access – Highway 187

- Site is adjacent to Scott Bridge on State Highway 187.
- The old Scott Bridge and ford site is located upstream.
- Below this point the flows are slower and influenced by the backwater impoundment of Bear Creek Reservoir.
- Fishing opportunities change to more reservoir-dwelling species.



WATERFALL AT 43 BRIDGE