

Hiwassee River Watershed Recreational Access Plan



Draft - April 2014



**Hiwassee River
Watershed Coalition, Inc.**

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April 2014

Presented to:

**Callie Moore, Executive Director
Hiwassee River Watershed Coalition**



**Hiwassee River
Watershed Coalition, Inc.**

Prepared by:

Broadfork, LLC



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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations Used

<i>Name</i>	<i>Acronym</i>
Cherokee Preservation Foundation	CPF
Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians	EBCI
Hiwassee Recreational Access Plan	HRAP
Hiwassee River Watershed Coalition	HRWC
Land Trust for the Little Tennessee	LTLT
National Forest Foundation	NFF
North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources	NC DENR
North Carolina Department of Transportation	NCDOT
North Carolina Ecosystem Enhancement Program	NC EEP
North Carolina Small Towns Economic Prosperity Program	NC STEP
North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission	NCWRC
Tennessee Valley Authority	TVA
Tourism Development authority	TDA
US Fish and Wildlife Service	USFWS
US Forest Service	USFS
US Geological Survey	USGS
Western North Carolina	WNC

1 Executive Summary

The Hiwassee River Watershed Recreational Access Plan (HRAP) was developed to engage the public in planning for improved access to lakes and rivers in the North Carolina portion of the Hiwassee River watershed. Funding for the development of this plan is provided by a grant awarded to the Hiwassee River Watershed Coalition (HRWC) from the Appalachian Regional Commission's Next Steps Fund.

The primary goal of this planning process is to identify and prioritize improvement projects that expand opportunities for citizens to enjoy the natural resources of the Hiwassee River basin through water-based recreation. Other goals include boosting the local economy through increased outdoor recreational tourism and creating a collaborative partnership for the implementation of this plan that forms lasting relationships around the issue of recreational access.

Until 2013, every river within the project area had an 11+ mile area where no official public access existed. Not only did this create safety and trespass problems, but it also limited access for those with less skill or those who weren't interested in an all-day float trip. With recent investment by NCWRC, Cherokee County, Duke Energy and others, the gap is shrinking in some places, but many barriers to access remain.

The recommendations of this report are aimed at alleviating these issues and others identified in the planning process. Below is a summary of recommendations that are made to enhance paddling, fishing and other opportunities for recreation. Further information on recommendations, site priorities and ranking criteria is detailed in the full report.

A large proportion of people who provided public input felt that current Lake Chatuge access is adequate. Consequently, no recommendations for improvement on Lake Chatuge have been developed at this time.

Valley River Recommendations Summary:

- Add 2-3 new access sites to accommodate canoes/kayaks on the Valley River between Marble and Murphy, downstream of G. Forest Hargett River Access Area and above the bridge at Black & Gold Drive;
- Complete improvements to the LTLT Welch Farm property including a gravel road, regular mowing of access path, construction of a launch structure, and establish an agreement for future access;
- Secure a written agreement with the owners of Valley Village shopping center that allows for public parking, install steps and/or a launch structure for improved safety and ease, add signage to direct potential users;
- Organize partners to develop an informal tubing plan for the town of Andrews; add at least one new multipurpose access site downstream of Cherokee Co. Heritage Park; and create signage to direct users;
- The aforementioned improvements (if realized) will also create at least three new wade fishing opportunities;

- Addition of a boat slide at Konehete Park; and
- NCWRC implementation of Delayed Harvest Trout Waters on a section of Valley River.

Hiwassee River Recommendations summary:

- Dependable release schedules from TVA's Chatuge Dam and accurate online flow data are essential for safety and recreation on the Hiwassee River;
- Improved access at the Hwy 64 Bridge/Crisp Access would allow for small boat launch that enhances fishing opportunities;
- A new access point at the mouth of Fires Creek is suggested;
- Brasstown Creek area improvements could lessen impacts and provide safer access at a popular location;
- The gate at the Chatuge Aeration Weir could be moved back to allow for easier access for drift boat launches;
- Payne Street Ramp could be improved to allow for additional non-motorized boat launch; and
- These improvements will support increased paddling and fishing opportunities.

Nottely River Recommendations summary:

- Dependable release schedules from TVA's Nottely Dam and accurate online flow data are critical to broadening recreational access;
- Add at least one new access location between Nottely Dam and Ranger Community Center (the vicinity of Cook Bridge Road would best meet public needs);
- Parking improvements and signage at Rominger Creek and Caney Creek access sites (both on US Forest Service property) are recommended;
- Rominger Creek trail maintenance and/or small boardwalk construction would reduce vegetative trampling, especially when lake levels are low; and
- Float access is critical for fishing access because public streamside access is scarce.

Apalachia Lake Recommendation Summary:

- USFS land along Morrow Road pull-off should be improved to provide small boat access and safer parking;
- Large quantity of public land around Apalachia Lake makes this an excellent opportunity for paddle-in campsites; and
- If future demand warrants, further improve the area with a designated fishing pier and/or additional shoreline access.

Hiwassee Lake Recommendation Summary:

- Improvements at Payne Street should include a separate non-motorized boat access;
- The US Forest Service Hanging Dog Recreation Area campground could be improved to offer a canoe/kayak launch at the existing camping area;
- Adding a canoe/kayak launch at the camping loop would increase fishing access to Hanging Dog Creek when lake levels are high;
- Existing John Taylor Road access needs a kiosk or site marker;
- Consider possible addition of south side lake boat ramp in the area of USFS Seed Orchard to offer additional motorized boating for fishing access; and
- Addition of shoreline fishing in Beaverdam Creek area along road does not appear feasible.

Successful implementation of the recommendations of this plan will rely on partner support, a robust public outreach effort and the availability of funding. HRWC is the ideal organization to lead and facilitate partner discussions. A detailed list of suggested partners that should be invited into the implementation process is provided in the body of this report and includes local governments and tourism associations, State and Federal agencies and other non-governmental organizations. Once partners have been identified and invited to join, a more specific implementation timeline should be collaboratively developed.

2 Introduction and Project Overview

The Hiwassee River Watershed Recreational Access Plan (HRAP) is an outreach and planning effort initiated by the Hiwassee River Watershed Coalition (HRWC) to improve public access to lakes and rivers of the Hiwassee River watershed. The vision of this project is to expand access for a variety of water-based recreational opportunities and promote the resource while protecting it, thereby capitalizing on water-based outdoor recreation tourism and improving quality of life for citizens. The vision is that when the objectives of this project are fulfilled, people will have abundant opportunities to enjoy the Hiwassee River watershed and develop a connection to the river that increases its perceived value, promotes tourism and encourages conservation action.

In 2013, the Hiwassee River Watershed Coalition received funding from the Appalachian Regional Commission's Next Steps Fund to develop a plan for improving public access to rivers and lakes in the Hiwassee River basin in Cherokee and Clay counties, North Carolina. In October 2013, HRWC contracted Broadfork, LLC to conduct public research regarding recreational access in these areas and make recommendations based on the responses received from this effort. This report represents the results of that effort. The HRAP will be used by HRWC and other project partners to plan and prioritize work, secure funding and implement new access projects.

2.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The Hiwassee River begins in Towns County, located in the mountains of North Georgia. From there, it flows northward into North Carolina through Cherokee and Clay Counties before heading west toward Tennessee where it joins the Tennessee River. The entire Hiwassee River basin drains 2,700 square miles of land, much of which lies in the Chattahoochee (Georgia), Nantahala (North Carolina) and Cherokee (Tennessee) National Forests.

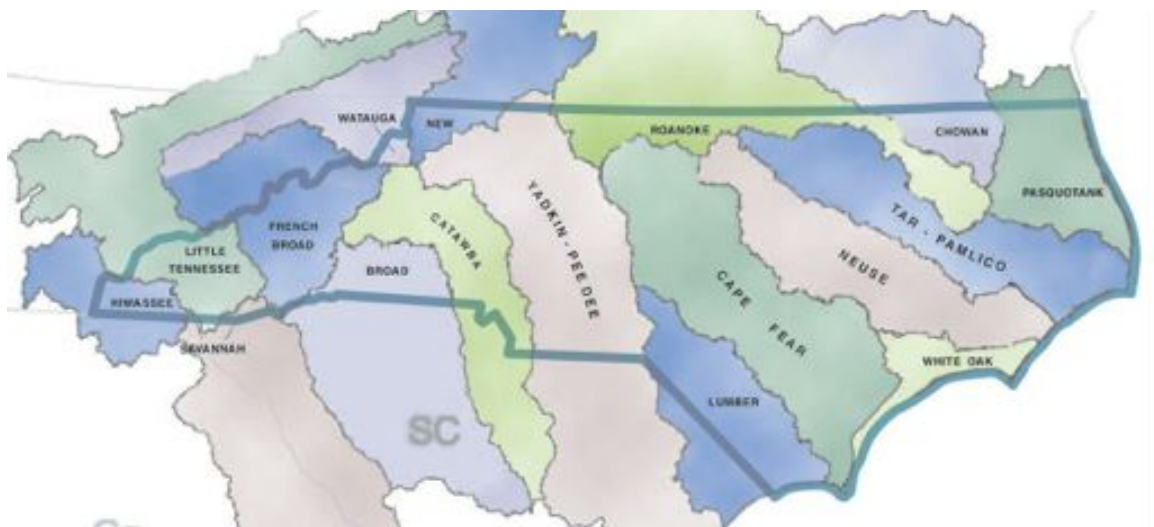


Figure 1 - NC River Basin Map, NCDENR Environmental Education Section

The Hiwassee River Watershed in North Carolina is picturesque and largely rural. According to 2010 census data, the total combined population of Clay and Cherokee Counties is 38,031. The Hiwassee River valley is steeped in Cherokee history, and Peachtree Mound near Murphy is considered one of the most important ancestral Cherokee sites in North Carolina. The basin also boasts 72 plant and animal species that are listed as endangered, threatened, of special concern or significantly rare. The North Carolina Natural Heritage Program has identified several natural communities in the basin with outstanding conservation value, including moist cove forests, rocky cliffs and mountain bogs (NCDENR, 2002).

The basin is punctuated by reservoirs, three of which are created by Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) dams constructed between 1930 - 1950 for flow regulation and hydroelectric power. The three TVA impoundments include the Lake Chatuge Dam, Hiwassee Lake Dam and Apalachia Lake Dam. The fourth dam in the basin is Mission Dam, licensed to Duke Energy and built in 1924. Another smaller dam constructed in 1941 is situated on Persimmon Creek, creating Cherokee Lake, located near Murphy.



Outdoor Recreation Economic Impact

Mission Dam on the Hiwassee River is the oldest impoundment in the project area.

The project area is uniquely positioned between four destination whitewater rivers in the southeast: the Ocoee, Chattooga, Nantahala, and Cheoah. Unfortunately, tourists looking for water-based recreation opportunities often bypass the Hiwassee River valley because they do not know what is available or how to access it.

Outdoor recreational tourism can have a big influence on a local economy. According to the Outdoor Industry Association's 2012 report entitled "The Outdoor Recreation Economy," outdoor recreation ranked third in annual consumer spending at \$646 billion, just behind healthcare and financial services/insurance spending. Of the \$646 billion spent annually on outdoor recreation, the vast majority (\$524.8 billion) is spent on trips and travel-related items like food, transportation, lodging, gifts, etc. Nearly 20% is spent on "Fishing" and "Water Sports" combined.

Similarly, a 2008 Paddle Tourism Study completed by the North Carolina State Trails Program found that paddlers spend almost one million dollars annually (\$947,800) on paddling trips outside their local area and another \$300,000 annually on trips within 50 miles from home. Furthermore, when asked about top concerns when on a paddling trip,

almost three-fourths of respondents in this survey reported being concerned with the quality and safety of access sites (73%) and water levels (72%).

Information on anglers obtained from the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission's (WRC) study entitled "The Economic Impact of Mountain Trout Fishing in North Carolina" also reports that in 2008 resident and non-resident mountain trout anglers spent a total of \$146 million dollars and had a total economic output of \$174 million when indirect economic effects are factored in. According to this report, Cherokee county is among the leading counties of mountain trout fishing participation, and Hatchery Supported Waters are the most popular.

The overwhelming theme in this information is that outdoor recreation is important to economic development. Communities in the Hiwassee River watershed are poised to take advantage of these economic benefits with a relatively small amount of planning, investment and cooperative effort among partners.



Trout fishing is an important economic driver in the Western North Carolina Mountains. (Photo: HRWC)

2.2 PROJECT AREA & OVERVIEW

The HRAP focuses on the North Carolina portion of the Hiwassee River Watershed in Clay and Cherokee Counties, where the basin covers approximately 640 square miles, with 11 sq. miles of Cherokee County covered in water and 6 sq. miles of Clay covered in water. Major Tributaries of the Hiwassee River in North Carolina include the Nottely River, Brasstown Creek, and the Valley River.

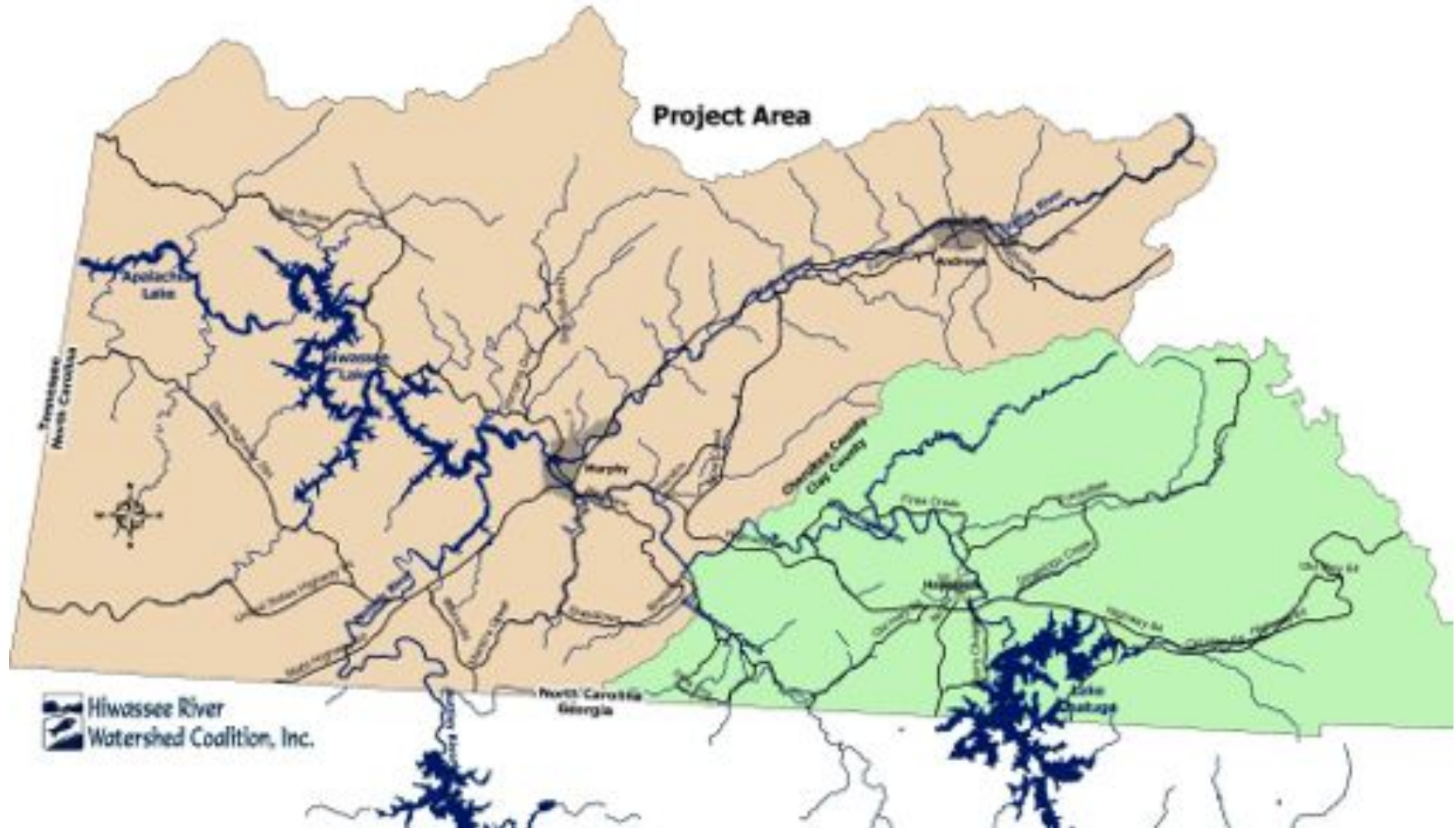


Figure 2 - Project Area Map

The two largest municipalities in the project area are Murphy and Andrews, both located in Cherokee County.

This project focuses specifically on the Hiwassee, Valley and Nottely Rivers as well as Apalachia Lake, Hiwassee Lake and Lake Chatuge. These are Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) reservoirs, and TVA manages these lakes for many purposes, including hydroelectric power production, maintaining flood control and in the case of Lake Chatuge, for the augmentation of water flows for navigation downstream.

Lake Chatuge is a 7,150 acre scenic lake that straddles the state line between Georgia and North Carolina. It is 13 miles long and contains approximately 130 miles of shoreline. Lake Chatuge is popular for sport fishing and recreational motorized boating. The current state record Walleye and Bodie bass were caught in Lake Chatuge.



This 66-lb state record Striped bass was caught in 2012 in Hiwassee Lake. (Photo: WRC.org)

Hiwassee Lake is also very scenic and is formed at the confluence of the Valley and Hiwassee Rivers with its dam located adjacent to Apalachia Lake in the westernmost corner of Cherokee County near Tennessee. The Nottely River also feeds this 6,000-acre lake, which is also popular with sport fisherman. The state record Striped bass and Smallmouth bass were caught in Hiwassee Lake, with the Striped bass weighing in at 66 pounds. The lake is approximately 22 miles long, and has around 180 feet of shoreline, much of which is in the Nantahala National Forest.

Between Lake Chatuge and Hiwassee Lake, there is an additional dam that is not owned or operated by TVA. This dam is known as Mission and it is a Duke Energy impoundment, constructed in 1924. Mission Dam is situated

approximately 14 miles below Chatuge Dam and approximately 8 miles above Hiwassee Lake. The reservoir behind Mission is approximately 61 acres at full capacity.

Apalachia Lake is the smallest TVA reservoir in the project area, totaling approximately 1,000 acres with 31 miles of shoreline. It is particularly remote and scenic, with approximately 89% of its shores within public land, most of which lies in the Nantahala National Forest. Apalachia Lake is cool and clean, and therefore used as a reference lake (one that is representative of minimally impacted lakes by which similar lakes in the region can be compared) in all 17 western NC counties and for TVA Blue Ridge Lakes.



Apalachia Lake

The Valley River originates in the Snowbird Mountains, north of Andrews, and is the only river in the project area that is not impounded and where flow is not controlled by reservoir releases; it is only limited by natural rainfall. The Valley River flows southwest out of Andrews, through the Marble Community and into Murphy and Hiwassee Lake.

The Nottely River originates in Georgia and its flow in North Carolina is controlled by TVA releases from the Nottely Reservoir, located in Union County, Georgia. The Nottely River flows generally north from Georgia into North Carolina until it enters the Hiwassee Lake west of the Town of Murphy.

2.2.1 Project Goals

Implementing the recommendations of this plan will involve many partners with various interests and priorities. As such, a primary goal of this project is to develop a plan that guides all efforts to improve and expand access in a way that best meets the diverse interests of the community. Other project goals include:

- Provide a “big picture” plan for the basin that all partners, agencies and organizations accept and can look to for guidance;
- Create lasting partnerships around the issue of recreational access;
- Contribute to the economic viability of the area by increasing recreational tourism;
- Increase public awareness of recreational opportunities;
- Provide area Chambers of Commerce and other partners with informational materials that advertise water-based recreation opportunities in the area;
- Encourage responsible use of waterways that maintains the integrity of water quality;
- Improve quality of life through enhanced recreational opportunities for Clay and Cherokee County citizens.

2.2.2 Project Phases

Phase I of the project is described as Preemptive Planning and Information Gathering. The work involved in this phase consisted of gathering and reviewing background information, paddling the Valley and Hiwassee Rivers, and conducting a visual assessment of the watershed to evaluate the current state of access. This phase also consisted of gathering and reviewing agency input on priority areas and investment strategies within the project area.

Phase II of the project centered on public outreach and gathering public input through public meetings, personal communication and coordination of an online survey. These activities are discussed in more detail in Section 4 below.

Phase III of the project involves evaluation of the results of phases I and II, development of prioritization criteria and creation of the final HRAP report.

3 Inventory of Existing Access

One of the first steps in developing this plan was to conduct an assessment of existing access points in the project area. This includes both marked and unmarked access points that are open to the public, such as county parks, USFS sites, TVA maintained facilities, etc. This does not include private, commercial marinas or private land that is commonly used without landowner permission. Photographs were taken to document each site visually, and each site was categorized as either existing, existing but needs improvement or under construction. Private land is only considered for access where private landowners have stepped forward and voluntarily offered their site for consideration.

“Existing” means that the site is operational and currently open to the public. “Existing/Needs Improvement” means that the site is functional, but there are issues that need to be addressed before the site can be truly advertised as complete and open to the public. “Under Construction” means that the site is either an active construction site or in the beginning stages of access construction. One site is listed as “Existing (New)” to highlight that it was completed during the HRAP process. Recommendations and other

improvements needed are discussed in detail in Section 5.



Duke Energy completed construction on the Mission Dam access and portage trail during the HRAP process, changing its status from “under construction” to “complete.”



3.1 Rivers

Table 1: Valley River Existing Access

River Mile	Site Name, Landowner, (Community)	Status	Uses
19.7	Valley River Park, Town of Andrews (Andrews)	Existing	Fishing, Walking Trail, Canoe/Kayak, Picnics, Handicap Access
18.7	Cherokee County Heritage Park, Cherokee County (Andrews)	Existing	Fishing, Walking Trail, Canoe/Kayak, Disk Golf, Handicap Access
14.9	Welch Farm, Land Trust for the Little Tennessee (Andrews/Marble)	Under Construction	Fishing, Walking, Canoe/Kayak, Birding
13.3	G. Forest Hargett River Access Area, Cherokee County/WNC Pacesetters (Marble)	Existing	Fishing, Canoe/Kayak
2.0	Black & Gold Drive Bridge**, Private Land & Right-of-Way (Murphy)	Existing/Needs Improvement	Canoe/Kayak
0.97	Konehete Park, TVA (Murphy)	Existing/Needs Improvement	Fishing, Handicap Access, Walking Trail, Picnic, Canoe/Kayak
0.20	Murphy River Walk & Canoe Trail, TVA (Murphy)	Existing	Walking, Canoe/Kayak Access

**Bridge is public right-of-way access, but parking area is private

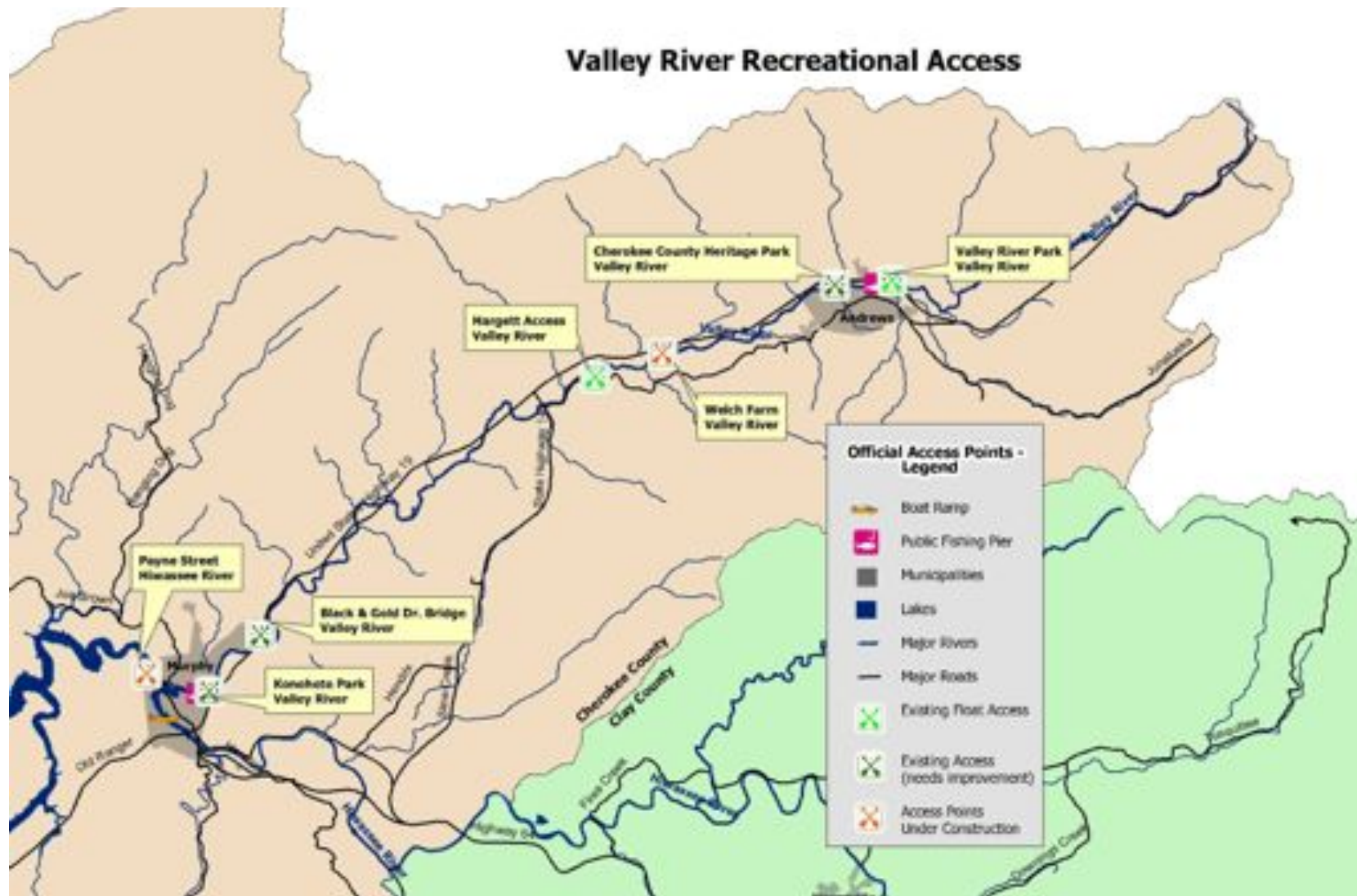


Figure 3: Map of Existing Valley River Access Locations

Table 2: Hiwassee River Existing Access

River Mile	Site Name, Landowner, (Community)	Status	Uses
121	Chatuge Aeration Weir, TVA (Hayesville)	Existing	Canoe/Kayak, Fishing
119.8	TVA Canoe Launch Public Access Area (aka "The Y"), TVA (Hayesville)	Existing	Fishing, Canoe/Kayak, Picnic
117.1	Tusquitee Road Access, WRC (Hayesville)	Under Construction	Canoe/Kayak
108.9	Sweetwater Park, TVA (Mission)	Existing	Fishing, Canoe/Kayak
106.4	Mission Dam, Duke Energy (Mission)	Existing (New)	Canoe/Kayak, Fishing, Drift Boat Launch
101.8	Wells Bridge, TVA (Peachtree)	Existing/Needs Improvement	Canoe/Kayak, Fishing
96.52	Hiwassee Street Boating Access, TVA	Existing	Motorized Boating, Canoe/Kayak
96.45	Murphy River Walk & Canoe Trail, TVA (Murphy)	Existing	Walking, Canoe/Kayak Access
95.78	Payne Street Boating Access, Town of Murphy & TVA	Under Construction	Motorized Boating, Fishing, Canoe/Kayak, Picnics, Birding, Handicap Access

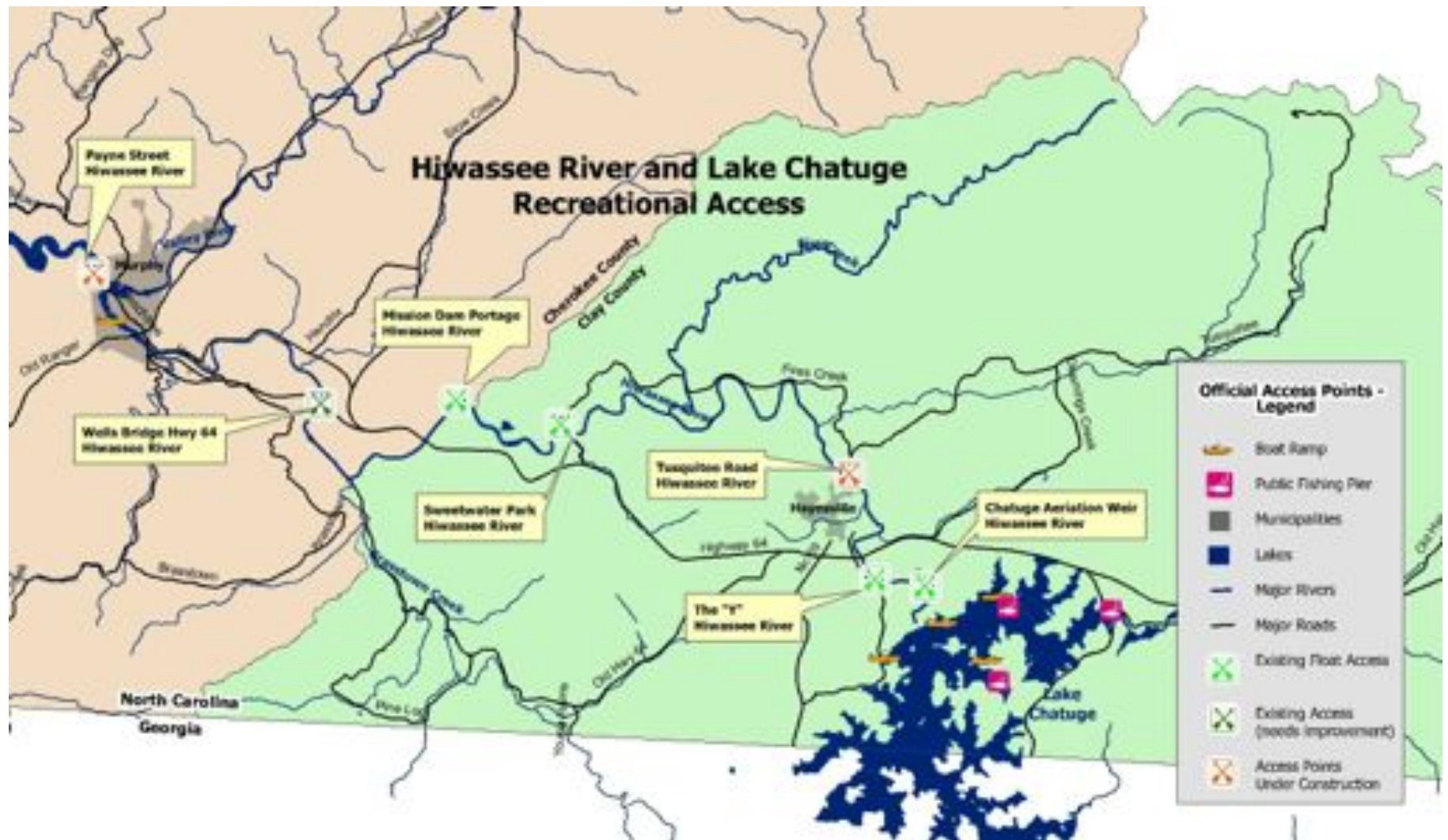


Figure 4: Map of Existing Hiwassee River Access Locations.

Table 3: Nottely River Existing Access

River Mile	Site Name, Landowner	Status	Uses
20.0	Nottely Dam (OUTSIDE PROJECT AREA), TVA	Under Construction	Fishing, Canoe/Kayak
8.5	Ranger Community Center, Cherokee County	Existing	Canoe/Kayak
4.1	Rominger Creek, USFS	Existing/Needs Improvement	Fishing, Canoe/Kayak
1.4	Caney Creek, USFS	Existing/Needs Improvement	Canoe/Kayak, Fishing, Seasonal motorized boating

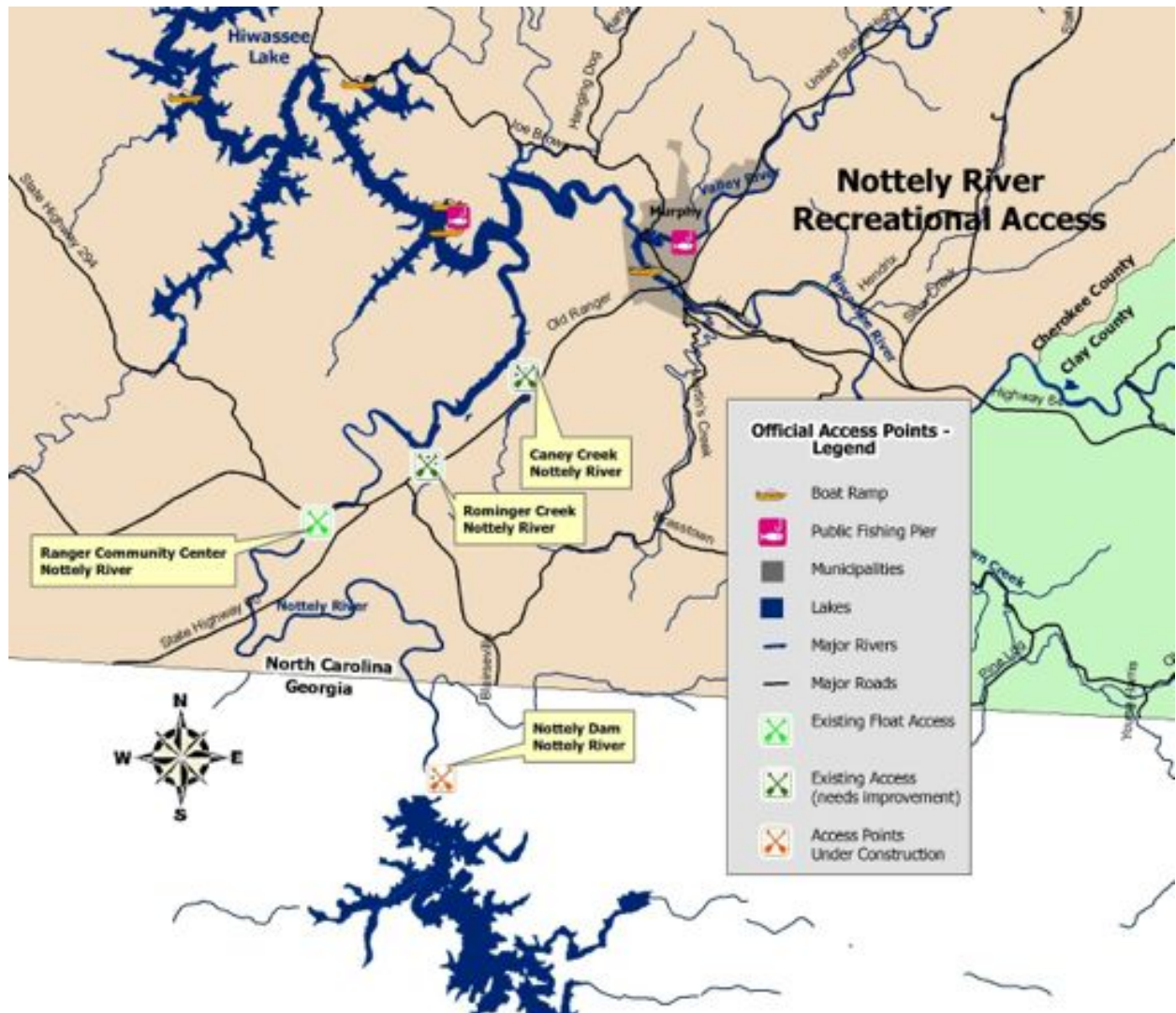


Figure 5: Map of Existing Nottely River Access Locations

3.2 Lakes

Table 4: *Apalachia Lake Existing Access*

Site Name, Landowner	Status	Uses
Apalachia Lake Boating Access Area, TVA and NCWRC	Existing	Motorized Boating, Canoe/Kayak, Fishing
Morrow Rd., USFS	Existing/Needs Improvement	Canoe/Kayak, Fishing

For a map of existing Apalachia Lake access, see Hiwassee Access Map.

Table 5: *Hiwassee Lake (and Cherokee Lake) Existing Access*

Site Name, Landowner	Status	Uses
Hiwassee Street Boating Access, TVA	Existing	Motorized Boating, Canoe/Kayak
Payne Street Boating Access, Town of Murphy & TVA	Under Construction	Motorized Boating, Fishing, Canoe/Kayak, Picnics, Birding, Handicap Access
Hanging Dog/Ramsey Bluff, USFS and NCWRC	Existing	Motorized Boating, Fishing, Hiking, Birding, Mountain Biking, Picnics, Camping
Grape Creek Boating Access Area, NCWRC	Existing	Motorized Boating, Fishing
John Taylor Road Access, USFS	Existing	Canoe/Kayak
Mickens Branch Boating Access Area, TVA & NCWRC	Existing	Motorized Boating, Canoe/Kayak
Cherokee Lake, USFS & NCWRC	Existing	Fishing, Canoe/Kayak, Picnic, Birding, Handicap Access

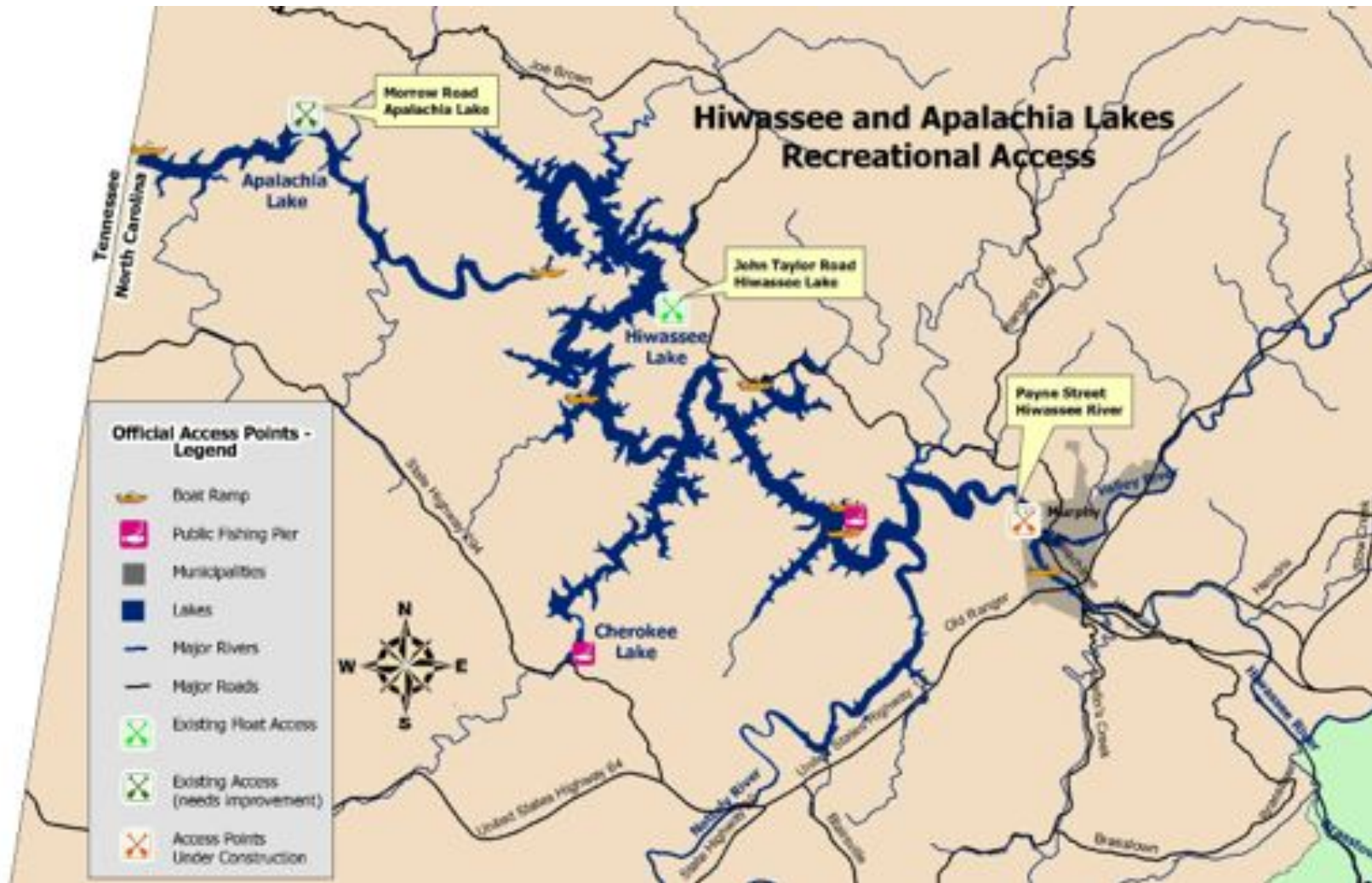


Figure 6: Map of Existing Hiwassee Lake, Cherokee Lake and Apalachia Lake Access Locations.

Table 6: Lake Chatuge (NC Only) Existing Access

Site Name, Landowner	Status	Uses
Clay County Recreation Park Public Access Area, Clay County	Existing	Swimming, Picnics, Walking Trail, Camping, Hiking
Gibson Cove Recreation Area, TVA	Existing	Motorized Boating, Fishing, Camping, Canoe/Kayak, Walking Trail
Ledford Chapel Boating Access, NCWRC	Existing	Motorized Boating, Fishing, Canoe/Kayak
Shooting Creek Public Fishing Area, NCWRC	Existing	Fishing, Handicap Access
Jackrabbit Recreation Area, USFS	Existing	Motorized Boating, Fishing, Camping, Canoe/Kayak, Picnics, Hiking, Swimming, Handicap Access, Mountain Biking
The Circle at Chatuge Dam	Existing	Motorized Boating, Picnics, Canoe/Kayak

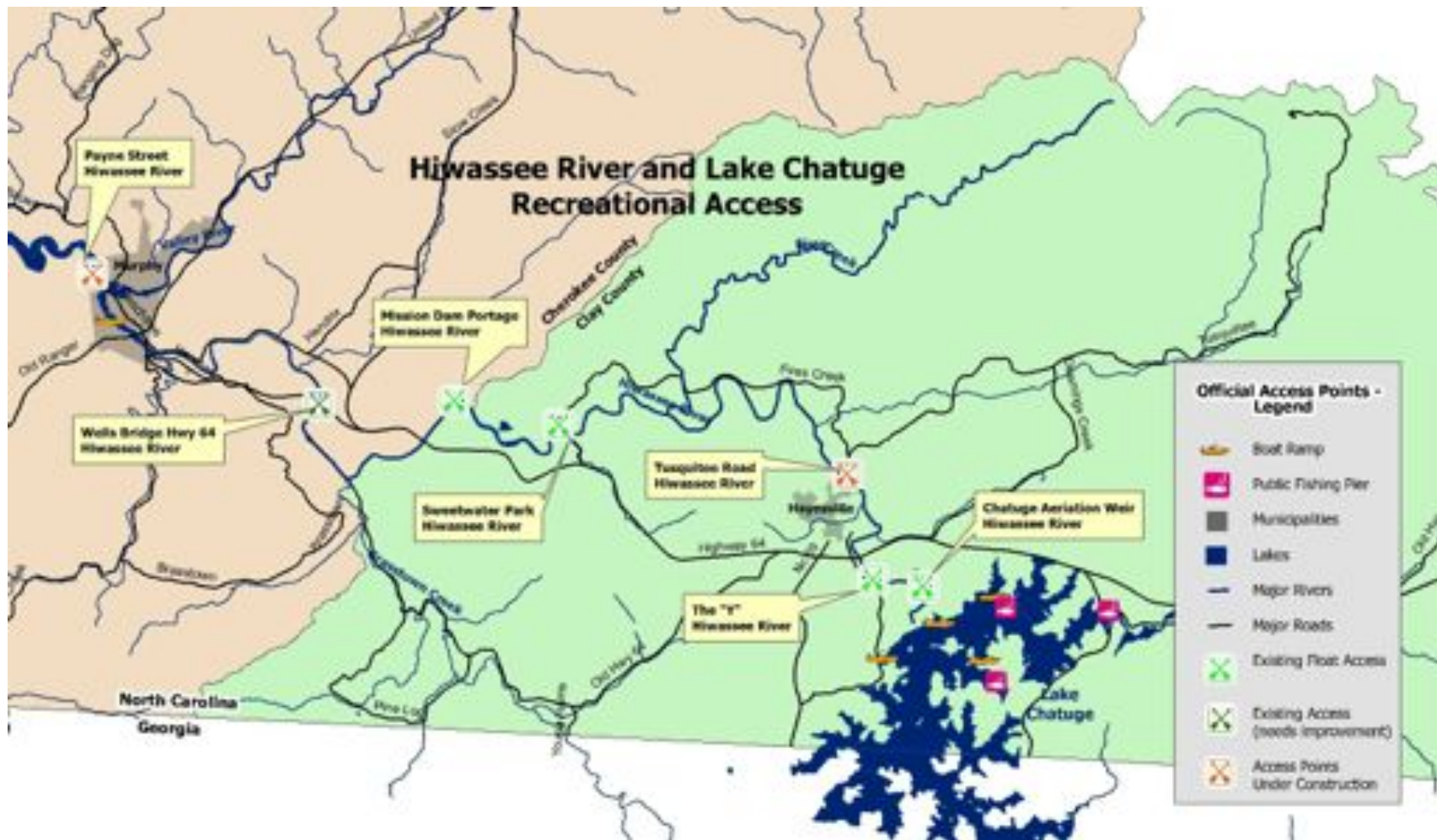


Figure 7: Map of Existing Lake Chatuge Access Locations

4 Public Input

Public involvement is vital to both the development and the implementation of this plan. People value the things they love, and one needs to experience a place in order to grow to love it. HRWC views this project as a chance to create more opportunities for people to experience and grow to love the Hiwassee River watershed, thus producing more ambassadors for the protection of this invaluable resource. This project also serves as an opportunity to build lasting relationships with project partners and encourage new ideas in the organization's work.

4.1 Methods and Results

Public input was gathered through both public meetings and an online survey developed using Survey Monkey. In November 2013, two public meetings were advertised in the Cherokee Scout, Andrews Journal and The Clay County Progress, in articles on HRWC's website and social networking sites, through HRWC's email newsletter list, and through various personal contact. Individuals and partners personally contacted include area Chambers of Commerce, tourism authorities, the local chapter of Trout Unlimited and Outfitters.

4.1.1 Survey Distribution and Participation

Surveys were distributed electronically and via personal communication. Anyone with an interest in access to the Hiwassee River Watershed was encouraged to participate in the survey, regardless of residency or recreational activity preference. However, respondents were asked to comment specifically on the North Carolina portion of the Hiwassee River and its tributaries. Hard copy surveys were distributed at each public meeting. After the meetings, the survey remained online and open for public input for one month, and the information presented in the public meetings was made available via HRWC's website. Survey reminder emails were sent to HRWC's mailing list just before the survey period ended to boost participation. A total of 82 people responded to the twelve-question survey.

A total of 24 people attended the public meetings. The first public meeting was held on Monday, November 18, 2013 at the Public Library in Hayesville with 13 people in attendance. The second public meeting was held one week later on Monday, November 25, 2013 at the Public Library in Murphy with 11 people in attendance. At each meeting, a presentation was given detailing the purpose of the project and the current state of access in the watershed. After the presentation, there was a period for open discussion and suggestions regarding access points.

4.1.2 Public Input: Meetings

Notes on comments received during the open discussion portion of the public meetings are detailed below. Words in parentheses are added for clarity.

Meeting #1 Suggestions and Comments – Hayesville, NC 11/18/2013

- What about Konehete Park/Murphy Park/Baseball Fields as a potential access location? The rec park is a suggested location, but they don't like it when you drive on the [walking] paths
- People don't know about dams and this is a [safety] problem for families
- People lack information on releases
- People need information on trip times, i.e. how long it takes to float between access points
- People are concerned about how to disseminate information to eliminate trespassing problems
- Fires creek is USFS property and something might be negotiable there
- One idea is to advertise in the paper which areas we are interested in finding new access points to see if property owners come forward
- There is interest in a walking trail above Mission Dam along the old Peavine Railroad.

Meeting #2 Suggestions and Comments – Murphy, NC 11/25/2013

- Valley put-in ideas:
 - Ball field
 - Rest area – need a footbridge to Heritage Park
- People want a 1-2 mile area designated for tubing – this could be accomplished at the area near the first bridge above Main Street. The Curtis Family owns the property [nearby] and is very interested in allowing public access there. There is a gravel bar and plenty of parking with a rocky beach. This would be a good tube take-out point.
- The town of Murphy prohibits tubing, but if they didn't, the Black and Gold Bridge site to Koneheta Park would be a good run.
- A bike trail/greenway trail from Murphy to Andrews would be nice to have
- The fishing pier at Valley River Park is too shallow for kayaks but is good for fishing
- The plan needs to include both float time estimates and river miles between points.
- The issue with releases and TVA needs to be addressed for safety and planning purposes. If you monitor the website and the actual flow they almost never match up.
- People want tubing access like Deep Creek in Bryson City. People also want signs

- that are specific to tubing to be posted (like the canoeist signs up at a few places)
- People would like to see shorter distances between a few put-ins and take-outs for tubing that are kid friendly
 - The Trout Fishing map that TDA gives out now is blank on the back. A suggested product of this study is to create a river access map to give out to tourists that could be printed on the back of the trout fishing map.
 - Some areas that are open to the public for access now do not have signage and this needs to be addressed with TDA.

4.1.3 Public Input: Survey

Survey respondents reported a wide range of residency and age groups, with people under the age of 20 apparently underrepresented in the sample data. Of the 61 people who reported where they live, 41% are from Cherokee County and 23% responded from Clay County with the remaining respondents located in other areas of Western North Carolina and other states. Kayaking/Canoeing is the most popular recreational use currently reported in the watershed.

Among the choices given regarding limits to access for recreational use, predictable water levels with regards to reservoir releases and/or TVA website information pose the biggest problem. Also, availability of a variety of put-ins and take-outs throughout the project area and information on the locations of these access points is needed by both river and lake users. People routinely said that the lack of this information limits their ability to plan trips that are suitable for their circumstances and skill.

Both lake users and river users said that more information on water levels, release schedules and access locations is a high priority for improvement. Most people (78%) reported that they would increase use of waterways in the Hiwassee River Watershed if these improvements were made.

Priority areas suggested for improvement generally trended in this order: Valley, Hiwassee and Nottely. There is a strong desire among those who commented about the Valley River to offer tubing access specifically.

4.1.4 Other Input

Ideas and comments were collected via personal communication and through open-ended survey questions to give people a chance to provide specific feedback even if they were not able to attend one of the public meetings. Many people took advantage of this opportunity to share ideas.



According to some users, low winter lake levels limit access.

Several people suggested that shorter float trip opportunities are needed. This would be arranged through careful planning of put-in and take-out locations measured by river mile and time needed for both high and low water times. Ideally, these sites should be spaced no more than 4-5 river miles apart. The comments received also provided several suggested locations for new sites, and this is discussed further in Section 6.1 below. One person mentioned that debris in waterways (fallen trees) often limits passage and creates a safety issue.

Some comments were received about expanding access on tributary streams other than the Valley and Nottely Rivers for both fishing and float trips. This is discussed further in Section 5.1.7. A few people also said that low winter lake levels limit

access. With respect to negotiating regular and/or predictable flow with TVA, it was suggested that HRWC work with other national partners such as American Whitewater to provide support.

Although this project is not necessarily focused on amenities at access points, it is notable that trash problems at access locations came up several times in the public input process. Several people reported a need for more signage about trash, more frequent pick up and more collection receptacles. There is concern that development of new access sites will lead to trash dumping, and it was suggested that sites be developed with adequate trash receptacles. Other amenity-related comments received included greater handicap access and trail maintenance needs at exiting access points.

5 Recommendations

In order to establish the Hiwassee River watershed as a destination for outdoor recreation tourism, safe and reliable access needs to be made widely available, along with



Factors Influencing Final Recommendations

information on these access locations. The recommendations of this report are informed by public input, agency priorities, HRWC priorities, and an inventory of existing use and access. Recommendations are proposed for new access sites, improvements to existing sites and public education materials needed. This report also provides suggested partner roles and responsibilities in Section 7. Funding suggestions for implementation are also detailed in Section 7.

Information gathered in the first two phases of the project was reviewed to identify the factors (if any) that limit access or create a barrier in each river section and lake in the project area and the HRAP recommendations are aimed at alleviating these issues. The following considerations were taken into account when evaluating existing site and potential site recommendations:

- **Safety** - is adequate parking available with a walking area that is located safely away from cars and roadways or can the site be improved for such?
- **Identified Need** - does the recommendation address a need or barrier specifically identified by the public?
- **Hydrologic Considerations** - Is high/low water creating a limitation for access that the site can help address?
- **Private Property and Trespassing** - Will the recommendation help reduce or eliminate trespassing problems that currently exist because there is not ample access nearby?
- **Feasibility** - Is access at the site particularly achievable or fundable?

5.1 Access

In the context of the HRAP, recreational access refers to any water-based recreational activity identified by the public and partners as desirable, however some people chose to



Cherokee County Heritage Park on the Valley River is an existing access location in the Town of Andrews that is suitable for many activities.

include comments about activities enjoyed *near* the water as well. The recommendations of the HRAP are mainly geared toward fishing and boating access (both motorized and non-motorized), however most, if not all, of the recommendations would benefit other types of recreation enjoyed near water bodies. General feedback during the public input process indicates that while lake access is important, river access is more critical at this

time. Recommendations are different for each type of water body and reflect the unique needs and circumstances for each situation.

5.1.1 Valley River

Since the Valley River is not dependent on scheduled dam releases for flow, access improvements in this area is important because access here would offer a recreational alternative when the Chatuge and Nottely dams are not releasing into the Hiwassee and Nottely Rivers. The only hydrologic limitations that exist are periods of low flow due to drought. Downed woody debris also makes safe passage difficult at times, particularly during low flow conditions, and this issue was mentioned by at least one survey participant. In particular, the middle section of the Valley River was identified by the public as the highest priority for improvement out of all the locations in the project area.

The Valley River is also the only river in the project area where a USGS gauging station exists, and this is a very important feature. Not only does it offer a way for people to monitor water levels, but it also provides potential public access, as described below. It is important to support the USGS and its efforts to maintain this facility.

Canoe/Kayak

In terms of recreational float access, a review of current Valley River access points and public input indicates that the area is not well suited for short paddling trips due to a lack of sites in large stretches of the river between Marble and Murphy. There are approximately 11.3 river miles without a public access point between existing sites at the G. Forest Hargett River Access Area and the Black and Gold Drive Bridge. This creates a situation where people must either trespass or ask a riverfront landowner for access permission if they know one. This situation is also preventing access for tourists and people who are not familiar the area.

One access point in this area would be sufficient to simply get people on the river, but paddle trip time would still be several hours when the water is low if only one new site is created. It is recommended that a minimum of two or three access points spaced no more than 4-5 river miles apart be developed in this area in order to allow for shorter paddle trips and ample access. Specific areas that should be targeted for



new access include the area *G. Forest Hargett Valley River Access Area*

near the US 19/74 Valley River overpass (near the State Highway 141 intersection, known as “the Billboards”), the Wells Road area, and the area in the vicinity of the planned Cherokee Valley River Casino.

To elaborate, a site located at the Hwy. 19/74 bridge would provide a 3.0 mile paddle distance from the nearest existing upstream access location, the G. Forest Hargett River Access Area. Coupled with a new site in the Wells Road area, this would create another 2.6-mile paddle opportunity. If only one of these points were to be constructed, there would still be floatable reaches in excess of the desired 4-mile average established for shorter float trips. Offering at least two new sites fulfills this objective as it breaks the area down into smaller sections.

While there are several private landowners in both of these areas that occasionally allow access to friends and locals, none of these landowners have offered their land for unrestricted, advertised public access. There is one identified site in the Wells Road area that might be ideal for development of formal public access, near the US Geological Survey (USGS) gaging station. The landowner, the USGS and the agricultural leasee of the land should be approached for collaboration on possible development of this site.

A third potential area for new access development is the area near the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians’ Cherokee Valley River Casino. The EBCI is one potential landowner that should be approached to discuss offering access somewhere in this vicinity because it is more cost effective if access improvements could be incorporated into initial planning and construction. This is also a promising area because it represents an overlap in tourism interests; if new access is constructed nearby, the Casino would have an additional attractant to boast to its patrons that would also further the community’s recreation tourism goals.

There are two existing Valley River access sites that are underutilized and/or potentially unsafe because they are in need of improvement. The first is the LTLT Welch Farm Property, where a gravel road was recently constructed with the assistance of NCWRC. A boat launch is also planned for construction. Once site construction is completed, the



Take-out at Black and Gold Drive is steep and difficult.

road will need to be regularly maintained and the area near the boat slide should be consistently mowed for year-round river access. Ideally, it would be good to formalize a long-term agreement for continuation of recreational access at this property with the landowner.

The second site that needs improvement is the Black and Gold Drive Bridge near the Town of Murphy. The right-of-way access under the bridge is steep and difficult

to navigate for people with canoes and kayaks. This is an important take out when the water is up in Hiwassee Lake because the lake backs up to almost this point, making the trip between this site and Payne Street on Hiwassee Lake very slow and almost without current. Because of this, the site offers versatility for paddling skill level in that it creates a break between an upstream run with rapids (as a take out location) and a slow, meandering lake paddle (as a put-in location). The Black and Gold Drive Bridge is also currently being used without landowner permission for public parking. This should be negotiated prior to development of stairs or any investment in improvements to the public right-of-way area under the bridge.

Tubing

Residents near the Town of Andrews have expressed strong interest tubing, and the issue of tubing access has the potential to strengthen efforts to improve paddling access.

Firstly, it would be best for concerned parties such as landowners, Town of Andrews officials, Chamber of Commerce and/or representative of the Tourism Development Authority to organize an additional planning gathering. This meeting should be specific to the issue of developing tubing within the Town of Andrews so that it can provide a more direct focus on tubing than the HRAP process allowed. This would also allow these groups to address the issue in a more organized fashion. The HRAP process identified one potential site offered by a private landowner to achieve the tubing access goal, however, there could be additional suitable sites and another informal planning process could help identify them.

Ideally, any new access point that is created to accommodate short tubing trips should be versatile enough to allow for canoe/kayak launches and wade fishing as well. Currently, at lower water levels, flow at Cherokee Heritage Park is unsuitable to launch canoes and kayaks. Property known simply as “the Curtis Family property,” located in downtown Andrews downstream of Heritage Park, provides an ideal access point that could be flexible enough to offer tubing as well as eliminate this hydrologic concern for paddlers.



Low flow conditions at Cherokee Heritage Park make canoe and kayak launch difficult.

The site is located just below the confluence of a small creek (Town Branch) that provides enough flow for boats to launch even when the water is lower. This site is also attractive because it would not require land acquisition due to landowner willingness to offer public access. This is an excellent opportunity that should be pursued by implementation partners.

Fishing

In terms of fishing access on the Valley River, adding two new sites for canoes and kayaks in the middle stretch of the Valley paired with improvements to access at LTLT's Welch Farm property will create new wade fishing access as well. Several people stated that they support implementation of delayed harvest on the Valley River, and this is an excellent suggestion as it also attracts tourists looking for a 'guaranteed catch' (so to speak) because the rules of delayed harvest reduce the impacts of harvest on popular stretches.

NCWRC has expressed an interest in offering a non-motorized boat slide at Konehete Park to expand on the shoreline and wade fishing access currently offered there. This was also brought up by a few paddlers during the public input process as a welcome improvement to allow for casual flat-water paddling and to reduce lake paddle by one mile for those paddling downstream from middle or upper Valley put-ins. If implemented alongside the above-described access in the vicinity of the Cherokee Valley River Casino, this would provide an additional 3.4 mile float trip and serve yet another recreational demographic.

New Access and Improvements

The following information details new sites recommended as well as improvements recommended for existing sites, listed in order from upstream to downstream.

Table 7: Valley River New Access and Improvements

River Mile	Site #	Site Name/Location	Status	Uses	Improvements/Other
18.3	1	Curtis Property, Andrews	Potential	Tubing, canoe/kayak, fishing, picnics	
14.9	2	Welch Farm, Land Trust for the Little Tennessee	Under Construction	Fishing, Walking, Canoe/Kayak, Birding	Regular maintenance of road and access path
10.3	3	Hwy 19/74 Bridge (Billboards)	Potential	Canoe/kayak, fishing	
5.9	4	Wells Road area	Potential	Canoe/kayak	Access parking should be located off the road shoulder for safety
4.4	5	Cherokee Valley River Casino Area	Potential	Canoe/kayak	
2.0	6	Black & Gold Drive Bridge	Existing/Needs Improvement	Canoe/kayak	Needs agreement with Valley Village shopping center for parking, improvement of area under bridge
0.97	7	Konehete Park, Town of Murphy/Cherokee County	Potential	Canoe/kayak	Add canoe/kayak structure

A map of proposed new sites and site suggested for improvement can be found in **Appendix A**.

Fishing Recommendations Summary

1. NCWRC implementation of a Delayed Harvest Trout Water on a section of Valley River;
2. Addition of boat slide at Konehete Park; and
3. Addition of 2-3 sites in the middle Valley section to allow for float fishing.

5.1.2 Hiwassee River

The Hiwassee River ranked second highest among the public as a priority for access improvements. Hydrologic conditions as well as lack of public access sites that allow for shorter trips are creating barriers for recreational access. Additionally, Hiwassee River users suggested that a few minor improvements at various existing sites would open up the river to recreational use for a greater variety of watercraft.

Canoe/Kayak

Currently, TVA releases from Chatuge Dam into the Hiwassee River are unpredictable. According to many river users, the information on TVA's website about scheduled releases often does not correlate with real time flows and release time. This has a crippling effect on virtually every water-based recreational activity because safety, navigability and trip planning all hinge on the accuracy of this information. The first step to broadening access on the Hiwassee River is to negotiate a fixed recreational release schedule with accurate website information in partnership with TVA so that locals and visitors have the basic information needed to plan trips in advance.

One major step in improving recreational access that should be celebrated occurred during the HRAP planning process. A small amount of property just downstream of the Tusquittee Road bridge was acquired by the NCWRC and is currently under



Sweetwater Park on the Hiwassee River.

development. This is a very important site as it created the first short paddle section of the Hiwassee from the TVA Canoe Launch Public Access Area (also known as “the Y”), measuring approximately 2.7 river miles. Before this site was acquired, the total distance between the TVA put-in and the next downstream public access site was a whopping 11 miles, creating an inaccessible gap almost as big as the aforementioned middle Valley gap.

At least one added access point is recommended on the Hiwassee

between the new Tusquittee Road access and Sweetwater Park. Approximately 8.25 river miles remain between Tusquittee Road and Sweetwater Park, which again poses a problem for casual users looking for shorter river trips. Unfortunately, this has also created a trespass situation at Lance Cove Road that could be remedied by the addition of a new public access point near the confluence of Fires Creek and the Hiwassee River.

Land on either side of the mouth of Fires Creek is part of Nantahala National Forest, but there is currently no legal access to these tracts from Fires Creek Road. The US Forest Service should keep working to obtain this access or to acquire additional land in the vicinity with which to provide road access. Paddle-in campsites could also be developed at this location.

Improvements at the Payne Street Boat Ramp in Murphy are underway for the construction of a new motorized boat ramp. It is recommended that a separate non-motorized boat ramp be constructed away from motorized boat areas for canoes and kayaks at this location. See Section 5.1.5 for more details about this recommendation.

Fishing

A few comments about the state of access on Hiwassee River included suggestions for improving existing sites to allow for launching of flat bottom boats such as drift boats and johnboats to enhance fishing opportunities. In order to accommodate these types of boats, an access area that is no closer than 50 feet and no more than 150 feet away from the river is preferable. Ideally, a set of stairs and a wide boat slide would be available as well. Lastly, the parking area and any turn-around areas need to be large enough to accommodate trailers. With these parameters in mind, TVA's Chatuge Weir Access could better accommodate drift boat launch if the gate at the site were to be moved back to allow for a trailer to be backed in close enough to launch the boats. Until there is an adequate downstream take-out for johnboats above Mission Dam, launching of johnboats at this location is not ideal.

Another ideal site for this type of craft launch is the Wells Bridge/Crisp Access site. The current site, located on the south side of the highway, is small with limited parking, which makes trailer access difficult. The area under the new 64 bridge, however, has a large NCDOT right-of-way area that provides ample space for parking multiple vehicles and trailers. If the NCDOT is willing to partner on this effort, improving this site is more practical and most likely less expensive than improving the site on the other side of the highway.



The right-of-way area under the new 64 bridge provides ample parking and is well suited for vehicles with trailers.

Mission Dam access improvements were also mentioned in a fair amount of comments that seemed to be directed at fishing access. However, the public input phase of the HRAP development was conducted just as construction began on improvements at Duke's Mission Dam site, and many people were unaware of this. The new site is now completed and provides wonderful access to the river just below the dam while offering a much-needed portage around the dam.

A few comments were received regarding access near the confluence of Brasstown Creek and the Hiwassee River. While this is private land, it is mentioned here because the landowner currently allows unrestricted public access. This is a popular area for swimming and shoreline fishing and as such, the area is somewhat impacted. Located just downstream from this confluence is a set of whitewater rapids, and whitewater

enthusiasts are attracted to the area as a put-in because the paddle down from Mission Dam is a little slow. Furthermore, historical Cherokee rock carvings are located here, and those interested in Native American history and art are often drawn to the area.

Depending on feasibility, this would be an appealing area to improve access in order to reign in impacts to shoreline vegetation and trash problems while opening up access for a variety of recreational purposes.

Recommendations: New Access and Improvements

The following chart and map details new sites recommended as well as improvements recommended for existing sites, listed in order from upstream to downstream.

Table 8: Hiwassee River New Access and Improvements

River Mile	Site #	Site Name/Location	Status	Uses	Improvements/ Other
111.7	8	Fires Creek Recreation Area Access	Potential	Canoe/kayak, fishing, swimming	Access should be located closer to river than current recreational access
103.5	9	Brasstown Creek Area	Existing/Needs Improvement	Canoe/kayak, fishing, Cherokee history	
101.8	10	Wells Bridge/New 64/Crisp Access	Existing/Needs Improvement	Canoe/kayak, fishing, drift boat access	

A map of proposed new sites and site suggested for improvement can be found in **Appendix A**.

Fishing Recommendations Summary

1. TVA releases should be more regularly scheduled;
2. Expand USFS Fires Creek Recreation Area to allow easier confluence access;
3. Determine feasibility and interest in acquiring and/or improving private, unrestricted access near Brasstown Creek confluence with Hiwassee River.

5.1.3 Nottely River

The Nottely River ranked almost as high as the Hiwassee River as a priority for improved access. Almost a third of respondents said they “never” use the Nottely River for recreation and this is linked to lack of access. Of the 27 survey respondents who said that access on the Nottely River is insufficient for the activities that they enjoy, 22 of them checked fishing as an activity they participate in. While recent efforts to increase access by the NCWRC and Cherokee County Government have helped, the two greatest barriers

for people on the Nottely remain simply having access to the upper reaches and having reliable flow.

Canoe/Kayak

Like the Hiwassee River, flow in the Nottely is controlled by TVA reservoir releases. Safe, reliable access hinges upon accurate and timely flow information. As such, the first step in providing people with access here is to negotiate a regular release schedule with TVA and to request that TVA provide accurate, up-to-date flow information online so that people can safely plan outings.

In partnership with Union County Government, TVA is in the process of constructing a new recreational access point located in Georgia below Nottely Dam. Though located outside of the HRAP project area, this provides an upper access point that is critical for virtually all types of recreation currently enjoyed on the Nottely River downstream in North Carolina. However, there remains approximately 11.5 river miles between the dam and the next downstream access point that is completed and open to the public, located at the Ranger Community Center. Ideally, another access point in between these two is needed to fulfill the identified need for access points located closer together for shorter float trips. Fortunately, the NCWRC is currently working to provide an access point in this area.



Ranger Community Center Boat Slide on the Nottely River.

Cook Bridge Road is currently being used as a “middle Nottely” access point under the bridge right-of-way because it is located approximately 5.1 miles downstream of the Nottely dam put-in. However, parking is **very** limited and river users are parking along a narrow shoulder on the side of the road, creating a dangerous situation for pedestrians, residents and other motorists.

NCWRC is working to secure an agreement on land adjacent to the bridge that would provide safe parking and a constructed access to the river. If for some reason this effort is unsuccessful, another property nearby should be identified and pursued by NCWRC, HRWC and/or other partners because this is a known and popular location for current recreational users that is centrally located between existing access points.

Downstream of the Ranger Community Center access are two sites, both of which need improvement, particularly with regard to parking. Rominger Creek (also known locally as



Rominger Creek Access at low lake levels, Nottely River.

the Caney Creek Trestle) is located approximately 4.4 miles downstream where the Nottely starts to slow down and back up when Hiwassee Lake is up. This is an important take out for that reason because it offers a take-out for users that prefer a little more current and a put-in location for users that prefer a slower moving, meandering lake-style paddle or float fishing trip.

Parking at this site is limited to a small strip of land along the road owned by the USFS. It is

recommended that a formal agreement be put in place with USFS to allow parking and minor improvements to this area. Additionally, light trail maintenance or the construction of a small boardwalk would reduce trampling of vegetation, especially when the lake levels are low.

The next downstream access site is the Caney Creek access point, located approximately 2.7 miles downstream from Rominger Creek. Access is established here, but at high lake levels there is insufficient parking, creating a potentially unsafe situation if people try to park along the road or in front of a Cherokee Co. convenience/recycling center located adjacent to the site. It would be prudent for HRWC and other partners who are interested in improving this site to organize a formal meeting with Cherokee County and nearby landowners to discuss options for addressing this problem.

Fishing

The Nottely is also a priority of the NCWRC to improve access so that float fishing is more available because wade fishing is difficult at many of the access sites that currently exist. Approximately half of the people who are interested in fishing said that the Nottely does not have sufficient access. Almost the same number reported that reliable water releases are important for recreation on the Nottely River.

Recommendations: New Access and Improvements Summary

The following information details new sites recommended as well as improvements recommended for existing sites, listed in order from upstream to downstream.

Table 9: Nottely River New Access and Improvements

River Mile	Site #	Site Name/Location	Status	Purpose	Improvements/ Other
14.93	11	Cook Bridge Road Area	Potential	Canoe/Kayak, Fishing	Parking should be located away from roadway; structure for launching canoes or kayaks is needed
4.13	12	Rominger Creek	Existing/Needs Improvement	Canoe/Kayak, Fishing	Parking and Trail improvements; signage
1.43	13	Caney Creek	Existing/Needs Improvement	Canoe/Kayak, Fishing	Parking for high water levels in lake

A map of proposed new sites and site suggested for improvement can be found in **Appendix A**.

Fishing Recommendations Summary

1. TVA releases should be more regularly scheduled;
2. Addition of a site in the Cook Bridge Area;
3. Parking improvements at Rominger Creek and Caney Creek sites;

5.1.4 Apalachia Lake

Access to Apalachia Lake is limited to two motorized boat ramps. The first is located just below the Hiwassee Lake dam and is usually open to the public and fully functional. The second, located on the north side of the lake near the Tennessee State line, is frequently closed and extremely inconvenient for residents in North Carolina to access. There is also an unofficial pull-off along Morrow Road that offers an unmarked access point for fishermen and canoe/kayak launch, but a person would almost have to know it is there in order to notice it.

Over half of the people who provided input during phase II reported that they seldom, if ever, use Apalachia Lake for outdoor recreation. If adequate access can be developed and marketed, Apalachia Lake could be successfully promoted as an oasis for outdoor recreation in a setting that allows for solitude that other reservoirs cannot offer. This is especially important in light of recent NCWRC trout stocking programs that were initiated on the lake in 2012.

Canoe/Kayak and Motorized Boating

Very little of Apalachia's shoreline is private land and there are no commercial marinas. It has comparatively low motorboat traffic due to the presence of a singular boat ramp that is continuously open and functional, which is located the farthest from the Town of Murphy of all the ramps on Hiwassee Lake and Apalachia Lake. These two factors combined make it the safest opportunity for non-motorized boating.

There is one unofficial put-in for small boats that is currently being used located on USFS land along Morrow Road. To truly label this small boat access as public, the site could be improved and advertised as such with signage. There is a small gravel ramp down to the water's edge that appears to have been previously improved that already provides good access. The parking area is currently a small shoulder area located off the side of the road. Since Morrow Road receives very little traffic, parking could remain along this shoulder with improvements to the area to allow enough space for multiple vehicles at once. Further improvements at this site should be developed under the guidance of a qualified design professional.

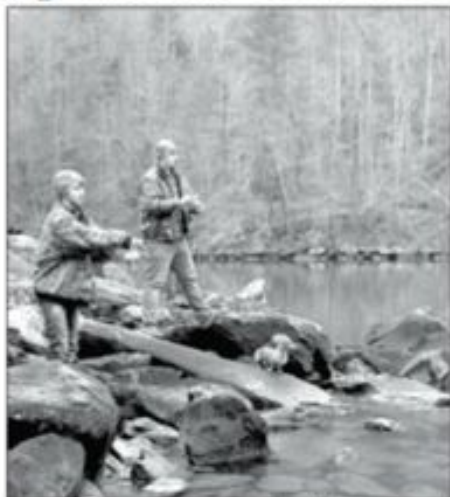


Access to Apalachia Lake along Morrow Road could be improved to provide adequate space for multiple types of recreational use. (Photo: HRWC)

Fishing

Fishing on Apalachia Lake is limited by the access described above. Shoreline fishermen are relegated to the area near the unofficial pull-off access along Morrow Road. If this area is developed for small boat access, it has the potential to displace or disrupt the few fishermen that use this shore area. If a pier at this location or another pull-off can be developed to space these uses farther apart, it might reduce the effect that increased small boat use has on fishermen, if any. At this time, however, demand does not warrant the development of a shoreline-exclusive fishing access point nor another motorized boat launch. Beginning in 2015, Apalachia Lake is expected to receive trout designation from the NCWRC, and the agency has been stocking the lake since 2012 with trout. Once this occurs, use will likely increase.

Apalachia: Could become county's trophy trout fishery



Blake Hamby (left) and Tyler Taylor, both of Hiwassee Dam, cast into Apalachia Lake below Hiwassee Lake Dam on Sunday, while fellow fisherman Ed Long's dog, Bud, looks on. Hamby finished the afternoon with two lake trout, one 18 inches and the other 19 inches long.

Continued from page 1B of trout since stockings began, but has noticed other species of fish benefiting as well.

"With more trout being there, it makes the other fish that are already in the lake bigger," said Hamby. "It gives the bass more to eat and makes everything bigger. There are way more trout than there used to be, but there are also some really big smallmouth bass in there, too."

Hamby, who caught an 18-inch trout and a 19-inch trout in 20 minutes on Sunday - fish he called "lake trout" - fishes all over Cherokee County, but said his favorite public fishing hole is the one closest to home.

"I'd rather fish Apalachia Lake than any other," said Hamby, who lives about five miles from the mouth of the lake. "This is the best trout water in the county."

The only downsides to the lake are the lack of fishable shoreline and lack of boat ramps. The majority of the lake can only be accessed by boat, and there is only one reasonably-accessible boat ramp in the county, the one below Hiwassee Lake Dam at the TVA Powerhouse.

"There is another boat ramp at the lower end of the lake near Apalachia

Dam," said Woody. "But it's really rough and you have to go into Tennessee to get to it. It's not a very good ramp at all."

For those without a boat, fishing from the shore is limited mainly to the waters immediately below the Hiwassee Lake Dam near the Powerhouse.

The lack of access to the lake, however, could prove to be a asset.

With less access comes less anglers, which results in less number of fish taken. It helps keep a steady and healthy quality and quantity of fish in the lake.

And it's showing. According to Woody, not only will Apalachia Lake become a trout fishery in 2013, but it's already showing signs of becoming the best big-trout waters in the county, and maybe even the region.

"To this point, from what we've seen, it's going to be a phenomenal fishery," said Woody.

"It could end up being the best trophy fishery in all of western North Carolina."

Anyone interested in participating in N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission's trout derby/trout tag for Apalachia Lake, please contact David Woody at 828-322-3125.

FISHING LAKE APALACHIA

WHERE TO GO: For shoreline fishing and boat ramp access, go to the TVA Powerhouse below the Hiwassee Lake Dam off Hiwassee Dam Access Road.

HOW TO GET THERE: From Murphy, take U.S. 84 West/U.S. 24 West, turn right onto N.C. 284 West, travel 6.7 miles and turn right onto Hiwassee Dam Access Road. The TVA Powerhouse road will be about five miles ahead on the left.

WHAT TO KNOW: It's not designated trout water, yet, so an in-shore fishing license is the only license required. Should the lake become designated trout waters, a trout stamp will be required. The state crest trout is seven fish.

WHEN TO GO: Check the Hiwassee Dam Lake generation schedule before going. The release of water from the dam creates a rapid rise in the water level and a strong current that can be hazardous to shoreline anglers and boats. For the generation schedule, visit <http://www.tva.gov/Power/13.htm>.

WHAT TO USE: If using a spin cast reel and reel, use steel line. Rapala, spinner and Rooster Tails. If fly fishing, which is easier from a boat than the shoreline, use big streamers.

An excerpt from a recent Cherokee Scout article on fishing in Apalachia Lake highlights NCWRC efforts to improve fishing opportunities.

Camping

Primitive, paddle-in campsites were suggested by several people during the phase II public comment period of the HRAP. The large proportion of public land on Apalachia Lake makes it scenic and offers primitive pack-in/pack-out camping as an alternative to maintained campground-style campsites easily accessible by car, opportunities for which are more abundant in the watershed. If paddle-in campsites can be developed and properly maintained, the Hiwassee River Watershed would boast a unique attraction that is suitable for families and more seasoned outdoor enthusiasts alike, and there are not many opportunities on nearby destination rivers that can offer the remoteness and solitude of Apalachia Lake.

Recommendations: New Access and Improvements Summary

The following information details new sites recommended as well as improvements recommended for existing sites, if any.

Table 10: *Apalachia Lake New Access and Improvements*

Site #	Site Name/Location	Status	Purpose	Improvements/ Other
14	Morrow Rd.	Existing/needs improvement	Canoe/Kayak, Fishing	Parking area improvements, signage
15	Apalachia Lake Public Land	Potential	Paddle-in primitive camping sites	Access permission from USFS and TVA, designated campsites; signage

A map of proposed new sites and site suggested for improvement can be found in **Appendix A**.

Fishing Recommendations Summary

1. Improve Morrow Road access;
2. If future demand warrants, further improve the area with a designated fishing pier and/or additional shoreline access.

5.1.5 Hiwassee Lake

There are currently eight (8) access points on Hiwassee Lake if both the high and low water motorboat ramps are taken into consideration at the Hanging Dog Recreation Area. As such, it is not surprising that public input indicated less interest in developing more access on Hiwassee Lake. Although roughly the same number of people listed Apalachia Lake and Hiwassee Lake as the first priority for improvement, fewer people indicated that they are unable to enjoy the recreation that they prefer on Hiwassee Lake than did those who enjoy Apalachia Lake. Therefore, there are more recommendations for improvements rather than new access sites on Hiwassee Lake.

Canoe/Kayak and Motorized Boating

Funding provided to the Town of Murphy by the NC STEP program has allowed for improvements to be made at the Payne Street Boat Ramp and Fishing Pier Recreation Area, which are currently under construction. According to HRWC and public input, in times of high traffic, this area is unsafe for non-motorized boaters to share. It would be ideal to create a separate small boat slide near the motorized boat ramp to solve this issue.

A few people indicated that improvements could be made at the Hanging Dog Recreational Area near a primitive camping loop (loop B) that is already established which would allow for canoe/kayak access and other recreational uses. Specifically, the area could be upgraded to include a small boat access site and/or launch which would allow greater access to Hanging Dog Creek. Like Apalachia Lake, this improvement has the potential to attract recreational users to the watershed that want primitive areas with less frequent public use where a variety of recreational interests can be pursued in relative

solitude. In order to accomplish this, USFS and NCWRC need to be approached for agreement on the development changes and new access locations at the existing site.

A small cul-de-sac area that ends at USFS land and at an access point on the Hiwassee Lake is located on John Taylor Road. This site is relatively unknown, and the public would benefit from signage that indicates allowed use and rules for such use. Signage is currently up along roadways directing people toward the site, but there is not a marquee at the actual access point.

According to personal communication received by HRWC, some Hiwassee Lake users have indicated a new access site located on the south side of the lake (near the confluence with Nottely River and the lake) would shorten driving times and create more convenient access for motorized boat fishing. While not absolutely necessary for adequate access, this suggestion should be considered. USFS seed orchard property has been suggested for this purpose, and would obviously require USFS cooperation and development of a new boat ramp.

Fishing

According to input received by HRWC, there is growing interest to have shoreline access along Joe Brown Highway near Beaverdam Creek where the road closely follows the shoreline on the north side of the Hiwassee Lake. No roadside areas that are large enough and which could be made safe for pedestrians were located. However, the addition of a canoe/kayak launch at Hanging Dog recreation area would provide additional fishing access that might help meet this need while providing fishing access to Hanging Dog Creek. No additional comments were received with regard to specifically improving fishing opportunities that were not related to motorized boating access, which is discussed above.

Other Uses

Hiwassee Lake does not currently have a public swim beach and public input has indicated that this is a desirable amenity. It is recommended that HRWC work with agency and local partners to identify a suitable location for the addition of a swim beach.

Recommendations: New Access and Improvements Summary

The following information details new sites recommended as well as improvements recommended for existing sites, if any.

Table 11: Hiwassee Lake New Access and Improvements

Site #	Site Name/Location	Status	Purpose	Improvements/ Other
16	Payne Street Boat Ramp and Fishing Pier Recreation Area, Murphy	Under Construction	Motorized Boating, Fishing, Canoe/Kayak, Picnics, Birding	Separate non-motorized boat launch would alleviate safety issues during peak use
17	Hanging Dog/Ramsey Bluff, USFS and NCWRC	Existing/Needs Improvement	Motorized Boating, Fishing, Birding, Mountain Biking, Camping, Swimming, Canoe/Kayak	Install non-motorized boat launch near camping loop, create swimming area, signage
18	John Taylor Road Access, USFS	Existing/Needs Improvement	Fishing, Canoe/Kayak	Marquee at site
19	South side of Hiwassee Lake near confluence with Nottely River	Proposed	Motorized Boating, Fishing, Canoe/Kayak	Develop new access with ramp for motorized boats and non-motorized boats, shoreline fishing

A map of proposed new sites and site suggested for improvement can be found in **Appendix A**.

Fishing Recommendations Summary

1. Consider possible addition of south side lake ramp in the area of USFS Seed Orchard.
2. Adding a canoe/kayak launch at Hanging Dog Recreation Area would allow access for floating fishing in Hanging Dog Creek when the lake is full.

5.1.6 Lake Chatuge

A large proportion of people who provided public input felt that current Lake Chatuge access is adequate. Of the people who did comment, most listed areas that are already developed with facilities that support multiple recreational uses and almost nobody provided specific information on areas that need improvement there. Consequently, no recommendations for improvement on Lake Chatuge have been developed at this time.

5.1.7 Other Streams

Personal communication provided during phase II public input suggests that there is growing interest among paddlers and fishermen to explore tributary streams other than the Valley and Nottely Rivers. Suggested areas include:

- Tusquittee Creek (Boating)
- Hanging Dog Creek (Boating)
- Beaverdam Creek (Trout Fishing)

As a follow-up project, HRWC should consider pursuing a future effort to explore recreational opportunities on other creeks once implementation of the HRAP is complete.

5.2 Public Education

Easily one of the most frequently cited barriers to access is the availability of information about access locations, skill level needed, trip distances and times, and release schedules. It is clear that any attempt to improve access must be coupled with a robust, organized public education component. The recommendations below are for materials and concepts that would be useful even now without any improvements to access.

5.2.1 Printed Material

Ideally, one of the simplest tools to create would be an area map with access locations detailed both visually and in writing. The most useful version of this concept would be a waterproof double-sided map depicting river access points that is durable enough to be taken along on river trips. Example maps from other rivers can be found in **Appendix B**.

It was also pointed out during the public input phase that the Cherokee County TDA currently distributes a paper trout fishing access map that is blank on one side. A small access map should be developed in coordination with the TDA to utilize this space. If a similar opportunity exists in Clay County it should be pursued. Further development of printed materials is not recommended because it is costly and web-based materials (described below in Section 5.2.2) will serve the area just as well if not better.

5.2.2 Websites

Part of HRWC's implementation strategy in the HRAP is to earmark funds for the development of public education tools. Currently, the best place to invest this funding is in the creation of a website for each river in the project area that provide access information, trip time estimates, skill required, release information, etc. Websites are an ideal tool because they can be updated with very little cost (after the initial investment) as access grows and they are helpful to tourists looking for information when planning trips.

The following site names have already been secured and development should begin immediately upon approval of the HRAP:

- paddlehiwassee.com
- paddlenottely.com
- paddlevalley.com

These sites should also link to TVA's release schedule websites. Again, the success of this effort will be enhanced by TVA's cooperation in updating their website to reflect accurate schedules and real-time flow information.

Since rivers are dynamic, another benefit of these websites is improved safety with the ability to update hazard information for paddlers and other users. It would be difficult for one website manager to track safety conditions in all areas of the watershed, so it is recommended that any websites developed incorporate a feature that allows individual paddlers to report hazardous conditions or other safety information directly to the site. This information could then be more easily disseminated to a broader audience and would be very beneficial to novice paddlers or those unfamiliar with the area.

Once completed, area chambers of commerce, tourism development boards and outfitters should provide links to the new paddle websites.

5.2.3 Other

Once the most pressing access challenges have been resolved, it is recommended that HRWC and its partners apply for National Water Trail Designation on the Valley, Nottely and Hiwassee Rivers. According to the National Water Trails System website, the National Water Trails Program has been established to protect and restore rivers, shorelines, and waterways and conserve natural areas along waterways as well as increase access to outdoor recreation on shorelines and waterways.



*National Water Trail
Designation Logo*

The following best management practices are outlined as a priority of the program:

1. **Recreation Opportunities:** The water trail route has established public access points that accommodate a diversity of trip lengths and provide access to a variety of opportunities for recreation and education.
2. **Education:** The water trail users are provided with opportunities to learn about the value of water resources, cultural heritage, boating skills, and outdoor ethics.
3. **Conservation:** The water trail provides opportunities for communities to develop and implement strategies that enhance and restore the health of local waterways and surrounding lands.
4. **Community Support:** Local communities provide support and advocacy for maintenance and stewardship of the water trail.
5. **Public Information:** The public is provided with accessible and understandable water trail information, including details for identifying access and trail routes; cultural, historic, and natural features; hazards; and water quality. The water trail is promoted to the community and broad national audience.
6. **Trail Maintenance:** There is a demonstrated ability to support routine and long-term maintenance investments on the water trail. Facilities are designed, constructed, and maintained by incorporating sustainability principles.
7. **Planning:** Maintain a water trail plan that describes a vision, desired future conditions, and strategies to strengthen best management practices.

These goals overlap heavily with the goals of the HRAP and make this program a natural fit, and it would likely enhance the marketability of the area. Further information on the benefits of water trail designation and selected case studies ([including one in North Carolina](#)) can be found at the [National Park Service's website](#).

Local tourism and economic development boards should also consider developing a cooperative marketing strategy to attract recreational tourism once a variety of access and recreational opportunity is available and informational materials exist. Due to the location of the Hiwassee River watershed, it would be appropriate and advantageous to advertise in nearby metropolitan hubs such as Atlanta, Raleigh, Chattanooga, Nashville and Charlotte, as several of these cities are currently among the fastest growing places in America.

6 Priorities & Implementation

Prioritization criteria were developed to help organize the information collected in phases I and II efficiently. Rivers in the project area are scored based on seven criteria and lakes are scored on six. As described in Section 5, the HRAP recommendations are based on information gleaned during the public input process, identified needs/access challenges and partner priorities. The same information is used to prioritize sites, and the criteria can be described as follows:

Public Priority – The site is considered a public priority if it lies within an area identified for improvement by multiple survey participants.

Agency Priority – Certain State and Federal agencies have funds set aside to work on access in the project area, but these agencies have organizational priorities. If an agency's site preference overlaps with a HRAP recommended site, then a point is awarded.

HRWC Priorities – HRWC has been working with the community for several years on the issue of access and the organization has its own internal priorities. If HRWC's site preference overlaps with a HRAP recommended site, then a point is awarded.

Needs and Challenges Identified by the Public – The HRAP process identified several issues with regard to access. The top challenges include trespassing, safety, and a desire for shorter float trips (rivers only). If any of these issues can be alleviated by the recommendation, then a point is awarded for each.

Fundability and Feasibility – The site is considered fundable if a funding source for the improvement is already identified. If a site does not have an identified funding source, but it has willing landowners and/or enthusiastic partners ready to work on it, then it is considered feasible. Only one point was given for either of the two criteria in this category.

Hydrologic considerations are not included in the ranking because shorter distances between put-in and take out locations is a priority for all rivers in the project area, and improvements suggested for this purpose should address this issue regardless of flow conditions, i.e. impounded or free-flowing. Also, a blanket recommendation was made

for the Hiwassee and Nottely Rivers to work to establish consistent release schedules with the TVA. The full ranking matrix can be found in **Appendix C**.

6.1 Priorities

The following chart details a list of recommendations, organized from highest priority to lowest for each water body in the project area.

Table 12: Prioritization of Recommended Site Improvements

<i>River Mile</i>	<i>Site #</i>	<i>Site Name</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Landowner</i>
		VALLEY RIVER			
10.3	3	Hwy 19/74 Bridge (Billboards)	Proposed	HIGH	Private
5.9	4	Wells Road area	Proposed	HIGH	Private
2	6	Black & Gold Drive Bridge	Existing/Needs Improvement	HIGH	NCDOT/Private
18.3	1	Curtis Property, Andrews	Proposed	MED	Private
14.9	2	Welch Farm, Land Trust for the Little Tennessee	Under Construction	MED	LTLT
0.97	7	Konehete Park, Town of Murphy/Cherokee County	Proposed	MED	TVA
4.4	5	Cherokee Valley River Casino Area	Proposed	MED	Private
		HIWASSEE RIVER			
111.7	8	Fires Creek Recreation Area Access	Proposed	MED	USFS, Private
103.5	9	Brasstown Creek Area	Existing/Needs Improvement	MED	Private
101.8	10	Wells Bridge/New 64/Crisp Access	Existing/Needs Improvement	MED	NCDOT
		NOTTELY RIVER			
14.93	11	Cook Bridge Road Area	Proposed	HIGH	Private
1.43	13	Caney Creek	Existing/Needs Improvement	MED	USFS
4.13	12	Rominger Creek	Existing/Needs Improvement	LOW	USFS
		APALACHIA LAKE			
N/A	14	Morrow Rd.	Existing/needs improvement	MED	USFS, TVA, NCDOT
N/A	15	Apalachia Lake Public Land	Proposed	LOW	USFS
		HIWASSEE LAKE			
95.78	16	Payne Street Boat Ramp, Murphy	Under Construction	MED	Town of Murphy
N/A	17	Hanging Dog/Ramsey Bluff, USFS and NCWRC	Existing/Needs Improvement	MED	USFS
N/A	19	South side of Hiwassee Lake near confluence with Nottely River	Proposed	MED	USFS
N/A	18	John Taylor Road Access, USFS	Existing/Needs Improvement	LOW	USFS

7 Partners, Implementation & Funding

Successful completion of this plan will rely on partner support, a robust public outreach effort and the availability of funding. HRWC cannot be solely responsible for implementation of these recommendations, however, HRWC is the ideal organization to lead and facilitate partner discussions. The first step in implementation is to reach out to potential new partners identified in the HRAP process and evaluate interest. Partners and suggested roles are discussed further below.

7.1 Potential Partners & Partner Roles

The following list of partners represents a starting point for implementation and proposed partner roles. Many of the following partners are already involved in this effort, and any who are not should be approached and invited to participate. This is not an exclusive list and should be adapted as necessary during the course of implementation.

Table 13: Potential Partners and Roles

<i>Partner</i>	<i>Role</i>
American Whitewater	Provide support for TVA release negotiations
Andrews Chamber of Commerce	Marketing and public education assistance, funding and general implementation support.
Andrews Valley Initiative	Provide community support and contacts to assist with implementation.
Cherokee County Chamber of Commerce	Marketing and public education assistance, funding and general implementation support.
Cherokee County Government	Provide funding and general support for implementation. Also key landowner.
Cherokee County Tourism Development Authority	Marketing and public education assistance, funding and general implementation support.
Clay County Government	Provide funding and general support for implementation.
Clay County Travel & Tourism	Marketing and public education assistance, funding and general implementation support.
Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians	Provide general support for implementation, also possible funding.
Hiwassee River Watershed Coalition	Lead partner on implementation and coordinating partner efforts.
Land Trust for the Little Tennessee	Key landowner and potential easement holder for new sites on private land.
Local Outfitters	Marketing and public education assistance, funding and general implementation support.
Local Paddling Clubs	Marketing and public education assistance, funding and general implementation support.
NC Department of Transportation	Key landowner, potential funding source
NC Wildlife Resources Commission	Key partner in funding and coordinating with other agencies.
Southwestern Commission (Region A Council of Governments)	Provide funding and general support for implementation.
Tennessee Valley Authority	Critical partner for release and public education recommendations. Also key landowner.
Town of Andrews	Provide funding and general support for implementation.
Town of Hayesville	Provide funding and general support for implementation.
Town of Murphy	Provide funding and general support for implementation.
Trout Unlimited - Local Chapter	Marketing and public education assistance, funding and general implementation support.
US Forest Service	Key landowner, potential funding source
WNC Pacesetters	Marketing and public education and general implementation support.

7.2 Implementation and Timeline

A more specific timeline for implementation should be set collaboratively with agreement from partner organizations and agencies, funders and landowners. Generally, highest priority should be pursued first and lowest priority sites last, except where cases of particular feasibility or fundability make a lower priority site exceptionally easy to execute. A reasonable goal would be to implement two new site recommendations per year until all objectives have been accomplished.

With regard to public education, the highest priority recommendation that can be accomplished quickly and have the biggest impact is the development of paddling information websites, as discussed in Section 5.2.2. This task should be pursued right away since funding is already available. A printed access map is also a high priority, however, this should not be completed until final access decisions are made with partners and the sites are constructed. This would also be an opportune time to work on National Water Trail Designation.

Although environmental impact assessment of proposed sites was not part of the scope of this project, it is a high priority of HRWC and its partners to complete the tasks outlined in this plan in a way that does not impact rare, threatened, endangered and sensitive freshwater and plant species, as well as sensitive or rare habitats and natural communities. This could be accomplished by reviewing the State of North Carolina's Natural Heritage Program rare species inventory, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's critical habitat and species datasets, and other assorted species data collected by North Carolina's DENR, EEP and WRC. Since Clay and Cherokee Counties are also rich with Native American history, it would be prudent to review cultural heritage sites and archaeological assessments before beginning any improvement project.

7.3 Potential Funding Sources

Several potential funding sources have presented themselves during the course of HRAP development. Nevertheless, there are additional potential sources that if pursued and successfully secured, could make implementation more rapid and successful. The following information is not exhaustive by any means, but presented rather as a potential starting point to aid in HRAP implementation.

Federal

National Parks Service Active Trails Program - The Active Trails program promotes healthy living by literally getting people out and active on the trails -whether hiking, kayaking, snowshoeing, or volunteering to improve existing trails or build new ones.

US Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration Recreational Trails Program (RTP) - The Recreational Trails Program provides funds to the States to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both non-motorized and motorized recreational trail uses.

State

North Carolina State Parks - The mission of the state parks system is to conserve and protect representative examples of the natural beauty, ecological features and recreational resources of statewide significance; to provide outdoor recreational opportunities in a safe and healthy environment; and to provide environmental education opportunities that promote stewardship of the state's natural heritage.

North Carolina Parks and Recreation Trust Fund - Provides matching grants to local governments for parks and recreational projects to serve the public.

North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) – Confirmed source of funding for access construction, land acquisition and other activities related to enhancing access for recreational fishing.

Local

Andrews Chamber of Commerce – Mission is to improve the economic, civic, environmental, cultural, industrial, educational, agricultural, commercial, professional, recreational, and travel and tourism interest of the area.

Cherokee County Chamber of Commerce – Mission is to foster, nurture and promote business opportunities in Cherokee County while improving economic growth.

Cherokee County Tourism Development Authority (TDA) – Mission is to promote tourism and travel in order to develop and enhance the quality of life for citizens of Cherokee County.

Clay County Chamber of Commerce – A consortium of businesses in Clay County interested in developing and promoting business opportunities.

Clay County Travel and Tourism Authority – Organization that promotes tourism in Clay County to enhance economic growth in the community.

Private/Other

Cherokee Preservation Foundation (CPF) – Private Foundation whose mission is to preserve the native Cherokee culture, protect and enhance the natural environment, and create appropriate and diverse economic opportunities in order to improve the quality of life for the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and their neighbors in western North Carolina.

National Forest Foundation (NFF) – Non-profit organization chartered by Congress, official funding partner of the USDA National Forest. Engages Americans in community-based and national programs that promote the health and public enjoyment of the 193-million-acre National Forest System, and administers private gifts of funds and land for the benefit of the National Forests.

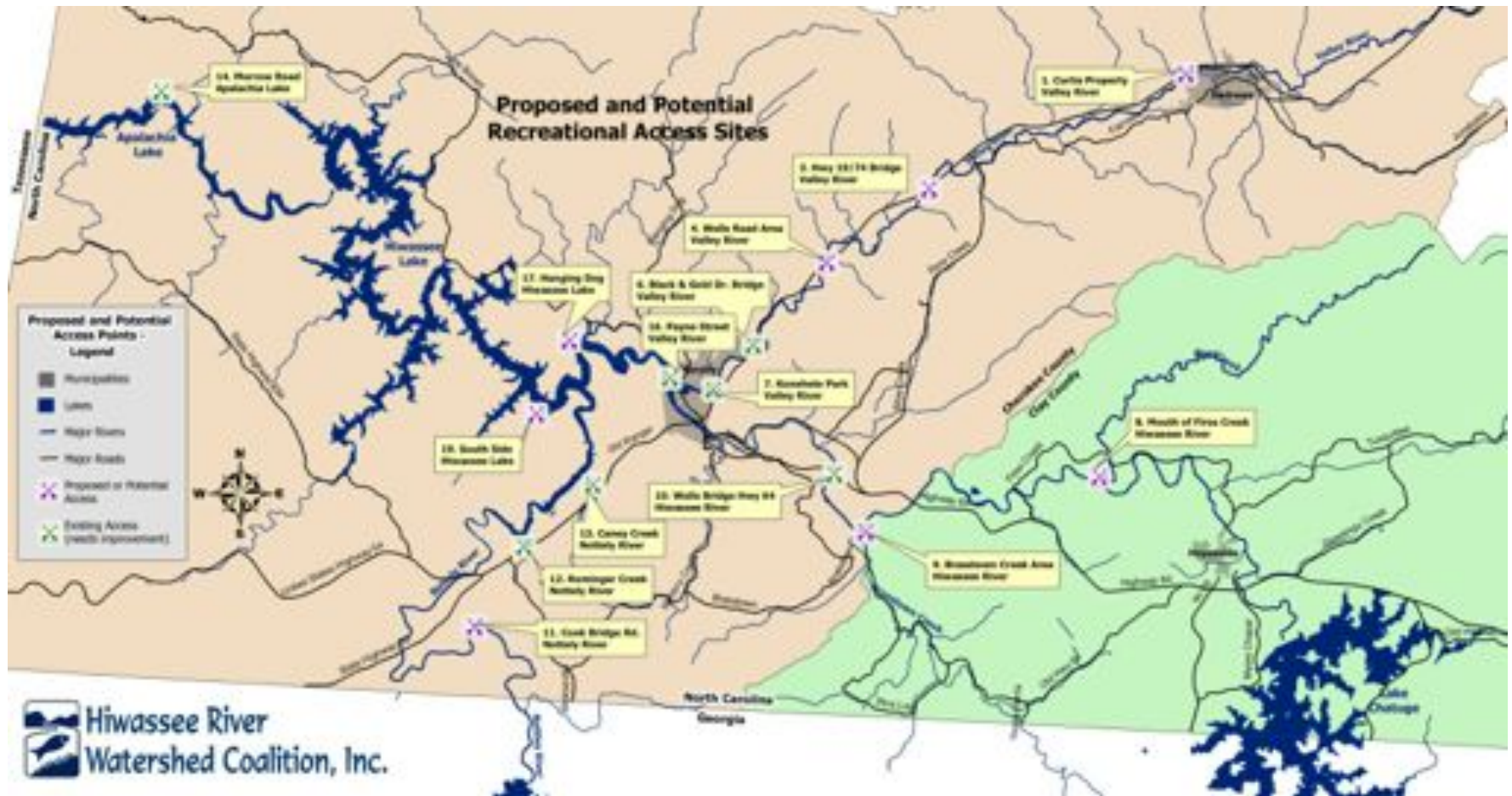
Tourism Cares Worldwide Grant Program - Tourism Cares is a nonprofit organization, funded primarily by the tourism industry, which is dedicated to preserving the travel experience for future generations.

8 Resources

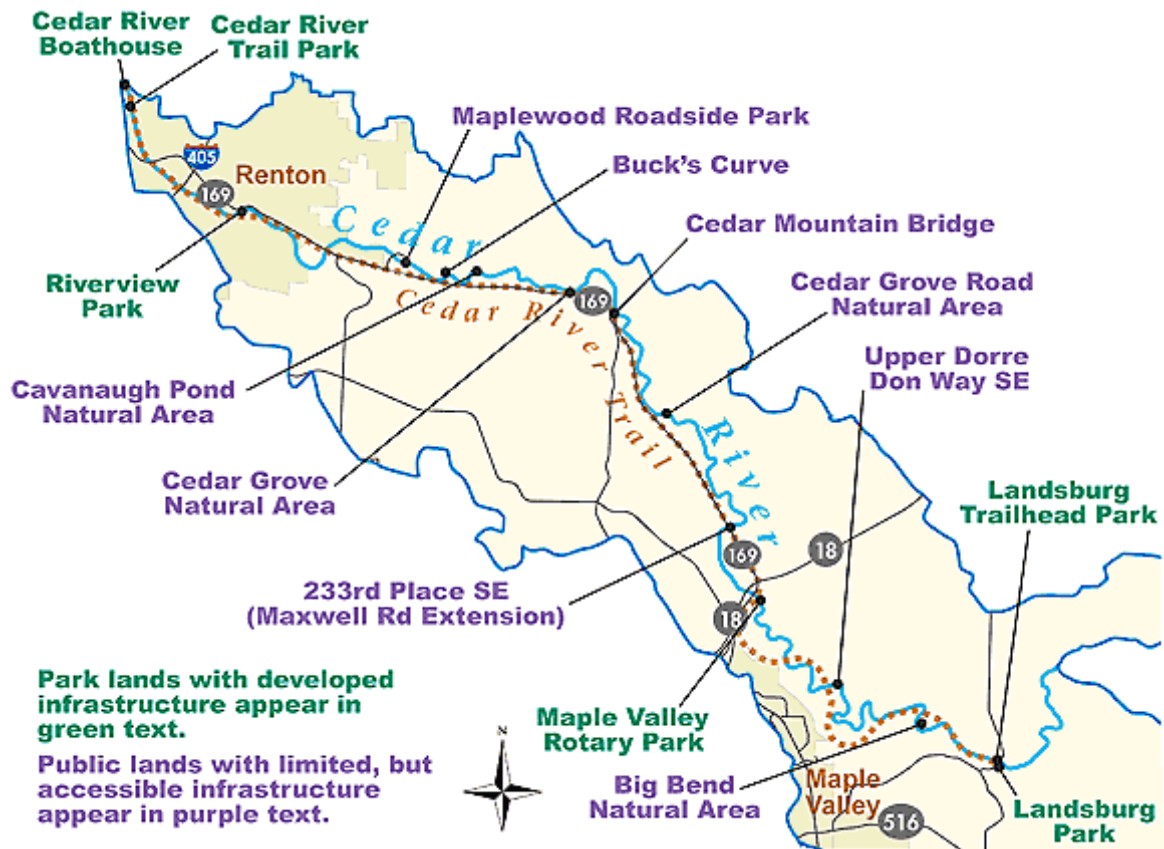
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9 Appendices

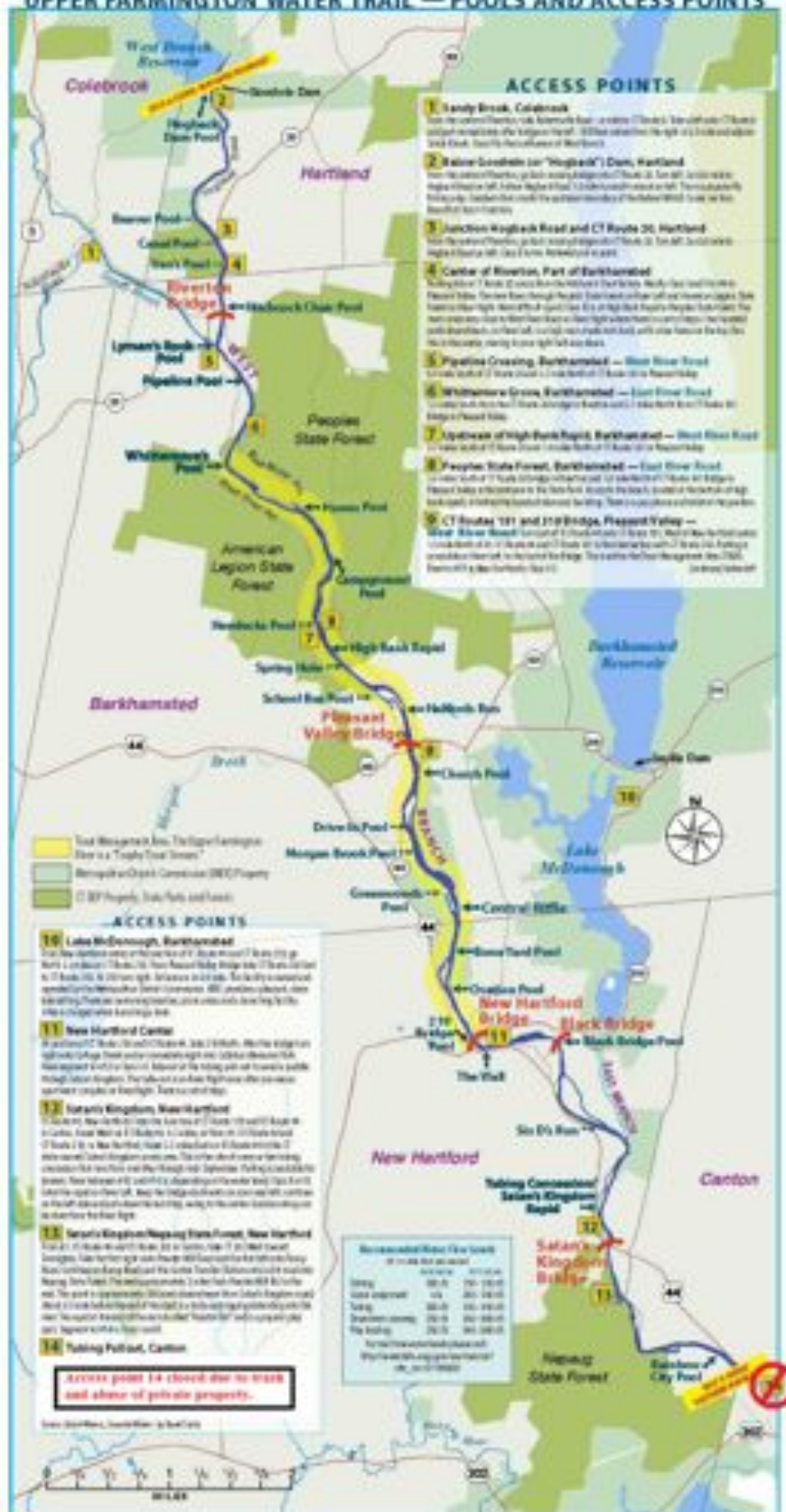
Appendix A: Map of Proposed New and Potential Access Sites



Appendix B: Example River Access Maps



UPPER FARMINGTON WATER TRAIL — POOLS AND ACCESS POINTS



Appendix C: Site Recommendations Ranking Matrix

<i>River Mile</i>	<i>Site #</i>	<i>Site Name</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Public Priority?</i>	<i>Agency Priority?</i>	<i>HRWC Priority?</i>	<i>Alleviate safety issue?</i>	<i>Alleviate trespass issue?</i>	<i>Fundable or Landowner support?</i>	<i>Provide short trip?</i>	<i>RANK/TOTAL</i>
18.3	1	Curtis Property, Andrews	Proposed	X				X	X	X	MED/4
14.9	2	Welch Farm, Land Trust for the Little Tennessee	Under Construction	X		X			X	X	MED/4
10.3	3	Hwy 19/74 Bridge (Billboards)	Proposed	X	X	X		X	X	X	HIGH/6
5.9	4	Wells Road area	Proposed	X		X	X	X		X	HIGH/5
4.4	5	Cherokee Valley River Casino Area	Proposed			X	X			X	MED/3
2	6	Black & Gold Drive Bridge	Existing/Needs Improvement	X		X	X		X	X	HIGH/5
0.97	7	Konehete Park, Town of Murphy/Cherokee County	Proposed	X	X				X	X	MED/4
111.7	8	Fires Creek Recreation Area Access	Proposed	X		X		X		X	MED/4
103.5	9	Brasstown Creek Area	Existing/Needs Improvement	X			X	X		X	MED/4
101.8	10	Wells Bridge/New 64/Crisp Access	Existing/Needs Improvement	X	X	X			X		MED/4
14.93	11	Cook Bridge Road Area	Proposed	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	HIGH/7

4.13	12	Rominger Creek	Existing/Needs Improvement			X				X	LOW/2
1.43	13	Caney Creek	Existing/Needs Improvement		X	X	X			X	MED/4
N/A	14	Morrow Rd.	Existing/needs improvement	X		X	X		X	N/A	MED/4
N/A	15	Apalachia Lake Public Land	Proposed	X		X				N/A	LOW/2
95.78	16	Payne Street Boat Ramp, Murphy	Under Construction		X	X	X		X	N/A	MED/4
N/A	17	Hanging Dog/Ramsey Bluff, USFS and NCWRC	Existing/Needs Improvement	X	X	X			X	N/A	MED/4
N/A	18	John Taylor Road Access, USFS	Existing/Needs Improvement						X	N/A	LOW/1
N/A	19	South side of Hiwassee Lake near confluence with Nottely River	Proposed	X	X				X	N/A	MED/3

Rank Scale:

1-2 Points = Low Priority

3-4 = Medium Priority

5-7 = High Priority