



With patience and persistence, paddlers and hikers in the Deep River region can be rewarded with glimpses of wary animals and birds.

From top to bottom:

- Red-tailed hawk
- River otters
- Green heron
- Bobcat



TLC's mission is to protect important open space — stream corridors, forests, wildlife habitat, farmland, and natural areas—to help keep our region a healthy and vibrant place to live and work. TLC is a private, nonprofit land trust serving Chatham, Durham, Johnston, Lee, Orange and Wake counties.

Since 1983, TLC has protected 10,000 acres in scores of sites across the Triangle region. These sites enhance the quality of life in the Triangle by protecting wildlife habitats, water quality, recreation areas and open space.

TLC is a member-supported non-profit organization. To support TLC or for more information, please visit our website at www.triangleland.org or contact us at:

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Photo credits:

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- Historic mill: TLC file
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- Bald eagle: Karen Laubenstein/USFWS
- Endor Iron Furnace: Sonke Johnsen

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DEEP RIVER

Paddling Guide



Welcome to the Deep River region in Chatham and Lee Counties. Explore the Deep River and journey through a mosaic of farmland, deep forest and small towns with colorful pasts. Despite its path through the rapidly developing North Carolina Piedmont, the Deep River and its valley endure as a home for wild places, a haven for wildlife and a reservoir of historical curiosities.

Deep River

The Deep flows 125 miles from its headwaters near High Point, joining the Haw River near Moncure to form the Cape Fear. The section of the river that divides Chatham and Lee counties is a popular paddling destination, offering public access points that allow for manageable daytrips. Experienced paddlers, novices and families alike enjoy this serene waterway lightly dashed with Class 1 rapids. This guide explores the 37-mile section of the river extending from Glendon-Carthage Road in Moore County to the confluence of the Deep and Haw.

River Time

Seated deep in its steep banks (the Deep is named for this, not the depth of its water), mostly narrow and enclosed by forest, the Deep River holds visitors with a quiet, natural embrace.

Mature floodplain forests with beech, birch, sycamore and oak tower over the river banks. Buckeye and pawpaw fill in the understory. Trout lily, mayapple, jewelweed and violets cover the forest floor when not overrun by the invasive plant *Microstegium*.

More plentiful than canoes, river otter, muskrat and beaver ply the river. Elusive coyote and bobcat range the floodplain forests with white-tailed deer and raccoon. Turtles and harmless water snakes abound, seldom distracting keen-eyed anglers who cast for bass, catfish, bluegill and sunfish.

A menagerie of birds uses the Deep's vital nesting and foraging corridors, from great blue heron to osprey to belted kingfisher to bald eagle. Pileated, hairy and red-bellied woodpeckers hammer throughout the day, while barred and great horned owls hunt through the night. Migratory songbirds color the spring and summer, visiting from tropical climes to breed. Look and listen for prothonotary warbler, ovenbird, wood thrush, scarlet tanager, Louisiana waterthrush and yellow-billed cuckoo.

Human History

Prior to European settlement, several eastern Siouan tribes lived in the region: Eno, Occaneechi, Shakori, Sissipahaw, and Sara. Historians have discovered remnants of their camps and villages and stone fish traps. The arrival of European settlers in the mid-1700s marked the decline of the Native American presence, and much of this history has been lost.

Early settlers lived off the land, farming in fertile bottomlands and building grist and saw mills on the river. They harvested hardwoods for timber and tapped longleaf pines for tar, pitch and turpentine. By the 1850s most of the floodplain forests had been logged.

Mining and related industries came to the region in the mid-1800s. Coal mining dominated, with several mines operating from 1850 to 1930 to exploit the state's largest coal deposit, the Deep River Coal Field near Cumnock. Mine explosions, flooding and the Great Depression ended the era. Iron production boomed briefly and left a legacy—the Endor Iron Furnace—a charcoal-fired blast furnace on the banks of the Deep that produced pig iron for the Confederate war effort.



Before the advent of a good road system in North Carolina, the Deep was a critical route for transporting goods to market. But the river's rapids, falls and shallow water made travel to Fayetteville and other downstream markets difficult. From the late-1700s to the mid-1800s several companies attempted to improve navigation by building locks and dams; they abandoned their efforts when the area's iron and coal deposits proved unprofitable.

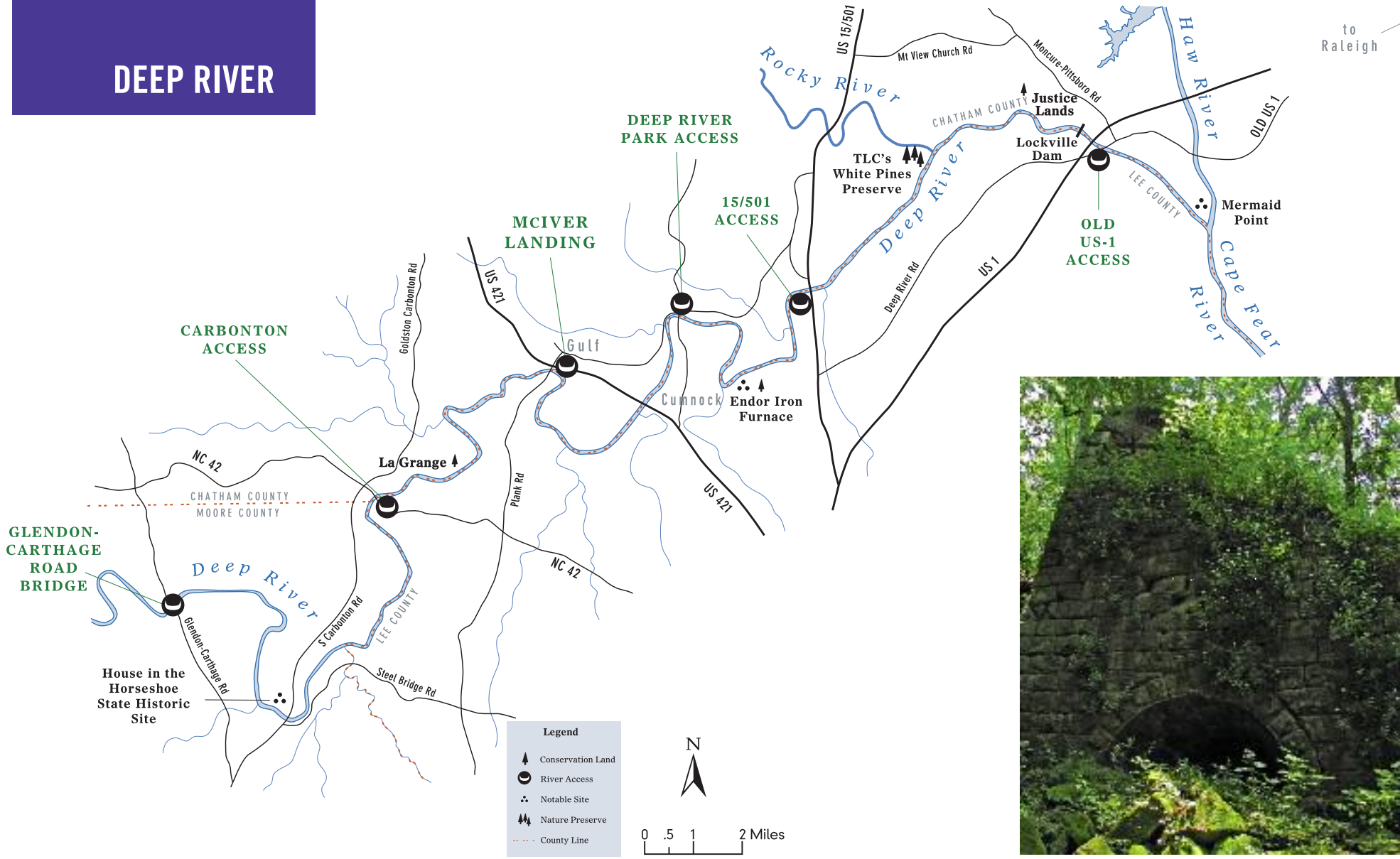
Conservation Story

To date, Triangle Land Conservancy has protected almost 3,000 acres along the Deep River in Chatham and Lee counties. TLC's flagship preserve, White Pines, overlooks the confluence of the Deep and Rocky rivers, sheltering disjunct populations of white pine and other mountainous species.

TLC's Deep River Campaign in 2000 stimulated conservation in the area, raising funds to conserve the 308-acre La Grange Riparian Reserve near Carbondon, McIver Landing Canoe/Kayak Access in Gulf, and 426 acres surrounding the Endor Iron Furnace. In 2003, TLC acquired the 760-acre Justice Lands near Moncure (since transferred to state ownership), and has since added two tracts to bring this conservation assemblage to more than 900 acres.

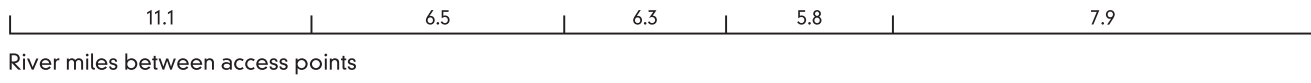
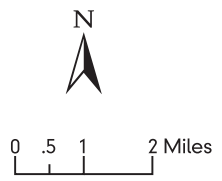
In 2007, the N.C. General Assembly authorized adding the Deep River State Trail to the State Parks System. A state trail provides an opportunity to link conservation lands with recreational opportunities and cultural resources. This canoe/paddle trail with public access sites may originate near Randleman Lake Dam and continue downstream to the confluence of the Deep and Haw rivers, linking conservation lands to recreational and cultural attractions. The trail could eventually be expanded into a regional land and water trail system with connections to the N.C. Zoological Park, Raven Rock State Park and beyond. State-owned property, along with some TLC holdings, could serve as the first public access areas on the state trail.

DEEP RIVER



Legend

- ▲ Conservation Land
- River Access
- ⋯ Notable Site
- ▲▲ Nature Preserve
- County Line



to Raleigh

Map Design: McMullen Design

Padding Tips and River Access Information

Glendon-Carthage Road Bridge to Carbonton Access (11.1 mi.) Difficult access at put-in. Little parking available. Steep bank on the right, a rope is useful. (Left bank is posted private property.) Mile 2.3: Class II rapids, with a two-foot drop. Mile 5.2: House in the Horseshoe State Historic Site at river left. Take-out for Carbonton Access is downstream right of NC 42 bridge.

Carbonton Access to Mclver Landing (6.5 mi) Carbonton Dam has been removed and a park at the old dam site located directly east of the NC 42 bridge offers boat access. A few Class I rapids in this section. TLC's La Grange Riparian Reserve extends from mile 1.4 to mile 4.0. Take-out for Mclver Landing is downstream left of the Plank Road bridge.

Mclver Landing to Deep River Park (6.3 mi) TLC owns and manages this river access off US 421 South, just south of the intersection with Plank Road. Mile 0.3: Rock from left bank narrows the channel, creating Class I rapid under an overhanging willow. Mile 4.2: Beware of logjams which frequently collect on the US 421 bridge piers. Mile 5.3: Village of Cumnock is on the right. Take out for Deep River Park is downstream left of the Camelback Bridge.

Deep River Park to US 15/501 (5.8 mi) Park entrance is on R. Jordan Road at the intersection of Rosser Road and R. Jordan/Everett Dowdy roads. Mile 2.7: Old navigation lock creates the only rapid of this section (Class I). Rock outcrop just below the rapid offers a rest stop and land access to Endor Iron Furnace (a quarter-mile walk along the river bank). Mile 3.0: Impressive remains of Endor Iron Furnace, visible from the river only when the leaves have fallen. Take-out for US 15/501 is river right just below the 15/501 bridge.

US 15/501 to Old US 1 (7.9 mi) {Check the USGS gauge website for "Deep River at Moncure" — minimum flow to run this stretch is 200 cfs.} Access is on the Lee County side from a small road that runs parallel to US 15-501 South. Mile 3.0: TLC's White Pines Preserve is on the left from here to the confluence with the Rocky River (mile 3.8). Downstream of Rocky River, for about 2 miles, several Class I-II rapids through rock gardens and over small ledges. Mile 5.5: Justice Lands on left. Mile 6.1: Rock garden rapids are fairly constant for 0.7 miles. Mile 7.3: Stay back from the Lockville Dam!

Water flows over the dam and it can be particularly dangerous with high water. Stay away from the millrace on the left. Best to portage the dam on the right. Take out just above the dam and carry a short distance along a rough path, then drop boat down to put in below the dam. A long rope would be helpful for lowering the boat. May want to carry the boat further downstream to avoid a stretch of rocks near the dam.

Take-out is upstream right of the Old US 1 bridge (the second bridge after portaging the dam). It is on private property, but is not posted for trespassing. Access is on the Lee County side (west) from a dirt road that leads through the woods to a ramp.

This information was compiled using:
Ferguson, Paul. *Paddling Eastern North Carolina*. North Carolina: Pocosin Press, 2002.

USGS gauge website:
<http://waterdata.usgs.gov/nc/nwis/current/?type=flow> (scroll down to Deep River).

House in the Horseshoe State Historic Site, a.k.a. the Alston House, still bears the scars from a 1781 Revolutionary War skirmish that is reenacted every year.

La Grange Riparian Reserve, a 308-acre TLC preserve with about 2.5 miles of forested water quality buffer on the Deep; was part of the La Grange farm that dates to the 1700s.

Mclver Landing, a TLC-owned boat access area, is named for a prominent family in the area; contains the stone foundation of Gulf Mills, the first modern roller mill in Chatham County (circa 1900).

Gulf, originally "The Gulph," this thriving 19th century community was named by early boatmen for an unusually deep section of the river where boats could be turned around.

Deep River Park, home of the historic Camelback Bridge (pictured above) built in 1908 to span the Cape Fear River at Lillington then moved in 1930 to Cumnock. Today the bridge is closed to automobiles and preserved by the Deep River Park Association.

Cumnock was originally called Egypt. Locals changed the village's name to Cumnock (for a mining town in Scotland) after a deadly mine explosion in 1895 killed 44 coal miners.

Endor Iron Furnace (pictured right), a 35-foot-high, charcoal-fired blast furnace produced iron for the Confederate war effort and was at the heart of mid-19th century Deep River industry. The furnace stack is on the National Register of Historic Places.

White Pines, TLC's flagship nature preserve, is a forested expanse at the junction of the Rocky and Deep Rivers. This unique natural area, open to visitors year-round, offers a slice of the mountains in the heart of the Piedmont.

Justice Lands, a TLC conservation assemblage of more than 900 acres near Moncure, could become the first node of the new Deep River State Trail.

Lockville Dam, built of stone, is the only portion of the 19th century Deep River lock and dam system that remains today.

Mermaid Point, where the Deep and Haw join to form the Cape Fear. Legend has it that mermaids swim from the Atlantic Ocean to this sandy spit where they soak in the sun, wash the sea salt from their hair, and sing.

