

Lower Haw River State Natural Area and the Bynum Beach Haw River Access Area (Chatham County)

The Lower Haw River State Natural Area is 1,022 acres along the Haw River from just above Bynum, NC downstream to Jordan Lake. Until 2001, this area was the Haw River Division of Duke University's expansive forest network. With the help of Triangle Land Conservancy, the land was purchased by the state and became part of the NC State Parks system. TLC assisted in the donation of the one-acre Bynum Beach Access Area to Chatham County as well as in raising funds to develop and maintain a canoe access on site.



Getting There

Lower Haw River Trail, [southern trailhead](#): A gravel parking lot is located off the eastbound lane of US 64, just east of the bridge. To reach the trail, walk downhill toward the river and pick the trail up under the bridge.

Lower Haw River Trail, [northern trailhead](#): From US 15-501 north of the bridge over the Haw River, turn east on Durham-Eubanks Road and stay on it as it becomes Bynum Church Road. There's parking just below the trailhead. The trail begins at the gate at the upper end of the lot.

Bynum Beach Canoe Access: From US 15-501 south of the Haw River bridge, turn east on Bynum Road. Go 0.3 miles; the access is to the right of the Bynum pedestrian bridge. Park along the road.

Recreation Opportunities

Hiking: From [GetGoingNC.com](#), "Usually when you think of taking an escape into the wild, you assume a long drive to an obscure trail that navigates rugged terrain, frequently loses its way through dense undergrowth, involves waist-deep stream crossings and surprises you with wild critters at every opportunity. With the Lower Haw River Trail, located on the outskirts of the booming Triangle, you get all of that without the long drive." The trail is about 5.1 miles in length.

Trail running: Fast tread, for the most part, with three creek crossings and a handful of rocky areas to negotiate make this a solid 8.6-mile out-and-back training run.

Paddling: The 3.6-mile stretch from the Bynum Beach put-in down to US 64 earns an A rating for scenery from Paul Ferguson in his "Paddling Eastern North Carolina" guidebook, and consists of Class I and II rapids. The normally placid Haw can become dangerous and a challenge to even the most accomplished whitewater paddlers after heavy rains. Use caution.

Tubing: A popular run is from the northern trailhead access described above downstream for one mile. There, tubers can walk the hiking trail back upstream.

Photography: Exceptionally good opportunities to shoot wildlife, especially along water's edge.

Kids: The water is obviously a big draw, but the rock outcrops, especially near the south end of the hiking trail offer good scrambling, and in summer the area abounds with wildlife, including some well-fed snakes.

Visit in.....

Winter: Without the dense undergrowth and canopy, the trail in winter offers a better sense of the terrain.

Spring: wildflower blooms, especially in the floodplain forest regions along the Lower Haw River Trail.

Summer: Paddling and tubing on the Haw River.

Fall: Autumn color is good along the water but best viewed from the water.
(*Note: the only venomous snake in this area is the terrestrial copperhead; any water snakes you see do not pose a threat.*)

Additional Information

[GetGoingNC.com](#)

Haw River Assembly [www.hawriver.org](#)

Haw River Trail [www.thehaw.org](#)

North Carolina State Parks [www.ncparks.gov](#)

[Paddling Eastern North Carolina](#) by Paul Ferguson, Second Edition, Pocosin Press, [www.pocosinpress.com](#)

