



# HIWASSEE RIVER

Distance	200 miles from Vanderbilt
Directions	Take I-24 East to Chattanooga. Pick up I-75 North to Exit 20. Take this bypass around Cleveland, Following signs for the Ocoee River. After 5 miles, turn/exit right onto US64/74 and Route 40. After 7 miles exit and go north on US411. Travel for about 14 miles and turn right onto Route 30. Follow Route 30 until you arrive in Reliance. Turn left and cross the bridge. Turn right after you cross and follow the road to the Hiwassee Put-In Parking Area.
Description	The Hiwassee is designated as a State Scenic River because of its clear running water that supports 65 species of fish and several endangered mussels and its watershed that is swarming with vast wildlife activity. Just below the Appalachia Powerhouse is the famous upper section that should be avoided by beginners because it is rated as a Class II. Even experienced kayakers are advised to take this section in a rubber kayak or attempt it with a group if it is their first time on the Hiwassee. The Tennessee Scenic Rivers Association offers whitewater-paddling classes for solo and tandem paddlers on this section in the summer. For leisurely family floats, a slower section rated as a Class I exists on the Hiwassee. It begins at the US 411 bridge and flows for eight miles along forested hillsides and cultivated farmland. This slower section is used by trout fishermen. Finally, part of the John Muir National Recreation Trail follows alongside the river.
Campsites	The slower section provides plenty of places to camp, the closest being Gee Creek campground. This campground has access to Gee Creek, which enters the Hiwassee just above the US 411 bridge.
Cautions	Because this river is dam controlled, you should make sure that you find out the water level before finalizing your plans. The TVA Information Line is 1-800-238-2264. Press "4" for water release schedules, "22" for Appalachia Dam, and "#" for future release schedules. It is also important to know that these water levels can change abruptly when generators are turned on. When hiking the trail, take caution against poisonous copperhead snakes that are abundant along stream banks in the summer.
For More Information	Refer to Canoeing in Tennessee by Holly Sherwin, pp. 97-99. The phone number for the Hiwassee River State Park is 423-338-4133.