

# GET OUT *and Play!*

## ON THE WATAUGA RIVER

The Watauga River headwater begins in North Carolina and flows into Tennessee for over 75 miles before being impounded twice at Watauga Dam and Wilbur Dam in Carter County and flowing into the South Fork of the Holston River. It flows through the Cherokee and Pisgah National Forests, where there are many hiking trails and camping opportunities, including the Appalachian Trail.

The cool tailwaters of Watauga and Wilbur dams create world-class trout fishing and paddling opportunities for kayakers and rafters.

Boating, fishing and skiing are still the most popular types of recreation on TVA lakes. But more and more people are getting interested in the world of tailwater sports—such as kayaking, rafting and trout fishing—that can happen in the water below the TVA dams.

Whether you are stepping into your boat, going for a hike, or gearing up for the hunt, having a little back-pocket information is key. Here is some simple information about some of this area's best recreational opportunities—where to show up, how to get there and what to bring along. One of the most amazing things about the Tennessee River system and its tributaries is how easy it is for you to get to places to relax and recreate. As part of its mission of service, the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) manages its public lands and waters to support recreation so the Tennessee Valley remains one of the best places in the country to live, work and play.

## BE A GOOD STEWARD

The Watauga River is known for its clean water and pristine rural shorelines. Here's how you can help play a part in keeping the river beautiful:

- **Stay on the path.** Shorelines are fragile ecosystems; please restrict launching and landing to designated areas only.
- **Leave no trace.** No littering. Pack it in, pack it out. For more info visit [www.lnt.org](http://www.lnt.org).
- **Look, don't touch.** Do not disturb any natural or cultural resources you may encounter.
- **Respect private property.** Do not trespass above the high water mark.
- **Be a happy camper.** Camp only in designated areas.
- **Don't play with fire.** No campfires unless otherwise designated.



## TVA PUBLIC LANDS

The public lands entrusted to TVA for stewardship are available for hiking, birdwatching, camping, fishing, hunting and other informal recreational pursuits. Some important regulations to protect the resources and your safety should be followed. Camping in a primitive campsite on TVA lands is allowable up to 14 days. You should follow all state hunting seasons and regulations. In addition, motorized vehicles, cutting or removing vegetation, target shooting or removal of cultural artifacts are not allowed on TVA public lands. For more information visit <https://www.tva.com/environment/recreation>, or call the TVA's Public Lands Information Center at (800) TVA-LAND (toll-free).

## TVA'S DAMS

At more than 1,900 feet above sea level, Watauga holds the distinction of being the highest reservoir in the Tennessee River system. The reservoir is managed for many uses, including flood damage reduction, power generation, water quality and aquatic ecology.

Surrounded by the Cherokee National Forest and flanked by the Appalachian Mountains, Watauga Reservoir is one of the most scenic in the Tennessee River watershed, and offers access to the Appalachian Trail.

Below Watauga Dam is a wildlife observation area where visitors have a chance to view unique species of wintering waterfowl, including buffleheads, mallards, American black ducks, gadwalls, ring-necked ducks, lesser scaups, canvasbacks, redheads and scoters.



you can call (800) 238-2264 (toll-free) and select option 2 for predicted unit schedules and select 02 for Watauga Dam and 42 for Wilbur Dam information by phone.

It is important to understand the water release schedule before paddling the river as the water's current and depth can change rapidly.

### Trip Essentials

- ☐ Map
- ☐ Whistle or other sound signaling device
- ☐ Certified life jacket for each person
- ☐ Photo identification
- ☐ Drinking water (no glass, please)
- ☐ Flashlight
- ☐ First aid kit
- ☐ Insect repellent and sunscreen
- ☐ Extra clothes and waterproof bags
- ☐ Mobile phone (coverage subject to availability)
- ☐ Camping supplies, if camping
- ☐ Fishing license, if fishing
- ☐ Other personal items as needed

## PADDLE POINTERS

Follow these 12 tips to help keep your next paddle trip safe:

**Know Your Limits**—Paddle water that is appropriate to your skills. Not sure about where to find it? Talk to a local paddle shop owner about good places to paddle for every skill level.

**Keep an Eye on the Weather**—Storms can spring up quickly in the south bringing lightning, high winds and choppy water. Point your bow toward shore whenever you hear thunder, no matter how distant.

**Follow the Law** for recreational vessels of the United States.

**Bring Flotation**—Always wear a Coast Guard-approved lifejacket, type II or III at minimum. Children under 12 years of age must wear a lifejacket.\*

**Wear a Helmet**—If you fall in, a helmet can protect your head from hard or sharp objects that may be lurking below the surface.

**Watch for River Hazards**—Watch for fallen tree limbs, barbed wire, bridge piers and other hazards that can snare or entangle you.

**Be Visible...and Audible**—Keep alert to other boats. If you believe another boat has not seen you, blow your whistle\* and wave your paddle to alert the other boat. A flashlight\* is required if you plan to paddle after sunset.

**Dress for Success**—Wear clothing sufficient to prevent hypothermia and/or sunburn.

**Wear Sunscreen**—The CDC recommends applying a sunscreen with a SPF of at least 15 to help prevent sunburn and skin damage.

**Don't Paddle Alone**—Paddling is an activity that is always better with friends and family anyway.

**Never Drink and Paddle\***—Alcohol impairs coordination and judgment.

**Communicate Your Plan in Advance**—Plan ahead, and let someone who's not going to be aboard know your paddling agenda. Be aware that some sections of the river have no cell phone service.

\*U.S. Coast Guard Requirement

## PARTNERS:

Mahoney's



#TVAfun

tva.com | [facebook.com/TVA](https://www.facebook.com/TVA) | [@TVAnews](https://twitter.com/TVAnews) | [@TVA](https://www.instagram.com/TVA)

TVA



# WATAUGA RIVER



**DISCLAIMER:** The featured map is for illustrative purposes only and is not intended, and should not be relied upon, to provide accurate locations, directions, or data. Paddle at your own risk. Fallen trees, built structures, and other hazards are present in the water. Be alert to weather conditions, water levels and flow, and river traffic. Boating involves some risk of drowning, injury, or death. TVA is not responsible for your personal safety or for your vehicle and is not liable for injury to you or damage to your vehicle, boat, or personal property.