






#11

Water Trails: Lake Blue Ridge to Ocoee Whitewater

Toccoa River
Water Trail

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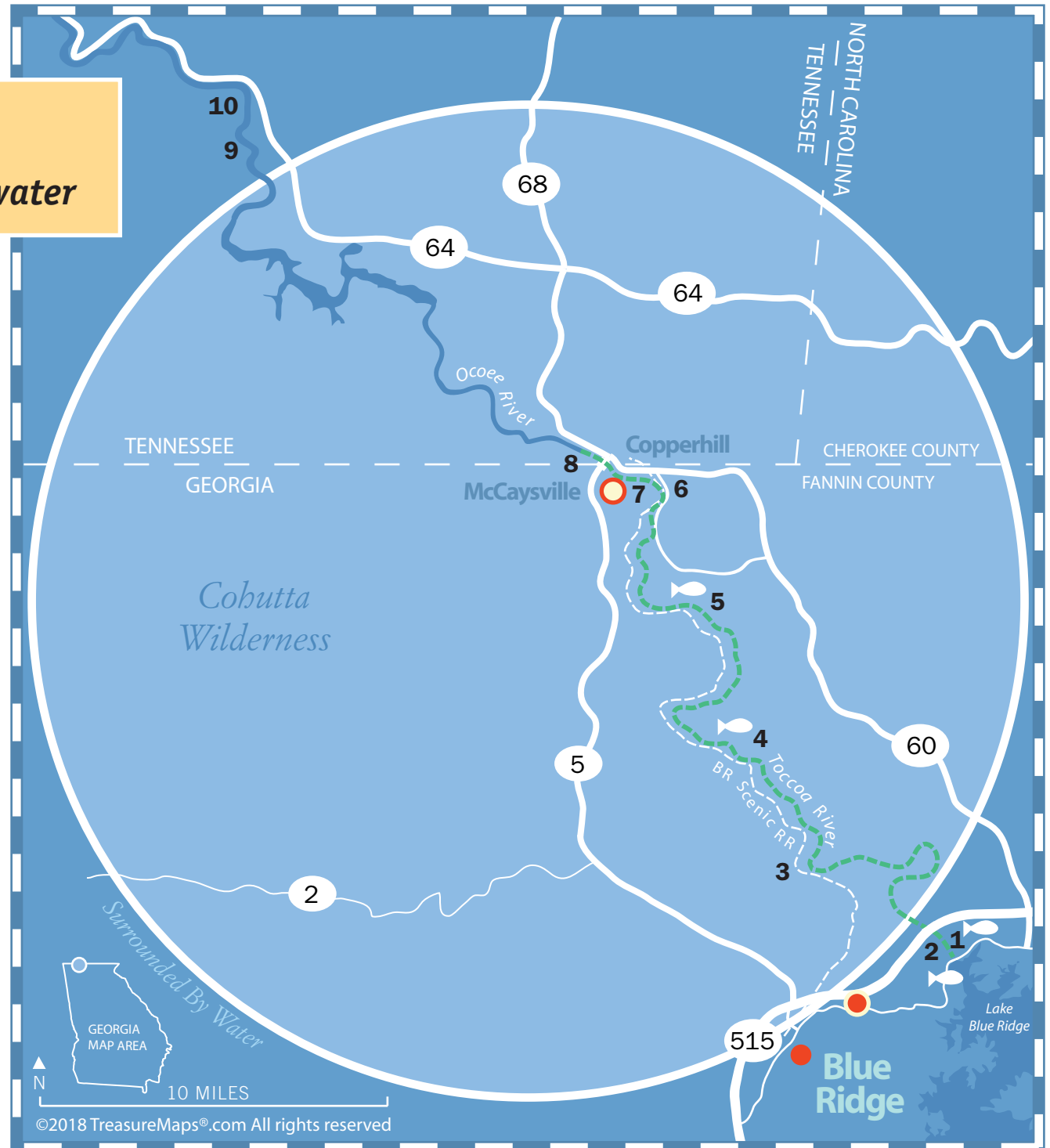
For info about local outfitters, fishing guides, rafting, tubing and canoeing, see www.BlueRidgeMountains.com



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#11 Water Trails: Lake Blue Ridge Dam to Ocoee River Whitewater

Red coordinates indicate GPS Fix

The Upper Toccoa River

Flowing northwards for almost 60 miles, the Toccoa River, one of Georgia's most pristine trout streams, has its headwaters in Union County. It then flows into Fannin County and becomes the major feeder stream for Blue Ridge Lake. Resuming its flow below the Blue Ridge dam, the river travels north into Tennessee, where it is known as the Ocoee River. Water quality is good and trout fishing is excellent. Add beautiful scenery and mild rapids and you have the perfect environment for canoeing, tubing, fishing, camping and all kinds of outdoor recreation.

The Ocoee River

Whether you like your water white and fast or deep and peaceful, a thrill a minute or a quiet drift through a summer afternoon, the Ocoee has it all. The Ocoee River area attracts thousands of visitors every year for whitewater rafting, kayaking, hiking, camping and picnicking. The area includes the Ocoee Whitewater Center in the Cherokee National Forest, site of the 1996 Olympic Canoe/Kayak Slalom competition. Big, closely spaced rapids make it one of the most popular whitewater rivers in the eastern USA.

1 Blue Ridge Dam Canoe Access

Lake Blue Ridge Dam is located just outside of Blue Ridge. There's a scenic overlook above the dam and a shaded picnic area near the powerhouse. The canoe and kayak launch site below the dam gives nonmotorized boaters access to the Toccoa River. The river is noted among fishermen for its sunfish, trout, and bass. When water is released from the Blue Ridge Dam to generate electricity, the river becomes a class I-II float through the Georgia hills. It is possible to float the Toccoa River from here to takeout points at Curtis Switch, Horseshoe Bend Park, and McCaysville City Park.

N 34°52.806' W084°16.903'

2 Tammen Park

A very popular place to picnic and fly fish for trout in the Toccoa River is just below the Lake Blue Ridge Dam. Call in advance for water-release information 1-800-238-2264, ext 4, #23. This park also has ball fields, playground equipment and picnic areas. The entrance to the park is clearly marked right off Hwy 515. N 34°53.254' W084°17.180'

3 Blue Ridge Scenic Railway Route

Enjoy a train ride alongside the beautiful Toccoa River from Blue Ridge to McCaysville. Board the train in historic Blue Ridge. The view changes with the seasons, wildflowers and mountain laurel in the spring, rhododendron in the summer,

gorgeous foliage in the fall and a ride with Santa and his elves for Christmas. The Scenic Railway departs from the old depot in downtown Blue Ridge. Your destination is downtown McCaysville, Georgia. The rail adventure is 26 miles round trip. The trip lasts 4 hours which includes a 2 hour layover in the twin cities of McCaysville, Ga. and Copperhill, Tn. The train operates from March through December. Schedules vary throughout the year so be sure to visit their website at www.brsenic.com or call the office at 877-413-8724.

4 Curtis Switch

One of the last remaining historic iron bridges in the area can be seen at Curtis Switch. A public boat ramp there is a great place to launch a canoe or kayak and a popular fishing spot. From Blue Ridge take Hwy 515 east to Industrial Park Road on the left. Follow Industrial Park Road approximately 1.4 miles to Ada Street and make a right. Go 3.5 miles to Curtis Switch Road and take a right. After you cross the railroad tracks and river you'll take a left on North River Road, you will see a pull off there with a path to the river. Great spot for fishing under the old iron bridge. You can also continue .3 miles down North River Road on your left to a graveled access area to the Toccoa River, plenty of parking and great fishing access. N 34°55.701' W084°20.300'

5 Horseshoe Bend Park

A beautiful park with good trout fishing on the Toccoa River. From Blue Ridge take Highway 5 into McCaysville. Turn right onto Highway 60 then drive a short distance and turn right on River Road. The park has a playground, picnic pavilions and restrooms. May through September, Horseshoe Bend Park is also home to Pickin' in the Park, acoustic jam sessions, on Thursday evenings. Dogs on a leash are welcome.

N 34°58.368' W084°21.566'

6 Toccoa and Ocoee River Outfitters

Colorful inner tubes, kayaks and canoes provide a cool and refreshing way to have fun and relax on a hot summer day on the Toccoa River for 1.5-mile and a 6-mile float trips. Whitewater rafting on the Ocoee River is world class. For a full current listing of whitewater outfitters see our website info:

<https://www.blueridgemountains.com/things-to-do/outdoors/water-sports/>

7 McCaysville City Park

McCaysville City Park at the edge of the Toccoa River is a great place for the kids to play and feed the ducks. Take Hwy 5 north to McCaysville. Turn right at the police station before the Toccoa River bridge and park is 2 blocks down on left.

8 Old Iron Bridge

When you get to McCaysville, cross the Toccoa River into

Copperhill. Hwy 5 will dead end into Hwy 68, also Main Street in Copperhill. Take a left and go a block to Bridge Street and go left. The bridge is just ahead. You can stand on 2 states at the same time at the marker. Stand on the Bridge side and you are in McCaysville, Georgia and walk across the "Blue Line" on the street and you're in Copperhill, Tennessee!

N 34°59.261' W084°22.277'

9 Ocoee Whitewater Rafting

The Ocoee has become one of the most popular rafting rivers in the country. Dam controlled water release means there will be enough water during times of drought and the Ocoee is just great fun. Dropping over 260 feet in five miles, there is little flat water on the whole river meaning nonstop action. With 14 rapids rated Class III-IV on the Middle Section. Outfitters on the Ocoee River put a guide in each raft making it suitable for beginners. Also, the State of Tennessee requires that each participant be 12 years old or older. Outfitters supply all necessary equipment, do a pre trip orientation and provide transportation to the river and back. However, you need to make a reservation as trips do fill up especially on weekends and during the summer. Many outfitters operate here, get info at www.blueridgemountains.com and see "Whitewater Rafting".

10 Ocoee Whitewater Center

The Ocoee Whitewater Center (OWC) site was constructed for the purpose of holding the 1996 Olympic Canoe and Kayak Slalom competitions. As part of the National Forest system, the Ocoee Whitewater Center is managed by the Forest Service as a multiple use recreational and educational complex. Consisting of a four-acre recreation area, the OWC offers water play, picnicking, hiking, biking, a nature-oriented gift shop, environmental education programs, a 7,200 sq. ft. visitors center, year-round special events, and provides the playground for whitewater rafting and kayaking. With a 30-mile hiking/biking trail system the OWC is quickly earning a reputation as having one of the premier mountain biking trail systems in the southeastern USA for both leisurely rides on a level double-track trail or a blistering high-speed race down a single-track trail. From Blue Ridge take GA 5 north to McCaysville, then turn left on Tennessee Highway 68. In Ducktown, take U.S. 64 west for approximately 6 miles to the Ocoee Whitewater Center on the left. More info on the web at www.fs.fed.us/r8/ocoe/ N 35°03.961' W084°27.678'

Main Welcome Center: 152A Orvin Lance Drive, Blue Ridge, GA 30513 1-800-899-MTNS

Caboose Visitor Center: 230 Roberts Way, Blue Ridge

Downtown McCaysville Visitor Center: 53 East Market St.

www.BlueRidgeMountains.com
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