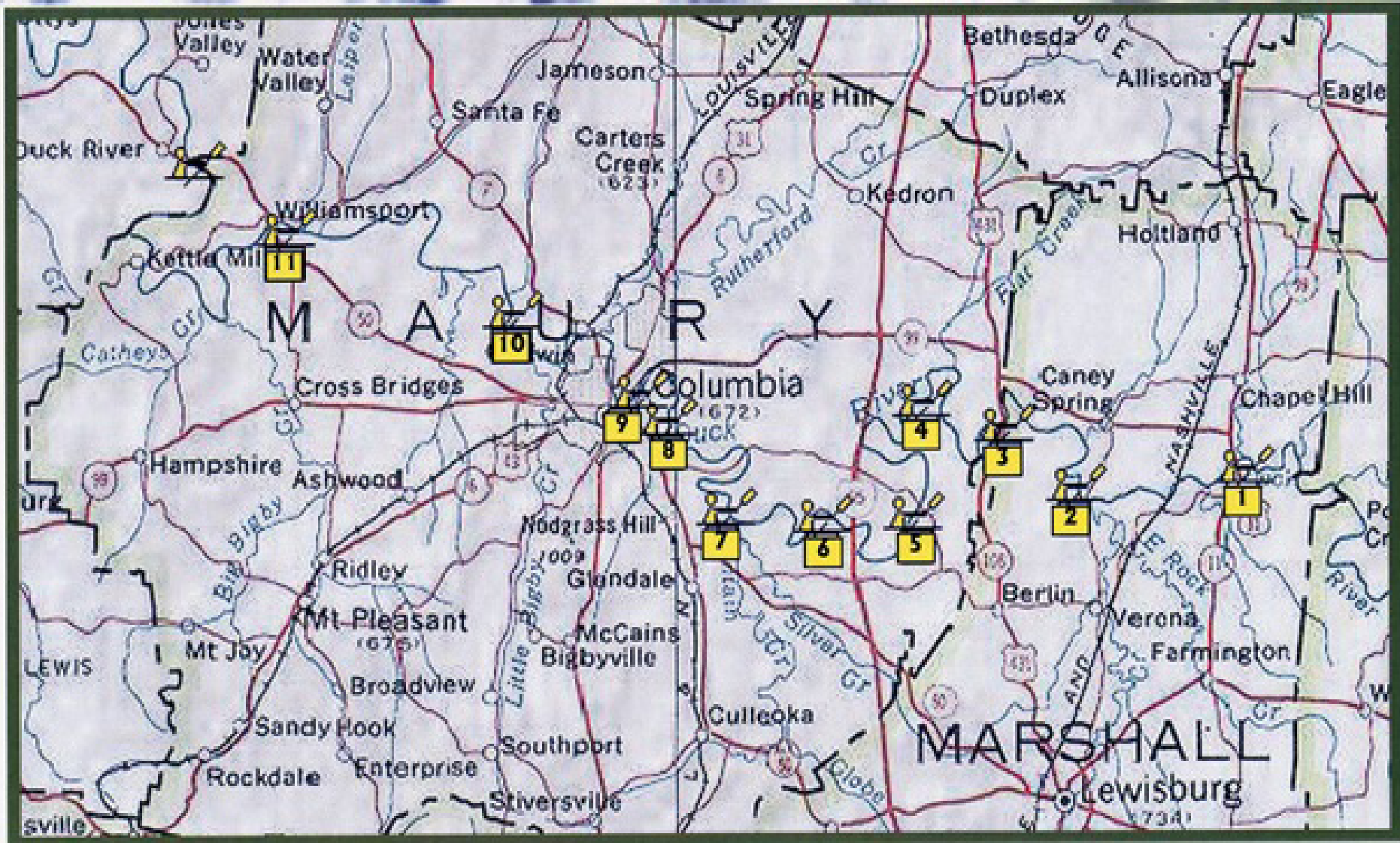


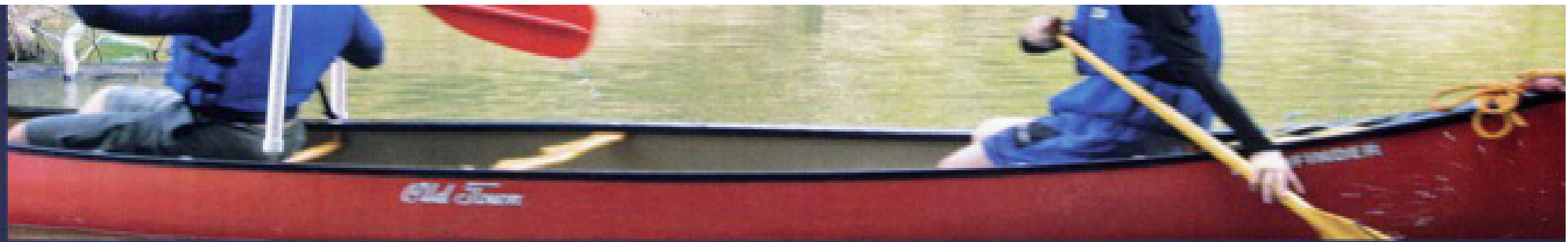
Duck River  
Blueway

# RIVER GUIDE

Maury and Marshall Counties

# Duck River Float Guide: Maury - Marshall Counties





## Contents

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Introduction: Journey Down The Duck.....              | 4  |
| History of the Duck River.....                        | 5  |
| <u>Blueway Routes Broken into Segments</u>            |    |
| 1.) Henry Horton to Mill Town.....                    | 6  |
| 2.) Mill Town to Highway 431 Bridge.....              | 7  |
| 3.) Highway 431 Bridge to Carpenter Bridge.....       | 8  |
| 4.) Carpenters Bridge to Leftwich Bridge.....         | 9  |
| 5.) Leftwich Bridge to Howard Bridge.....             | 10 |
| 6.) Howard Bridge to Fountain Creek.....              | 11 |
| 7.) Fountain Creek to Iron Bridge.....                | 12 |
| 8.) Iron Bridge to Columbia Old City Dam.....         | 13 |
| 9.) Riverside Drive to Chickasaw Trace Park.....      | 14 |
| 10.) Chickasaw Trace Park to Williamsport Bridge..... | 15 |
| 11.) Williamsport Bridge to Highway 50 Bridge.....    | 16 |
| Important Information.....                            | 17 |

## Credits

### Acknowledgements

#### **Project Funding:**

Maury County Convention and Visitors Bureau  
Tennessee Parks and Greenway Foundation

#### **Project Coordinators:**

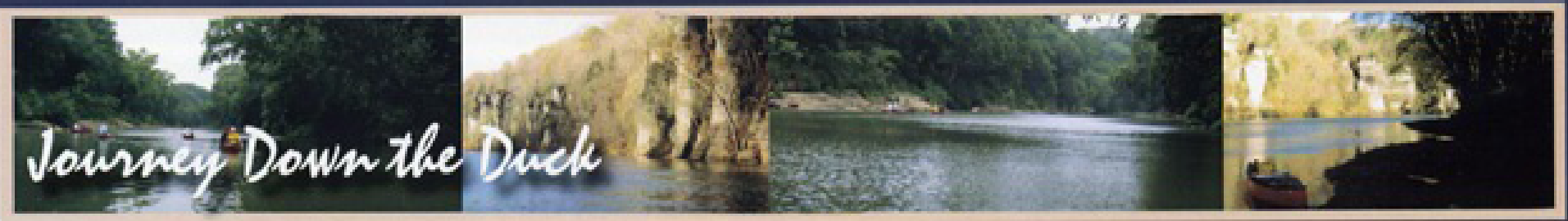
Graphics – robin E designs, Robin Estep  
Information – Joe Brooks

#### **Project Supporters:**

Tennessee Nature Conservancy  
Tennessee Wildlife Resource Agency  
Tennessee Duck River Development Agency  
Boy Scouts of America - Gene Barr

#### **Project Interest & Support:**

Southeast Watershed Forum  
Marshall County Government Economic Development  
South Central Development District  
Henry Horton State Park  
Yanahli Kayak and Canoe Company  
River Rats Canoe Rental  
National Park Service, Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program  
TDEC, Greenway and Trails  
TDEC, Natural Areas Program  
South Tennessee Tour Association



## Journey Down the Duck

Welcome to your journey of the Duck River – a beautiful pastoral stream that meanders almost 270 miles through several different cities, amidst a diversity of wildlife and past countless ever-changing scenic bluffs, islands, gravel bars, sloughs and bottomlands.

The river is surrounded by great beauty and diverse wildlife, providing very good fishing and an excellent canoeing stream for all to enjoy. For beginning canoeists, this river provides a beautiful backwater stream to learn the basics of navigating a river, and for moderately experienced canoeists, the stream offers beautiful scenic quiet waters versus the roaring rapids. And, for those who love history, this river provides an awesome historical treasure on river navigation, watermills, fish-traps, Native-American landmarks, European settlements, early roads fords, ferry sites, caves, bridges and railroads, among others.

An easy 30 to 40 mile drive from Nashville and within reach of most of the population in Middle Tennessee, the river is a good one or two-day trip. For your canoeing pleasure, this book has been compiled by the work of many people to provide detailed descriptions of the various Duck River floats. Whether you're seeking a quick half-day float or a long all-day excursion, this book will provide you all the details to get you started.

As you plan your journey down the Duck, we hope this river guide will help you navigate the river while offering interesting historical information about the sites you'll see along the way.

Happy Paddling!

*And I count myself more fortunate with each passing season to have recourse to these quiet, tree-strewn, untrimmed acres by the water. I would think it a sad commentary on the quality of American life if, with our pecuniary and natural abundance, we could not secure for our generation and those to come the existence of . . . a substantial remnant of a once great endowment of wild and scenic rivers.*

— William Anderson, Congressman from Tennessee



## History

The Duck River offers something for everyone who enjoy its waters. One of the last rivers in southeastern United States, it offers more species of animal life than any other stream in this region and a vast amount of historical information that we cannot begin to cover in this book alone.

The Duck River's diversity in wildlife consists of 150 species of fish and more than 50 species of freshwater mussels. In its waters, the river is home to smallmouth bass, largemouth bass, spotted bass, catfish and crappie fish through a good portion of the year. In fall and winter, sauger may be spotted moving up the lower part of the river. Due to the diverse wildlife, this river provides very good fishing and an excellent canoeing stream to view this wildlife.

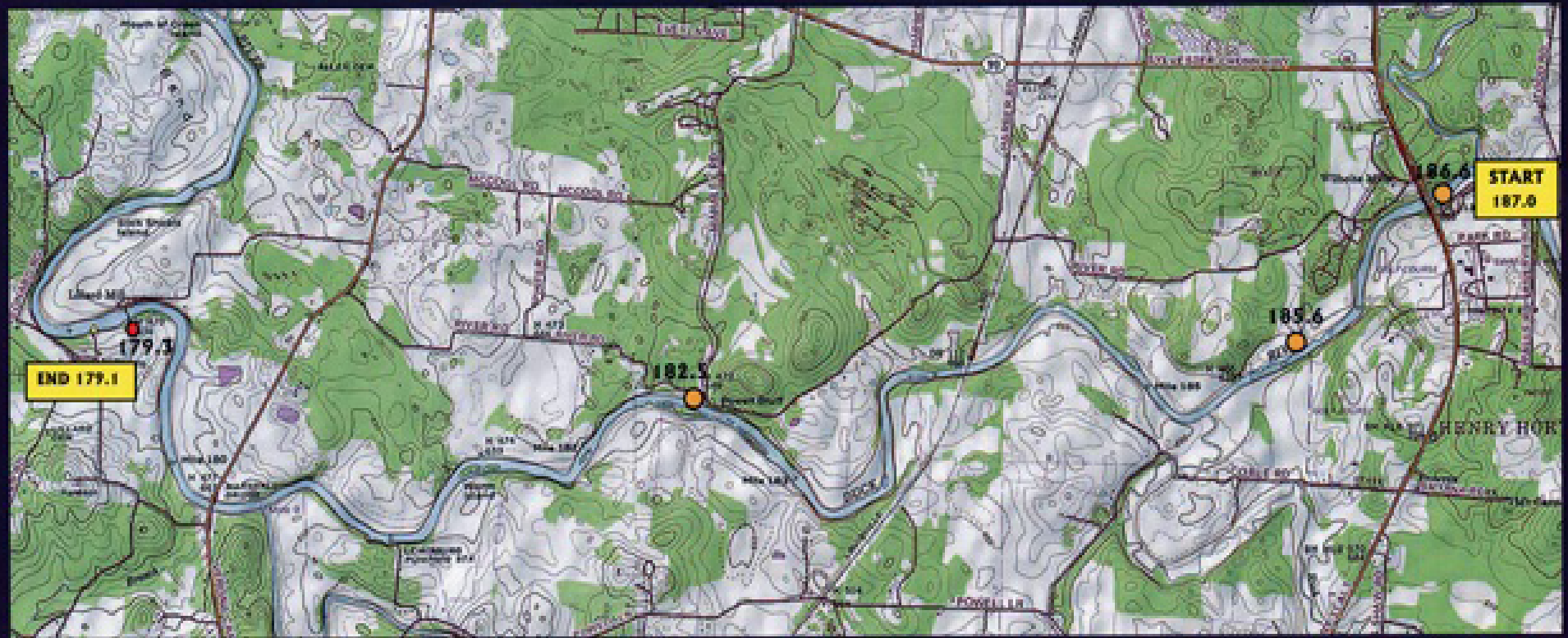
The River is full of history on river navigation, watermills, fish traps, Native-American settlers, European settlements, early roads, fords, ferry sites, caves, bridges, railroads, commercial centers and hydroelectrical use of the river. Above Columbia, there are sites for at least 50 mills, including sawmills, woolen, cotton, hemp, paper and powder mills. Due to many floods, and competition from mass producing merchant mills, surviving river mills closed in the mid 1950s.

This river has been used for many purposes through the ages and traveled by all types of river craft such as keelboats, flatboats, simple log rafts, cedar rafts, dugout canoes, pirogues, tie rafts, batteaus, and steamboats. Many prehistoric Native American sites encompass the area, and there is quite an indication of heavy settlement up to 450 A.D., when most Woodland tribes vacated places like Stone Fort and other sites. European settlement followed the historic native tribes, preceded by long hunters and surveyors who used the native or buffalo traces (or trails). There were at least 12 native trails crossing the Duck River along the Blueway, more than 20 along the whole river. Europeans and Chickasaws established more than 25 ferry sites along the river.

The Duck River is a key link of our past to the future, and we hope you'll enjoy the interesting stories, legends and journeys in landmarks you'll see along the way.

# Henry Horton to Mill Town

MILES  
7.9



## HIGHLIGHTS:

- 186.6 Remnants of Wilhoit Penstocke
- 185.6 Remnants of Hamilton/Green Mill Dam
- 182.5 Remnants of Powell Mill Dam

## CAUTIONS:

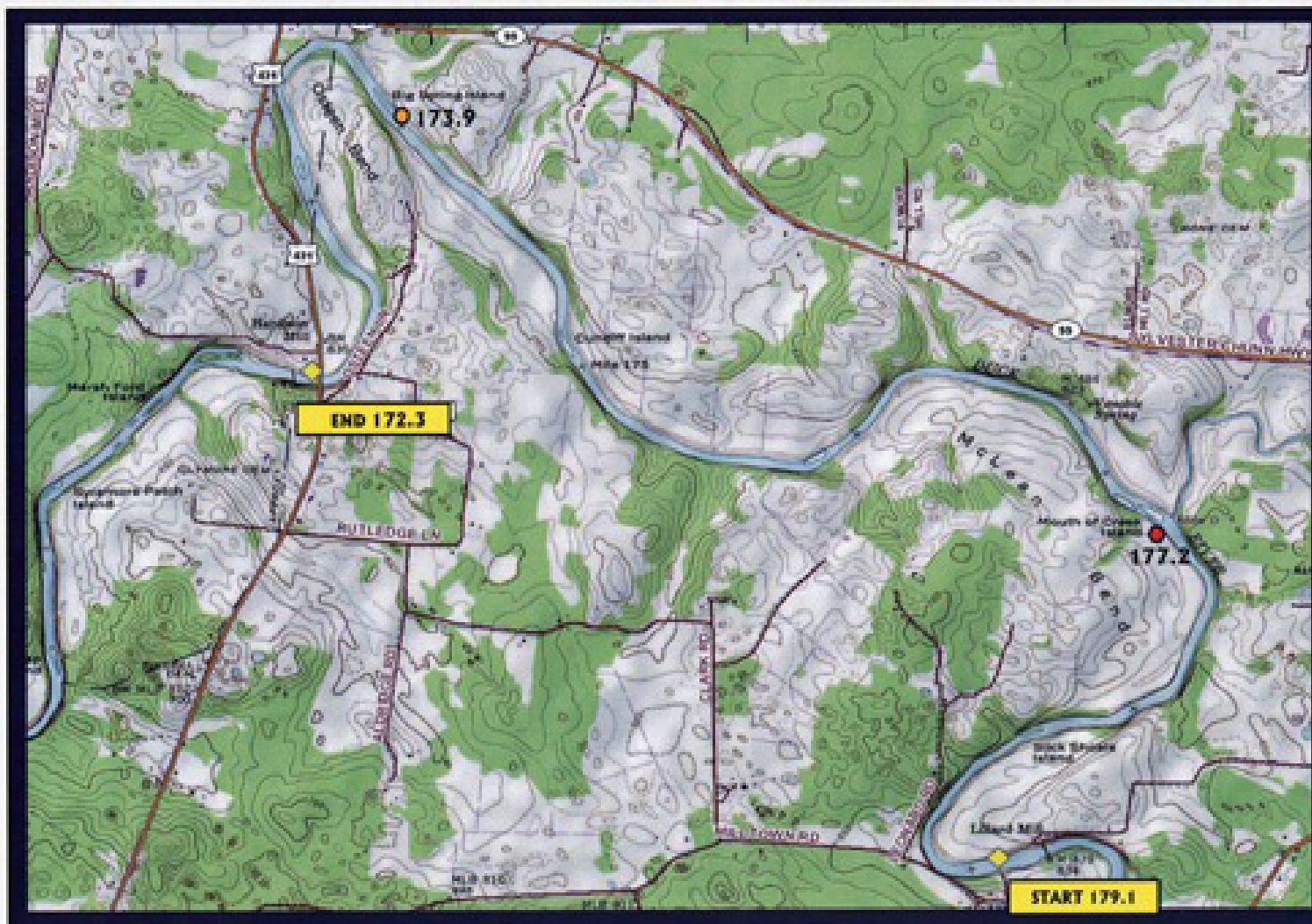
- 179.3 Difficult portage

## FLOAT FACTOID:

During the Creek War of 1814, General Jackson's army crossed at the ferry site. In 1819, there was a warehouse built there for navigation boats. A grist and saw mill were built in 1821 and rebuilt in 1846 as the Wilhoite Mill. A small community was developed around the mill and survived to the 1950s. It is now known now as Henry Horton State Park.

# Mill Town to Highway 431 Bridge

MILES  
6.8



## HIGHLIGHTS: ●

173.9 Cedar raft landing/raft building site - late 1800s

## CAUTIONS: ●

177.2 Rocky shoals

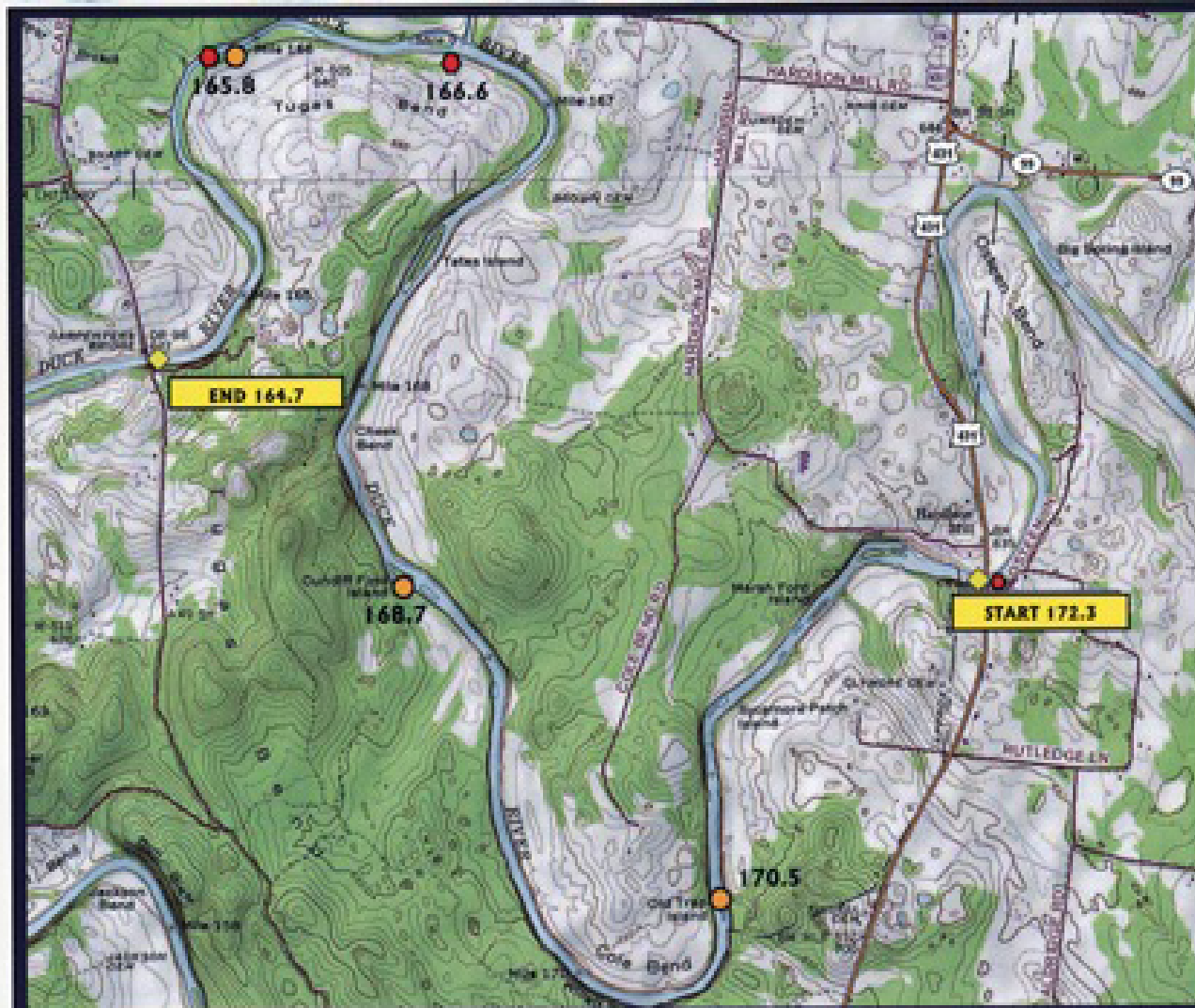
## FLOAT FACTOID:

### *Lillard's Mill*

During the 1830s, the McLean's Mill (Lillard's Mill) was built and replaced by a hydro-electric plant in the late 1920s. It became a shipping point for cedar rafts in the late 1800s to early 1900s.

# Hwy. 431 Bridge to Carpenter Bridge

MILES  
7.7



## HIGHLIGHTS: ●

- 170.5 Fish trap remnants
- 168.7 Fish trap remnants
- 165.8 Remnant of lower Hardison Mill Dam

## CAUTIONS: ●

- 172.2 Remnants of Hardison Mill Dam (best portage on right side)\*
- 166.6 Rocky Shoals
- 165.8 Spring Hill water intake-go to far left of river.
- 165.8 Rocky Shoals

## FLOAT FACTOID:

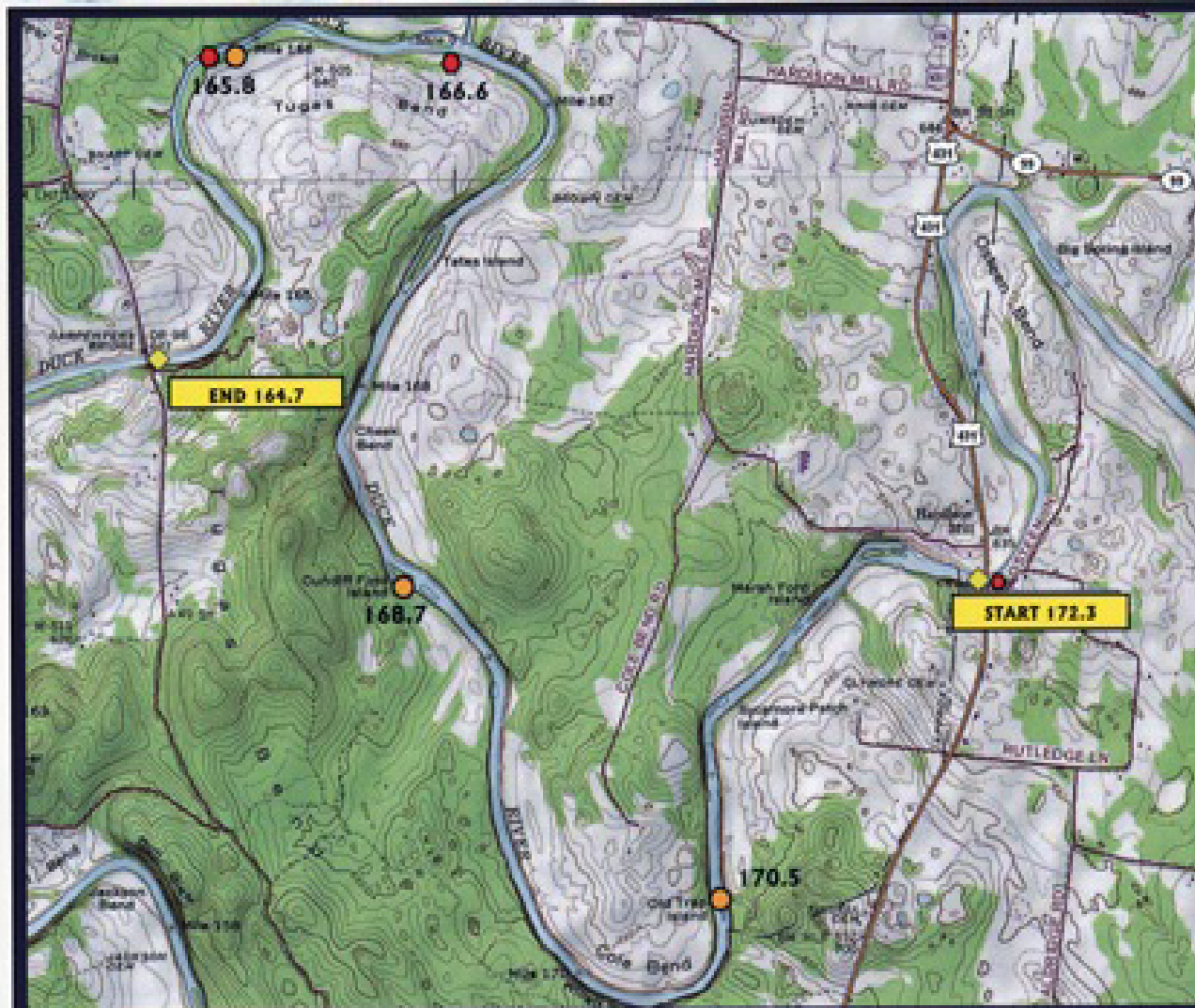
### *Mill's Story, Floods and Fires*

\*Upper Hardison Mill, built by Charles Hardison with various business partners, has endured floods, disasters and fires. Destroyed by floods in 1838-1839, 1840-1841, 1847 and early 1870s, the mill was rebuilt and again destroyed in 1902 by another flood. The next millhouse was built away from the Duck River and survived another flood in 1947, despite the destruction of the gearhouse. The Mill burned in 1952.



# Hwy. 431 Bridge to Carpenter Bridge

MILES  
7.7



## HIGHLIGHTS: ●

- 170.5 Fish trap remnants
- 168.7 Fish trap remnants
- 165.8 Remnant of lower Hardison Mill Dam

## CAUTIONS: ●

- 172.2 Remnants of Hardison Mill Dam (best portage on right side)\*
- 166.6 Rocky Shoals
- 165.8 Spring Hill water intake-go to far left of river.
- 165.8 Rocky Shoals

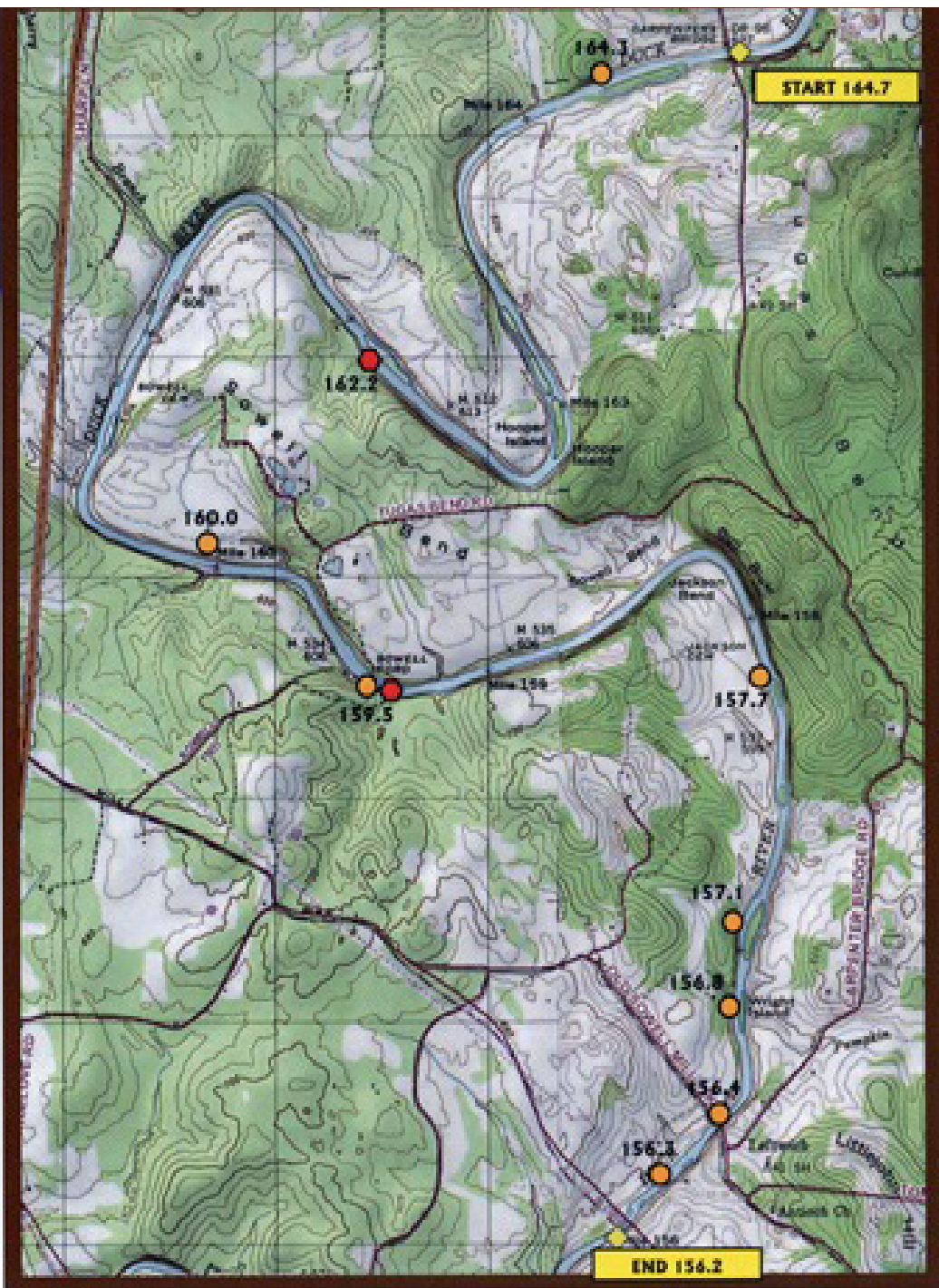
## FLOAT FACTOID:

### *Mill's Story, Floods and Fires*

\*Upper Hardison Mill, built by Charles Hardison with various business partners, has endured floods, disasters and fires. Destroyed by floods in 1838-1839, 1840-1841, 1847 and early 1870s, the mill was rebuilt and again destroyed in 1902 by another flood. The next millhouse was built away from the Duck River and survived another flood in 1947, despite the destruction of the gearhouse. The Mill burned in 1952.



# Carpenters Bridge to Leftwich Bridge

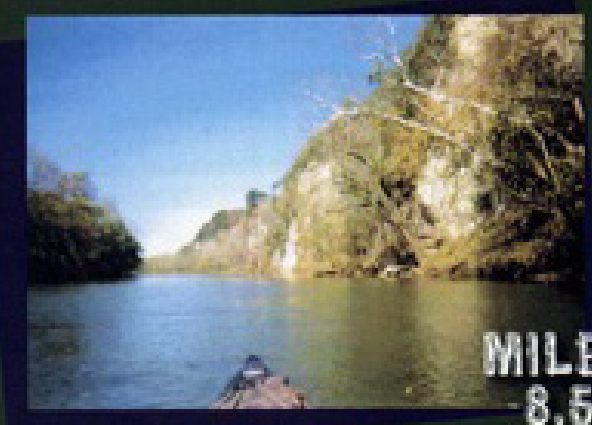


## HIGHLIGHTS: ●

- 144.3 Fish trap remnants
- 160.0 Farrar/Smith mill dam remnants
- 159.5 Upper Sowell Mill remnants/shoals/timbers-dam
- 157.7 Old Horsley mill site
- 157.1 Remnants of Cedar raft
- 156.8 Remnants-fish trap dam
- 156.4 Old Leftwich Bridge
- 156.3 Remnants of fish trap dam

## CAUTIONS: ●

- 162.2 Shoals  
(usually strainers/rocks)
- 159.5 Shoals, remnants of timber, rock dam



MILES  
8.5

# Leftwich Bridge to Howard Bridge

MILES  
5.8



## HIGHLIGHTS: ●

- 155.4 Fish trap remnants
- 153.7 Cave Spring
- 152.3 Cheek Bend caves
- UT Knoxville "Owl Study"

## CAUTIONS: ●

- 153.0 Rocky shoals

## FLOAT FACTOID: *Caves, Owls and Buzzards*

\*Cheek Bend Caves, alias "Buzzard Caves," has been a focus of archeological study - a deep trench of owl "spitballs," used by archeologists to track climate change in Duck River Valley, from Canadian forest to near desert, prairieland, back to the current mix of cedar/hardwood forest we see today. Today, the cave still lives up to its name, "Buzzard Cave" with sightings of dark, feathery creatures leaving the cave.

# Howard Bridge to Fountain Creek

MILES  
4.5



## FLOAT FACTOID:

### *"Still house Hole"*

\*Mile 148.9 is the beginning of "Stillhouse Hole," claimed the deepest spot in the Duck River. As the story goes, an old man appears in Maury County, claiming silver buried in caves near bluffs. His story, an escaped slave of Spanish mines, in or near Berlin, Marshall County, inspired some early settlers to search for the treasure, but all they found was dirt and plenty of trash.

## HIGHLIGHTS: ●

- 150.3 Spring Cave
- 149.7 Wallace mill dam remnants
- 148.9 Still House Hole\*
- 148.7 Old river road/below cliff

## CAUTIONS: ●

- 149.7 Mill dam remnants
- 147.6 Rocky shoals

# Fountain Creek to Iron Bridge

MILES  
9.5



## HIGHLIGHTS: ●

- 144.9 Davis Ford\*
- 143.3 Vaughn Landing
- 141.1 Remnants of old bridge pier
- 139.6 Large grotto/bluff
- 137.2 Old Columbia TVA Dam\*

## CAUTIONS: ●

- 144.9 Slack water to Iron Bridge (very few stops)

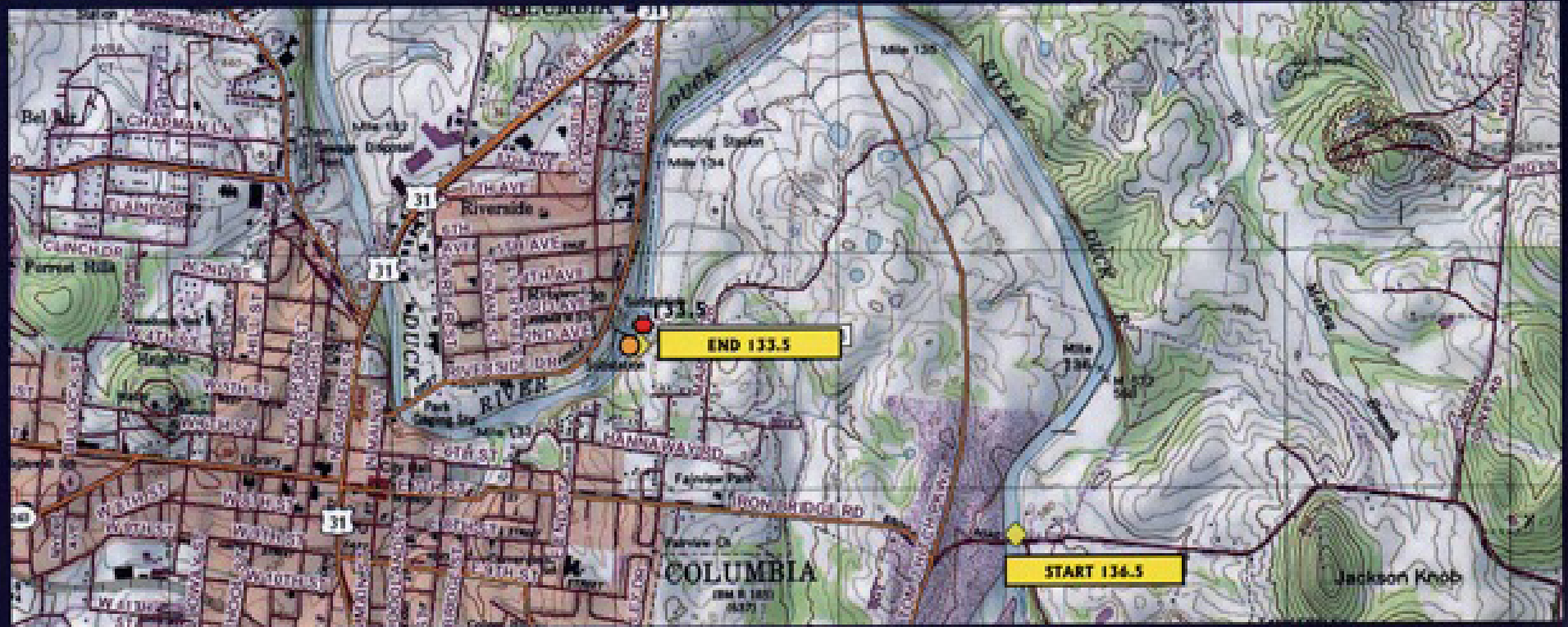
## FLOAT FACTOID:

### *General Hood's Campaign of 1864*

\*One early clear morning, 19,000 men slipped around Scholfield's Union army, crossing by pontoon bridge just below Davis Ford River at flood stage. The best route envisioned by General Hood turned to be the worst road in Maury County, with remnants of Old McCutcheon's Buffalo Trace reverted to cow paths and mud holes. The troops plunged on to the Battle of Franklin. Nearly one third of these men had no idea they would die by sundown the next day.

# Iron Bridge to Columbia City Dam

MILES  
2.9



**HIGHLIGHTS:** ●  
133.5 Ashton Mill\*

**CAUTIONS:** ●  
133.5 portage (west/right bank)  
Columbia City Dam shoals/hydraulics below dam - slack water with very few spots to stop

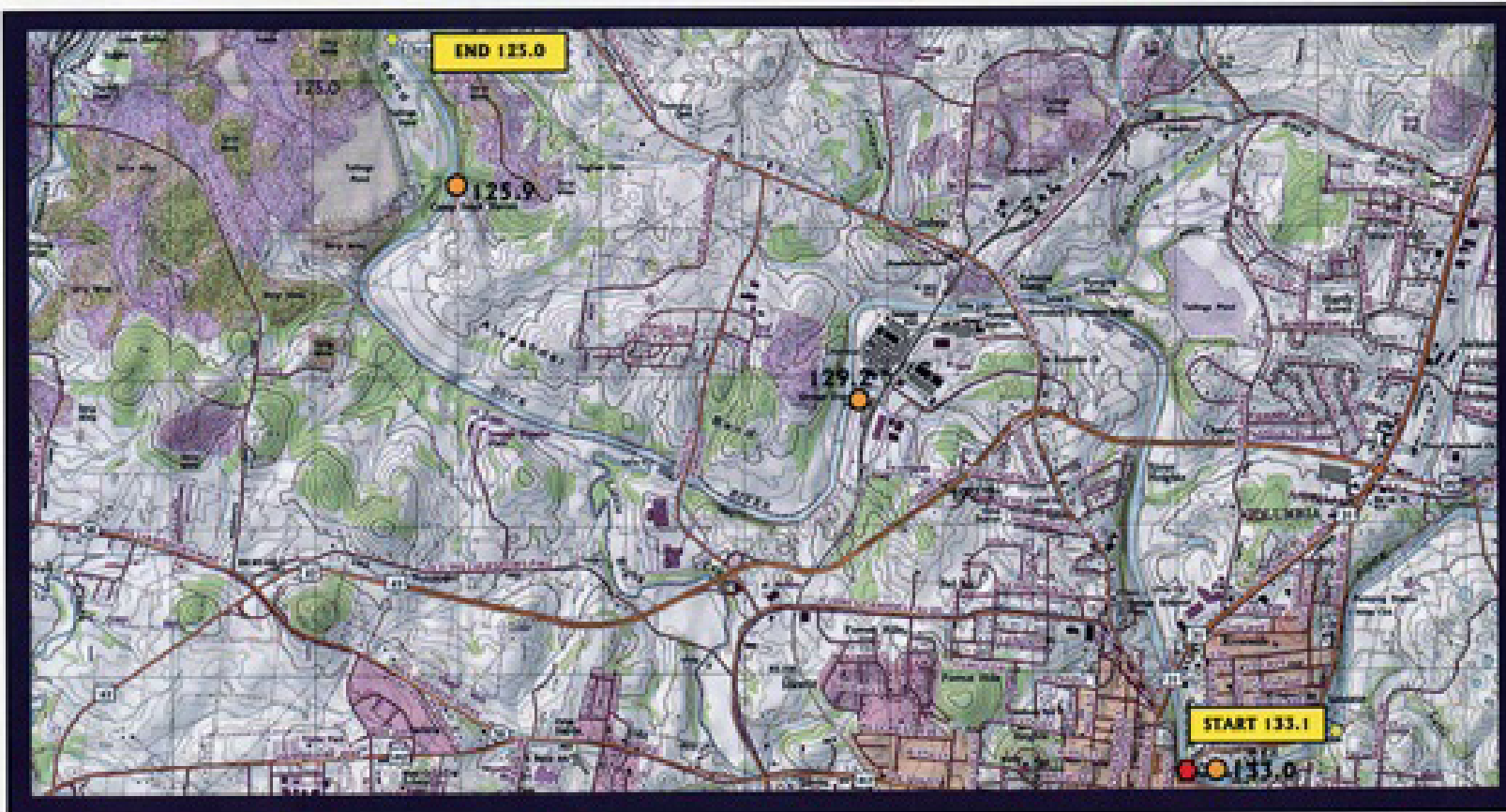
## FLOAT FACTOID: *Ashton Mills*

\*A grist mill was petitioned in 1819 by Joseph Brown and built by William Horsley in 1826. After many owners, the mill burned in 1862 during the Civil War. It was rebuilt by J.B. Ashton and destroyed by floods in 1874. A large flour and grist mill was rebuilt and operated into the late 1940s.



# Riverside Drive to Chickasaw Trace Park

MILES  
8.4



## FLOAT FACTOID:

This float passes by six different bridges - Riverside, Harlan, Highway 412 bypass, Sante Fe, Railroad and the Industrial Road bridge.

\*Columbia, pre-Civil War riverport, main landing here. Twice per year, during freshets, boats moved goods downstream to Tennessee and Mississippi Rivers.

### HIGHLIGHTS: ●

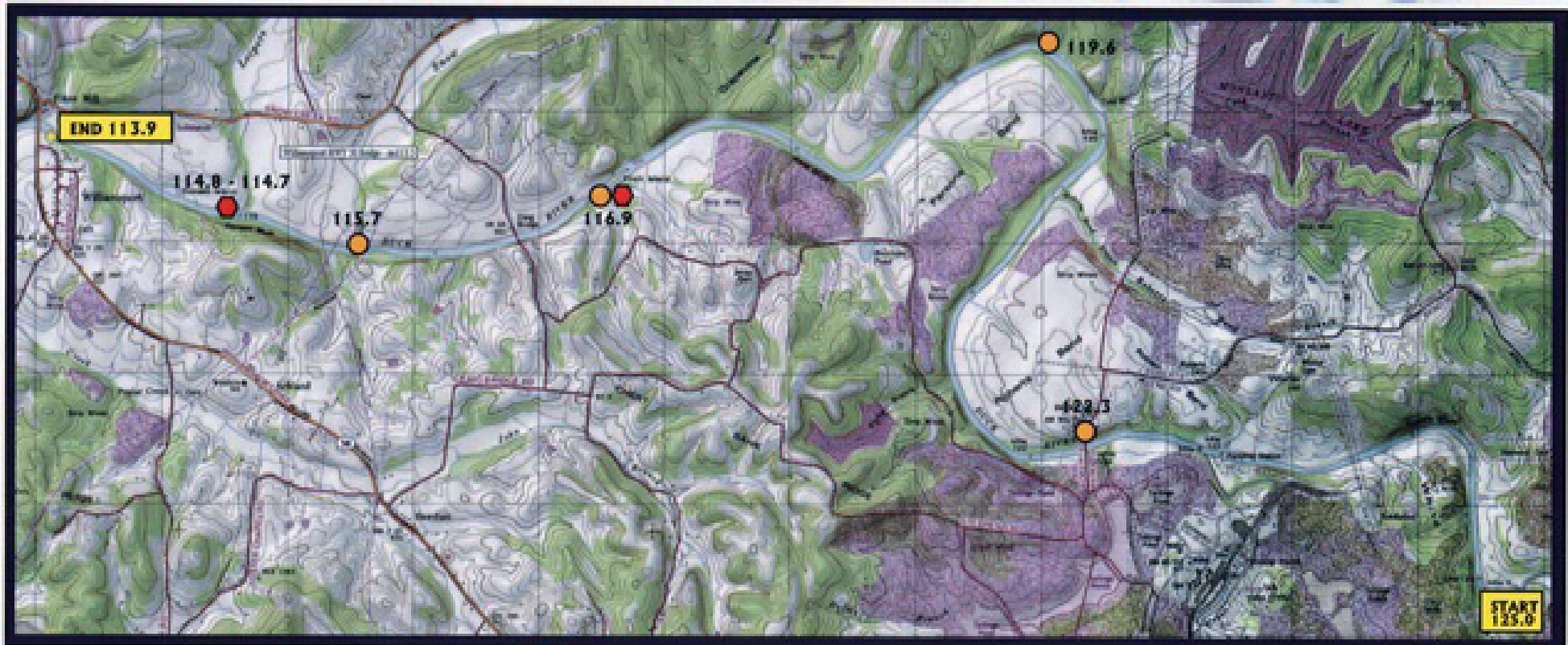
- 133.0 Old bridge pier remnants - shoals
- 129.2 Fish trap remnants
- 125.9 Fish trap remnants

### CAUTIONS: ●

- 133.0 Old bridge pier remnants - rough shoals\*

# Chickasaw Trace Park to Williamsport Bridge

MILES  
11.3



## HIGHLIGHTS: ●

- 122.3 Lock & dam remnants
- 119.6 Fish trap remnants
- 116.9 Fish trap remnants
- 115.7 Middle TN railroad bridge remains

## CAUTIONS: ●

- 116.9 Fish trap remnants (Finche Island) - rocky shoals
- 114.8 - 114.7 Rocky shoals from fish trap remnants (Dorset Island)

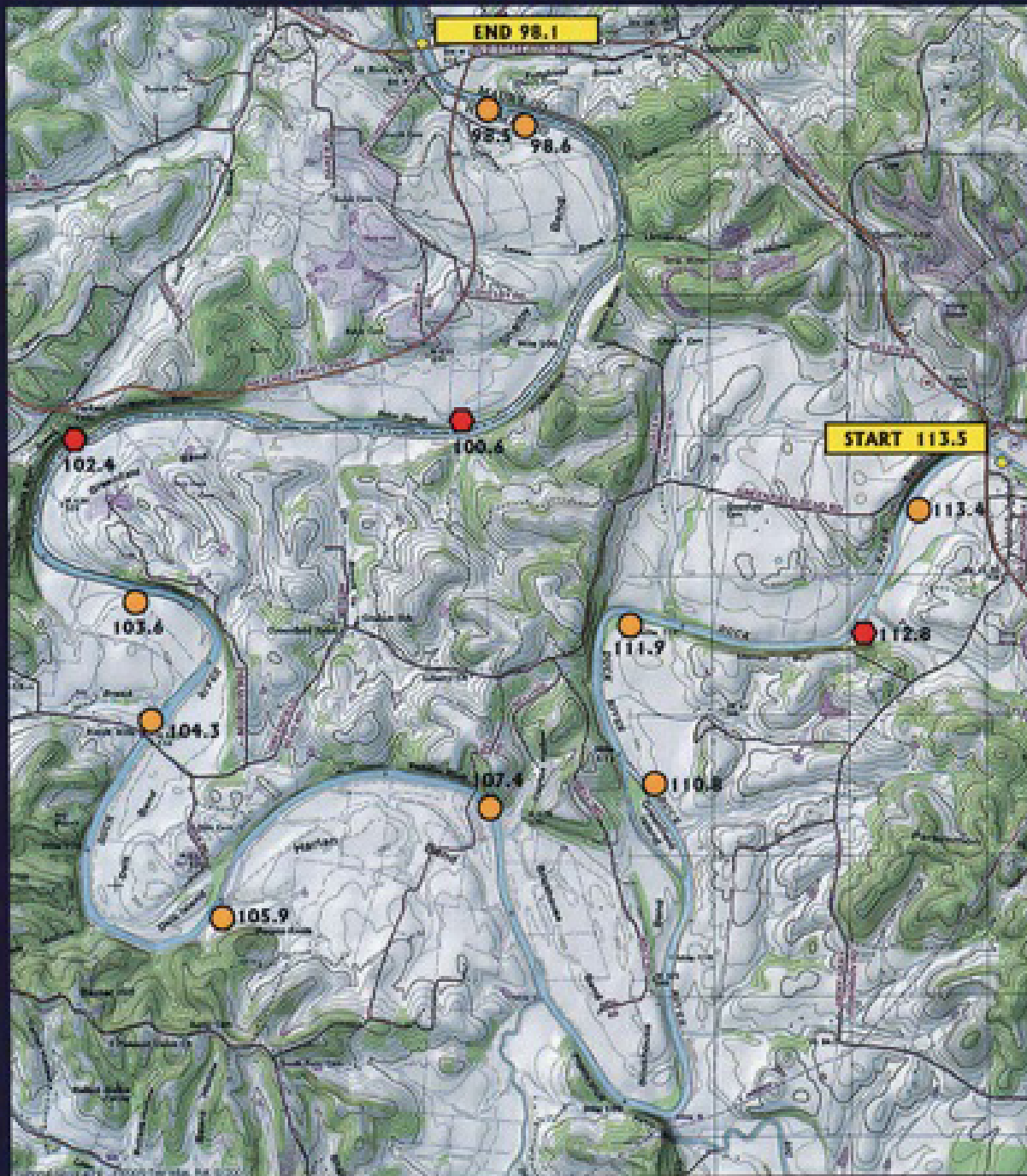
## FLOAT FACTOID:

A navigation lock & dam (built 1850 - 1851) was identified as one of two sites that Duck River Slack Water Navigation Company worked on prior to being shut down by the Chancery Court of Maury Count in 1853. This is now private property.





## Williamsport Bridge to Highway 50 Bridge



### HIGHLIGHTS: ●

- 113.4 Fish trap remnants
- 111.9 Shoals/strainers
- 110.8 Fish trap remnants (Greenfield Island)
- 107.4 Old phosphate bridge remnants (private property)
- 105.9 Fish trap remnants (Baxter)
- 104.3 Kettle milldam remnants
- 103.6 Double fish trap remnants (Anderson)
- 98.6 Remnants of fish trap
- 98.5 Gordon's Ferry

### CAUTIONS: ●

- 112.8 Shoals
- 102.4 Shoals/strainers/ trunks/large eddy (Jackson Falls)
- 100.6 Mysterious rock wall remnants shoals/strainers

**MILES**  
**16.1**

*\*This is a 2-day float*



## Important Information

### LINKS AND INFORMATION:

The TVA link below gives reservoir elevations, up-to-date discharge rates and discharge predictions for several days.

<http://www.tva.gov/river/lakeinfo/index.htm>

The USGS link below gives hourly river levels, water temperatures and flow information at several sites on the Duck River.

<http://waterdata.usgs.gov/tn/nwis/rt>

The Duck River Agency site below will have the float maps for downloads.

[www.duckriveragency.org](http://www.duckriveragency.org)

### EMERGENCY NUMBERS:

In case of an emergency, call 911 to notify the proper Rural Rescue squads.

### STEWARDSHIP:

Please be respectful during your float and help keep the Duck River clean by following the guidelines below:

- Dispose of waste properly and leave no trace.
- Leave what you find in the natural state you came across it.
- Respect wildlife.
- Be considerate of other visitors.
- Respect private property.

### SAFETY TIPS:

The best canoe trips are the result of proper planning and preparation. Make your trip the best by preparing for your paddling adventure adequately.

- Check water conditions in advance (see links section to the left).
- Check weather conditions.
- Carry a first aid kit.
- Scout river features before approaching.
- Carry the appropriate amount of food, water and supplies necessary.
- Don't go on the blind side of a bend.
- Take caution when coming upon shoals. Always stop and look first.
- Use extra caution after floods. Water channels will change.