

Wayne County Paddle Trails consist of over 70 miles of interconnected rivers, streams, and tributaries that twist and wind throughout Wayne County.

The main artery of water, the Neuse River, is the 2nd largest estuarine system in the United States. The Neuse is a flat, slow moving body of water that is ideal for paddling. Dense canopies of trees drape across the narrower sections of the river, and an abundance of wildlife can be seen along its sandy banks.

History is rich along the Neuse River. The river has carved its path throughout eastern North Carolina for more than 2 million years. Tuscarora, Coree, Neusiok, and Secotan tribes settled along the Neuse's banks over 14,000 years ago. In 1584, two English captains, Arthur Barlowe and Phillip Armadas, were commissioned by Sir Walter Raleigh to explore the area. In their report to Raleigh, they wrote favorably of the Indian population in "...the country Neusiok, situated upon a goodly river called Neuse". In 1709, John Lawson led a small expedition along the Neuse River. He published an account of his travels and named it *A New Voyage to Carolina*. After a brief visit back to England, Lawson returned to the territory in 1711 with his associate, Christopher von Graffenried. They were captured by Tuscarora Indians while ascending the Neuse River. The Tuscarora tribe released von Graffenried, but Lawson was tortured and killed. Shortly thereafter, tensions between Indians and settlers erupted into the bloody conflict known as the Tuscarora War.



After the war, supplies and cargo could be transported safely by boats, rafts, and eventually, steamboats on the river. Settlements began to spring up along the river. The two largest were Seven Springs and Waynesborough.



### Little River Continued:

At mile marker 64, the trail will skirt Edwards Road (Johnston County SR 2372), as it continues eastward. Continuing east on the Little River Trail it will cross Capps Bridge Road (SR 1234) at mile 68.5.

Mileage: 5.5 Miles  
Skill Level: Intermediate/Expert  
Difficulty: Moderate/Difficult  
Time Required: 3 to 5 Hours

Access Points:  
(1) Raines Mill/Pikeville-Princeton Road (Johnston County SR 1002)  
(2) Capps Bridge Road (SR 1234)

**Section 2:** Capps Bridge Road (SR 1234) to NC 581 — 6 Miles — Section 2 of the Wayne County Little River Trail begins at the Capps Bridge Road (SR 1234) at mile 68.5 and continues eastward to NC 581 to mile 74.5.

Mileage: 6 Miles  
Skill Level: Beginner/ Intermediate  
Difficulty: Moderate  
Time Required: 3 to 5 Hours

Access Points:  
(1) Capps Bridge Road (SR 1234)  
(2) NC 581

In 1781, Cornwallis and his troops marched across the Neuse in the vicinity of Waynesborough on their way to Yorktown. Waynesborough was incorporated as the County Seat in 1787 and continued to thrive until the 1840s. When the Weldon Wilmington rail was built in 1839 just a few miles away, river traffic slowed. Businesses began to leave Waynesborough and settled along the rail at Goldsborough Junction. In 1847, Goldsborough became the new County Seat, and Waynesborough became a virtual ghost town.

The Neuse River played a major role in the Civil War. On October 17, 1862, a contract was signed between the Confederate Navy Department and the ship building firm of Howard & Ellis to construct an ironclad gunboat. The vessel *Neuse*, as it would later be identified, was one of 22 ironclads constructed and commissioned by the Confederate Government.

Remnants of the ironclad can still be seen at the CSS *Neuse* State Historic Site in Kinston. Two months later, in December of 1862, General John G. Foster marched his Union forces from New Bern to Goldsborough. The Union objectives of the Goldsborough Campaign (also known as Foster's Raid) were to take the bridge at Whitehall (present-day Seven Springs), destroy the CSS *Neuse*, and proceed by shorter route to destroy the rail line at Goldsborough. The Confederates had a superior defensive position, and they burned the bridge to prevent the Union forces from crossing. The Union army spent most of the day of December 16 bombarding the town with artillery fire to destroy the Confederate defenses and to attempt to destroy the boat. Meanwhile, Union riflemen aimed sniping fire at the Confederate forces defending the boat. The boat was damaged, and the town was leveled.

**Section 3:** NC 581 to US 70 — 8.25 Miles — Section 3 of the Wayne County Little River Trail begins at NC 581 at mile 74.5 and continues eastward to US Highway 70 to mile 82.75.

Mileage: 8.25 Miles  
Skill Level: Beginner/ Intermediate  
Difficulty: Moderate  
Time Required: 3 to 5 Hours

Access Points:  
(1) NC 581  
(2) US Highway 70

**Section 4:** US Highway 70 to NC 581 (Cherry Hospital) — 1.5 Miles — Section 4 of the Wayne County Little River Trail begins at US Highway 70 and continues eastward to NC 581 (Cherry Hospital) to mile 84.2.

Mileage: 1.5 Miles  
Skill Level: Beginner/ Intermediate  
Difficulty: Moderate  
Time Required: 1 to 2 Hours

Access Points:  
(1) US Highway 70  
(2) NC 581 (Cherry Hospital)

**Section 5:** NC 581 (Cherry Hospital) to Waynesborough Park — 2.8 Miles — Section 5 of the Wayne County Little River Trail begins at NC 581 (Cherry Hospital) and continues eastward to the mouth of Little River with the Neuse River and continues downstream to Waynesborough Park. The Little River section is 1.8 miles, and the Neuse River section is 1 mile.

Mileage: 2.8 Miles  
Skill Level: Beginner/ Intermediate  
Difficulty: Moderate  
Time Required: 1 to 2 Hours

Access Points:  
(1) NC 581 (Cherry Hospital)  
(2) Waynesborough Park

Near the end of the day on December 16, the Union abandoned their attempt to cross the river at Whitehall and withdrew to the west. They crossed the Neuse River between Whitehall and Mount Olive and continued on to the engagement at Goldsborough. Foster's army arrived at the railroad bridge south of Goldsborough on the morning of December 17. After two days of intense fighting, the vital railroad bridge near Goldsborough was destroyed, temporarily halting the flow of supplies from the Deep South and the port at Wilmington to Virginia. Because of the importance of the Goldsborough Bridge to the Confederate chain of supply, men and engineers were rushed to the site and the bridge was rebuilt in a matter of weeks. The bridge still stands today.

### Points of Interest Along the Way:

**Cherry Research Farm** — Part of the Center for Environmental Farming Systems (CEFS). One of the nation's largest centers for the study of environmentally sustainable farming practices. CEFS is a cooperative effort with NCSU, NCA&T, and the NC Department of Agriculture.

201 Stevens Mill Road  
www.cefs.ncsu.edu  
919-731-3270

**Cherry Hospital Museum** — Opened in 1880 by the state for African Americans with mental illness, Cherry Hospital was opened to all races in 1965. The museum depicts over a century of history with photographs, log books, and a variety of authentic medical equipment. Call to schedule an appointment.

201 Stevens Mill Road  
www.cherryhospital.org/museum  
919-731-3417

**Waynesborough Historical Village** — This recreated village borders the Neuse River and the Little River. Step back in time and wander through the 11 structures



### Neuse River Trail:

The Wayne County section of the Neuse River Paddle Trail begins where Mill Creek joins the Neuse River, approximately 80.5 miles below the Falls Lake Dam. The paddle trail follows the Neuse River through Wayne County to Seven Springs, which is located at mile 124.5. The total distance for the Neuse River Paddle Trail through Wayne County is 44 miles.

The paddle trail is divided into the following sections:

**Section 1:** Option 1 — Richardson Bridge Road to Ferry Bridge Road — 7.2 Miles — There are two options for beginning the Neuse River Paddle Trail in western Wayne County. The paddler can begin the trail on the Neuse River at the NC Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) access at Richardson Bridge Road (SR 1201), located at mile point 76.1. From there the paddler can paddle down the Neuse River to the NCWRC access at Ferry Bridge Road (SR 1224), which is located at mile 83.3.

Mileage: 7.2 Miles  
Skill Level: Beginner/ Intermediate  
Difficulty: Moderate  
Time Required: 1 to 2 Hours

Access Points:  
(1) Richardson Bridge Road (SR 1201) NCWRC Access  
(2) Ferry Bridge Road (SR 1224) NCWRC Access

that comprise the park, dating back to the 1800s. Enjoy a picnic, hike, or fish. Waynesborough Village has over 150 acres to enjoy with five miles of walking trails, boat launches, and fishing sites. Camping and restroom facilities are also available.

801 US 117 South  
www.waynesboroughhistoricalvillage.com  
919-731-1653

**Goldsborough Bridge Battlefield** — Located on 32 acres of the original 1862 battlefield site. The rail fenced parking area contains a Civil War Trails historical marker which details some of the events of Foster's Raid and the Battle of Goldsborough Bridge. An informational kiosk provides visitors with a battlefield map and further information. Walking trails surround the battlefield. Two sets of well preserved earthworks may be viewed, as well as the site of the Wilmington & Weldon Railroad Bridge, the objective of the Union army.

Old Mt. Olive Highway  
www.goldsboroughbridge.com

**Seven Springs** — Nestled along the banks of the Neuse River, Seven Springs is the oldest town in Wayne County. Visit Seven Springs United Methodist Church or the "Church on the Hill." This historic building was built in 1874 and overlooks the village. Feast on mouth-watering "down home" cooking at one of the downtown restaurants or enjoy one of our local festivals.

Town of Seven Springs  
301 W. Spring Street, Seven Springs, NC 28578  
www.sevenspringsnc.org  
252-569-5241

**Cliffs of the Neuse State Park** — The cliffs, towering 90 feet above the Neuse River, show the magnificently chiseled results of the mighty force of erosion. The

**Section 2:** Option 2 — Mill Creek to Ferry Bridge Road — 3.6 Miles — The second option is to begin the paddle trail at the Mill Creek Bridge (SR 1200) and paddle to the NCWRC access at Ferry Bridge Road (SR 1224). The Mill Creek Bridge is located approximately 0.75 miles upstream of the creek's intersection with the Neuse River. The mouth of Mill Creek is located at mile point 80.5 on the Neuse River. The NCWRC access at Ferry Bridge Road is located at mile point 83.3 on the Neuse River.

Mileage: 3.6 Miles  
Skill Level: Beginner/ Intermediate  
Difficulty: Moderate  
Time Required: 1.5 to 2 Hours

Access Points:  
(1) Mill Creek Road Bridge (SR 1200) NCWRC Access  
(2) Ferry Bridge Road (SR 1224) NCWRC Access

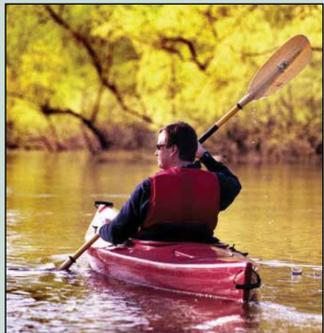
**Section 3:** Ferry Bridge Road to Stevens Mill Road NCWRC access — 8.5 Miles — The paddler will launch at the NCWRC access at Ferry Bridge Road, at Neuse River mile point 83.3 and paddle downstream. Paddling this section of the Neuse River, the paddler will pass Progress Energy's H.F. Lee Power Plant and its large ponds. This section of the river provides numerous opportunities for viewing birds. Continuing past the Power Plant facility, the paddler will approach the NCWRC access at Stevens Mill Road at mile point 91.75.

Mileage: 8.5 Miles  
Skill Level: Beginner/ Intermediate  
Difficulty: Moderate  
Time Required: 2.5 to 3.5 Hours

Access Points:  
(1) Ferry Bridge Road (SR 1224) NCWRC Access  
(2) Stevens Mill Road (SR 1008) NCWRC Access

multicolored cliff face reveals layers of sand, clay, seashells, shale, and gravel. The 751-acre park is on the NC Birding Trails, www.ncbirdingtrail.org. In addition to year-round bird watching, Cliffs of the Neuse State Park offers hiking, kayaking, canoeing, fishing, picnicking, and camping. During the summer months, an eleven-acre, man-made lake provides enjoyment to swimmers, sunbathers, and paddlers. An interpretive museum is open year round and features creative dioramas and audiovisuals, which depict the geology and natural history of the area. The park is home to more than 420 plant species and a host of animal species.

345-A Park Entrance Road  
Seven Springs, NC 28578  
www.ncparks.gov  
919-778-6234



For more information on other attractions, festivals, lodging, and restaurants, visit www.visitgoldsboronc.com or call 866-440-2245.

**Section 4:** Stevens Mill Road NCWRC access at Waynesborough Park — 8.2 Miles — Leaving the access at mile point 91.75 continue downstream towards Goldsboro. At mile point 92.4, cross under the bridge on Stevens Mill Road (SR 1008). Continue downstream. At the 95.8 mile point you will approach a four-way cross in the river. Take the left or northern leg of the cross, and continue towards Goldsboro. At mile point 99.6, you will pass the mouth of the Little River as it enters the Neuse River. Continue paddling to mile point 100.6 and you will approach Waynesborough Historical Village, located on the left side of the river. Step back in time and wander through the 11 structures that date back to the 1800's. The structures include Grange Hall, a doctor's office, a Quaker Meeting House, a print shop, a schoolhouse, and a working black smith shop. Waynesborough Village has over 150 acres to enjoy with hiking trails, picnic areas, restrooms, and overnight camping facilities. For more information, call 919-731-1653 or visit online, www.waynesboroughhistoricalvillage.com

Mileage: 8.2 Miles  
Skill Level: Beginner/ Intermediate  
Difficulty: Moderate  
Time Required: 2.5 to 3.5 Hours

Access Points:  
(1) Stevens Mill Road (SR 1008) NCWRC Access  
(2) Waynesborough Park

**Section 5:** Waynesborough Park to Goldsboro (US 117 South) NCWRC access — 2.1 Miles — Leaving the park at mile point 100.6, continue paddling downstream. As you approach mile point 102.7 you will see the Goldsboro (US 117 South) NCWRC access on the left.

Mileage: 2.1 Miles  
Skill Level: Beginner/ Intermediate  
Difficulty: Moderate  
Time Required: 1 to 2 Hours

Access Points:  
(1) Waynesborough Park  
(2) Goldsboro (US 117 South) NCWRC Access

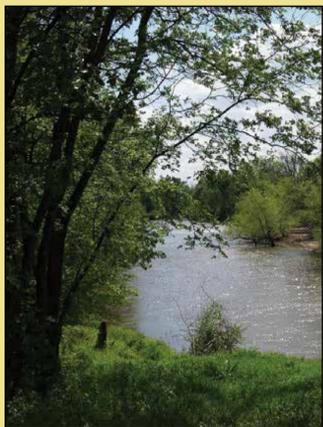


### Mill Creek Trail:

Mill Creek begins in Johnston County near Benson as Hannah Creek. Northwest of the Tuscarora Boy Scout Reservation, Hannah Creek joins Mill Creek and assumes the name of Mill Creek. The creek, up to this point, is fairly narrow and in many places it is difficult to determine the channel of the stream.

Just east of the bridge crossing Mill Creek on Richardson Bridge Road (SR 1201), Mill Creek becomes the boundary between Johnston and Wayne Counties. The county boundary follows Mill Creek eastward to its juncture with the Neuse River.

The Wayne County section of Mill Creek begins at the Mill Creek Bridge on Richardson Bridge Road (SR 1201) in Johnston County. The trail terminates at its juncture with the Neuse River approximately 3.7 miles downstream. To continue the trail from this point, the paddler will follow the Neuse River approximately



**Section 6:** Goldsboro (US 117 South) NCWRC access to Price's Landings NCWRC access — 6.8 Miles — Leaving Goldsboro (US 117 South) NCWRC access at mile point 102.7, continue paddling downstream. At mile point 103.2, you will approach the US 117 bridges and at mile point 105.2 you will approach the bridge on Arrington Bridge Road. At mile point 103.6, you will approach the Goldsborough Battlefield Civil War site located on your right. This is the site of the battle of Goldsborough Bridge, where on Dec. 17, 1862, some 2,000 Confederate forces attempted to stop Union Gen. John Foster's 12,000 troops from destroying a vital railroad bridge. The bridge, located south of the city over the Neuse River, was a key position for both Union and Confederate forces. To date, the battlefield boasts a Civil War Trails marker, battlefield monument, informational kiosks, period snake rail fencing, and original earthworks. A live reenactment to commemorate the anniversary of

the battle is held in December. For more information, visit www.goldsboroughbridge.com.

Continuing east, you will pass the bridge on Arrington Bridge Road. Just past the bridge, you will be approaching Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, which will be located on your left. On your right is the City of Goldsboro Water Treatment Plant. You will leave the Air Force Base as you paddle past mile point 107. Continue paddling downstream and you will approach the Price's Landing NCWRC access at mile point 109.5, which will be on your right. The access is located just past the NC 581 Bridge.

Mileage: 6.8 Miles  
Skill Level: Beginner/ Intermediate  
Difficulty: Moderate  
Time Required: 3.5 to 5 Hours

Access Points:  
(1) Goldsboro (US 117 South) NCWRC Access  
(2) Price's Landing (NC 581) NCWRC Access

**Section 7:** Price's Landing (NC 581) NCWRC access to Slick Rock Road — 4.25 Miles — Leaving Price's Landing continue paddling downstream. This section of the river is mostly undeveloped and offers many opportunities for wildlife and bird viewing. At mile point 103.75 the Neuse River will parallel Slick Rock Road (SR 2050).

Mileage: 4.25 Miles  
Skill Level: Beginner/ Intermediate  
Difficulty: Moderate  
Time Required: 2 to 4 Hours

Access Points:  
(1) Price's Landing (NC 581) NCWRC Access  
(2) Slick Rock Road (SR 2050)

**Section 8:** Slick Rock Road (SR 2050) to NC Highway 111 South Broadhurst Bridge — 2.4 Miles — Leaving Slick Rock Road (SR 2050) continue paddling downstream. At mile point 116.1 you will approach NC Highway 111 and the Broadhurst Bridge.

Mileage: 2.4 Miles  
Skill Level: Beginner/ Intermediate

### Falling Creek Trail:

The Falling Creek Trail begins at Old Grantham Road (SR 1219) near the Wayne County community of Grantham, southwest of Goldsboro. From the bridge crossing on Old Grantham Road, the paddler will paddle in a northerly direction towards the Neuse River.

At approximately 3.2 miles, approach the bridge crossing on Stevens Mill Road (SR 1008). After passing the bridge, continue on the trail for approximately two more miles, where Falling Creek joins the Neuse River. The mouth of Falling Creek is approximately 0.2 miles east of the NC Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) access at Ferry Bridge Road, where the paddler can paddle upstream to the access to end the paddling outing.

Mileage: 5.3 Miles (5.1 miles on Falling Creek and 0.2 miles on the Neuse River)  
Skill Level: Beginner/Intermediate  
Difficulty: Easy/Moderate  
Time Required: 3 to 5 Hours

Access Points:  
(1) Old Grantham Road Bridge Crossing (SR 1219)  
(2) Stevens Mill Road Bridge Crossing (SR 1008)  
(3) Ferry Bridge Road (SR 1224) NCWRC Access

### Little River Trail:

While the Little River flows through Wayne County, it begins in Franklin County near the Town of Youngsville. On its way to Wayne County, it passes through Wake and Johnston Counties. It also passes near towns such as Wake Forest, Zebulon, Wendell, and Princeton.

To provide continuity of the Little River Trail from its beginning to end, the mileage of the Wayne County section will begin at mile marker 63 at the Rains Mill/

Pikeville-Princeton Road (SR 1002) bridge crossing. The Wayne County section of the Little River Trail is 24 miles long.

Just west of Wayne County/Johnston County, the Little River Trail can be accessed at the Little River Bridge crossing on the Rains Mill/Pikeville-Princeton Road (SR 1002) in Johnston County. This bridge crossing is the beginning of the Little River Paddle Trail in Wayne County.

The river around the Rains Mill/Pikeville-Princeton Road (SR 1002) bridge is a rock garden area, with many large boulders in the waterway, forming several Class I and Class II rapids. During low water, these rapids may be difficult to run due to the lack of water flow.

Almost one mile below the Rains Mill/Pikeville-Princeton Road (SR 1002), a small island divides the river into two separate channels. Either of the channels should be passable, although they may require a short portage for down trees.

Traversing through Wayne County, the Little River flows through the rural country side of the county. Large segments of the trail pass through pine and hardwood forests that provide glimpses of beautiful agriculture fields, peppered with rural homesites.

The Wayne County section of the Little River Trail is divided into five sections and are described as:

**Section 1:** Raines Mill/Pikeville-Princeton Road to Capps Bridge Road — 5.5 Miles — The first section of the Wayne County Little River Trail begins at the Rains Mill/Pikeville-Princeton Road (SR 1002) bridge at mile marker 63.

Continued...



Mileage: 11 Miles  
Skill Level: Beginner/ Intermediate  
Difficulty: Moderate  
Time Required: 6 to 10 Hours

Access Points:  
(1) NC Highway 111 South Broadhurst Bridge  
(2) Seven Springs (Main Street, SR 1731) NCWRC Access

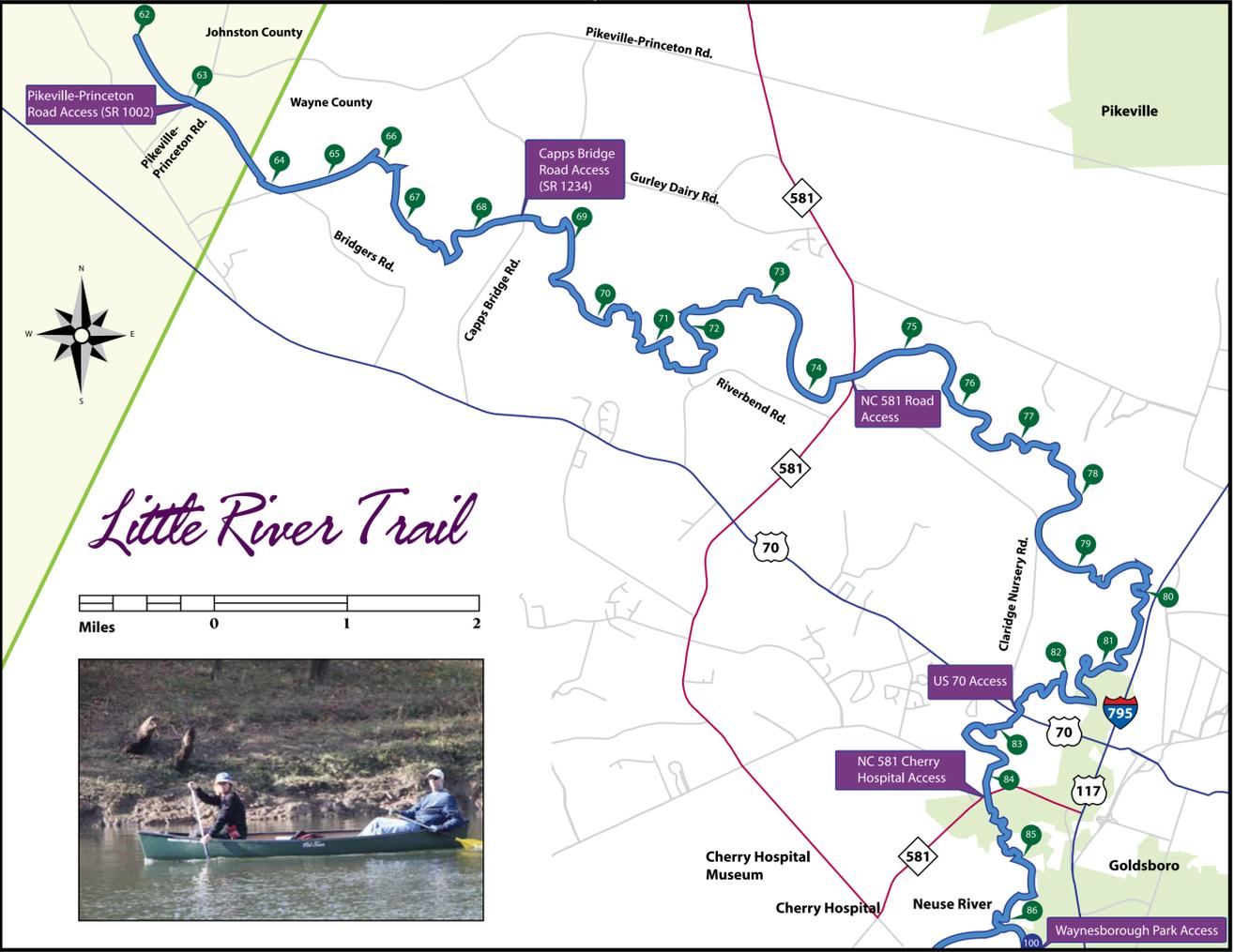
The Seven Springs access is the last access point to the Neuse River in Wayne County. At mile point 126, the river enters into Lenoir County. At mile point 126.7, NC Highway 903 crosses the Neuse River.

**Guide Disclaimer & Safety Tips:**

- The Neuse and Little Rivers are generally slow moving; however during periods of high rainfall the level of the rivers can increase significantly. During these periods, caution should be followed when planning outings. Stream flow data can be obtained at: <http://waterwatch.usgs.gov>, which can help the paddler in making their decision to paddle. This publication is not intended for use as a navigational map for any of the waterways in Wayne County.
- Water activities are inherently dangerous and can involve dangers of serious personal injury, property damage, or even death. Rivers are natural environments that contain hazards and constantly changing conditions. Evaluate your decision to paddle on any waterway based on your awareness of the potential dangers and risks and your own skill level and knowledge.
- The information provided here is designed for informational use and not a substitute for specific training, experience, or research of river conditions. Wayne County Travel and Tourism and its partners assume no liability for any individual's use of or reliance upon any material contained or referenced herein. Beware that conditions of the waterways could have changed since the printing of this publication.
- Most of the property adjacent to the Wayne County waterways is privately owned. Always ask permission before entering private land, you may not trespass on any privately owned shorelines without permission.



- Travel times described in this publication are only estimates, and actual travel times will be affected by existing conditions of the waterways.
- Mileages identified in this publication are approximate and are provided for general information on the length of segments described.
- Every attempt has been made to insure accuracy; however, some portions may not be shown to scale nor identify all landmarks and hazards. Use of USGS and other maps for the area of exploration is highly recommended.
- Paddling is an inherently dangerous sport. Paddlers should know their limitations and use common sense. Precautions should be taken to avoid accidents or injuries.
- Follow accepted safety practices while on the water and carry safety equipment. Observe all rules and regulations as governed by the US Coast Guard and the NC Wildlife Resources Commission.
- File a float plan with someone who will not be participating in your paddling outing, including your expected return time.
- Wayne County emergency services can be reached by dialing 911.



*Neuse River Trail*



Match Line for Neuse River Trail