

# PASCAGOULA RIVER GEORGE COUNTY

**THE PASCAGOULA RIVER BLUEWAY** is almost 22 miles in length and is best for experienced and intermediate paddlers because of distance between access points and strong currents. Those hoping to enjoy fish and wildlife in the slower backwaters should visit Points of Interest accessible by road just off the main river. The Pascagoula River is formed where the Leaf and Chickasawhay Rivers join. It is allowed to move naturally (no dams) over 80 miles where it empties into the Mississippi Sound. Over 50,000 acres are now protected for conservation along the stunning landscapes of the free-flowing river.

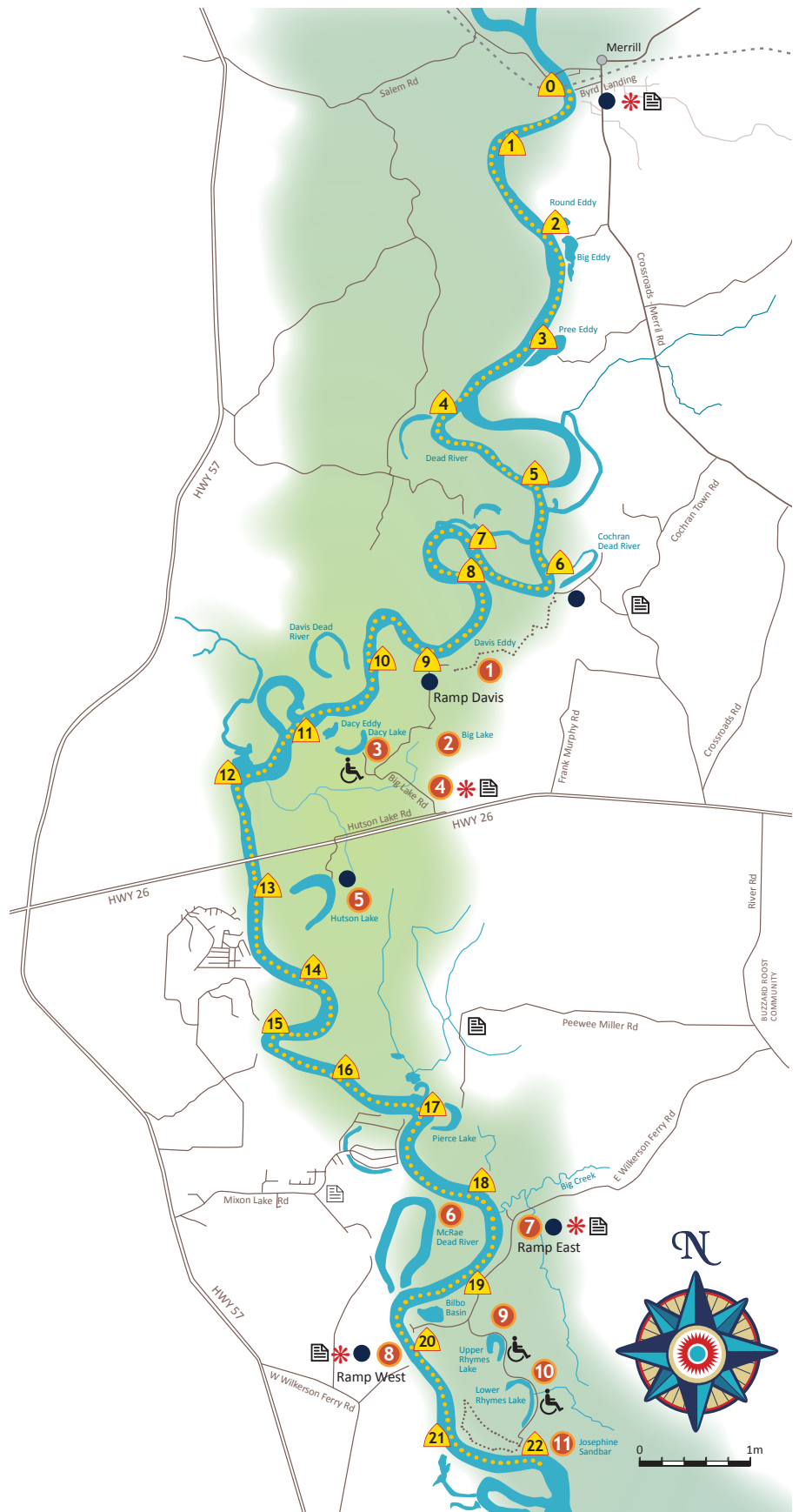
**Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs)** are lands set aside to conserve Mississippi's wildlife resources. Within the Pascagoula River WMA hunting, fishing, camping, hiking, wildlife watching, and boating are all acceptable activities. Aside from the river, visitors may see oxbow lakes and other backwater sloughs, cypress-tupelo swamps, small creeks, pine savanna and longleaf pine forests within the 37,000 acres of the Pascagoula River WMA. Within this fascinating landscape of habitats, over 327 species of birds live or migrate each year to feed, nest and roost. Deer are plentiful; fox, river otters, beaver, skunks, bobcat, alligators, snakes and even black bear can be found within the river habitats.

**MAP LEGEND**

|                    |  |  |                   |
|--------------------|--|--|-------------------|
| Mile Marker        |  |  | Information Kiosk |
| Canoe/Kayak Launch |  |  | Permit Station    |
| Blueway Trail      |  |  | Handicap Pier     |
| Point of Interest  |  |  | Hiking Trail      |

---

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| <b>LEVEL</b>         | Intermediate to Experienced                      |
| <b>START/END</b>     | Merrill  |
| <b>TRAIL MILES</b>   | 22 miles in length                               |
| <b>PADDLING TIME</b> | 8 hours  |
| <b>DESCRIPTION</b>   | River currents and deep water                    |
| <b>SCENERY</b>       | Bottomland Hardwoods, Oxbow Lakes, Cypress Ponds |
| <b>ACCESS</b>        | Several Public Boat Launches                     |





## Points of Interest

Often called "Bird Lake", **1** Davis Eddy Lake is a must-see for nesting herons and egrets in the spring. For additional scenic views, hike the 2 mile nature trail to Cochran Dead River.

Big Lake **2** is a long, narrow lake that was most likely a "drowned" stream dammed naturally over time.

Dacy Lake **3**, a former river channel often called a "dead river" or oxbow, is a scenic locale ideal for nature and wildlife photography.

Just north of HWY 26 **4**, this area showcases many migratory songbirds in spring and fall as well as ducks and other waterfowl in winter and early spring.

Another former river channel now isolated from the main river, Hutson Lake **5** is a bird sanctuary easily accessible by road or boat launch.

McRae Dead River **6** is a former river channel of the Pascagoula River. From the water, paddlers can get a sense of how the river changes course over time. During high water events, the oxbow may be accessible to the main river channel. Access the area from Mixon Lake Road off Hwy 57.

Formerly the site of Wilkerson Ferry **7, 8**, a historic ferry carrying passengers across the river, the locations host primitive camping, port-a-lets, and running water (Artesian well).

Upper Rhymes **9** is home to large cypress and tupelo gum trees. Watch for alligators and wading birds amid the cypress knees and buttressed (swollen) trunks.

Lower Rhymes Lake **10** is another large oxbow that provides great opportunity for intrepid paddlers to get close to giant cypress and tupelo gum trees. Many wading birds and waterfowl use these areas for feeding and nesting.

Josephine Sandbar **11** is currently the largest accessible sandbar on the Pascagoula River. The site boasts an artesian well, a continuous source of freshwater.

All visitors must purchase and carry a WMA User Permit (purchased wherever licenses are sold). Permit use is strictly enforced. Additionally, visitors must complete a daily use permit card before entering the WMA. These permit cards are available at permit stations located at major entrances to the WMA. For questions about the Pascagoula River WMA, visit the website at [www.mdwfp.com/wma](http://www.mdwfp.com/wma) or call 228-588-3878.

### The Land Trust for the Mississippi Coastal Plain

works with landowners to conserve special places in perpetuity. With local, state and federal agencies, the Land Trust protects natural areas that benefit residents and visitors to south Mississippi: abundant seafood, rich timberlands, pristine water, and unsurpassed recreational activities. [www.ltmcp.org](http://www.ltmcp.org)

**The National Park Service** is collaborating with state and local agencies and organizations to promote the conservation, stewardship, and public use of the Pascagoula River, the last large unimpeded river system in the lower 48 states. The Pascagoula River Blueway is part of America's Great Outdoors Rivers Program to conserve and restore key rivers across the nation, expand recreational opportunities and support jobs in local communities.



AVOID PADDLING UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF DRUGS OR ALCOHOL. ALWAYS WEAR YOUR LIFE JACKET AND CARRY A WHISTLE OR OTHER SOUND PRODUCING DEVICE, PREFERABLY ATTACHED TO YOUR LIFE JACKET. PADDLERS SHOULD CHECK WATER LEVEL AND TIDES, WEATHER, AND WATERWAY CONDITIONS PRIOR TO EVERY TRIP. REMOVE WHAT YOU BRING, CLEAN UP MORE IF YOU CAN. AVOID TRESPASSING ON PRIVATE LANDS. PLEASE BE AWARE OF YOUR SURROUNDINGS AND ALWAYS RESPECT THE WILDLIFE. REPORT ANY PROBLEMS YOU ENCOUNTER TO THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES IF APPROPRIATE.

