



THE EDDY LINE

VOLUME 58 NO. 4

OCTOBER 2023

Inside this Issue:

- *Southeasterns—Page 2*
- *Nantahala Trip Report—Page 3*
- *Platform Camping on the Okefenokee—page 5*
- *Call for Tallulah volunteers—page 7*

2023-24 GCA Officer Candidates Announced

The Nominating Committee has finalized and the Board of Directors has approved a new slate of GCA Officers for the 2023-2024 term. A huge “Thank you!” goes out to these volunteers who are making themselves available as officers to ensure the continued viability of the club. Without this kind of support, the club could not continue to exist.



The candidates are:

President	Diane Windham
Vice President	Angi Hansen
Secretary	Susan Thompson
Treasurer	Vincent Payne

The election will take place at the Fall Membership Meeting & Paddle on October 15. Other nominations may be made from the floor at the meeting. Anyone being nominated must agree to serve if elected. Details of the meeting time and place are available in the newsletter and on the GCA web site at www.gapaddle.com. Your attendance and participation are encouraged.—EL

Southeasters

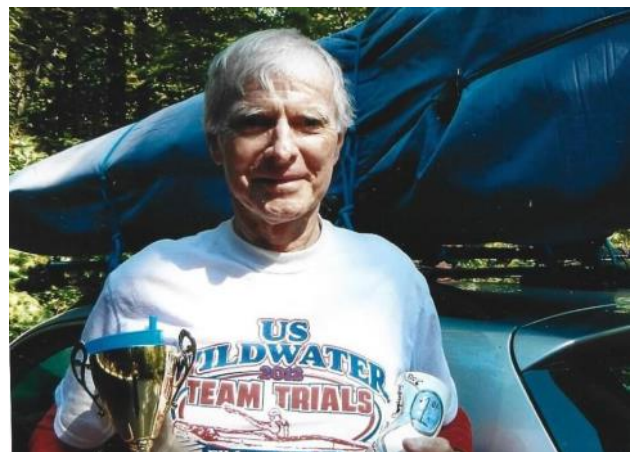
It's Southeasterns time!! GCA's 55th Annual Southeastern US Wildwater Championships, a 8-mile downriver race on the Nantahala, will be Sunday, October 22, 2023. There will categories for racers of all skills and boat types, and we can still use a few volunteers! This year we will also be cosponsoring the US Wildwater Team Trials with the American Canoe Association (ACA), which will attract top racers from throughout the nation (and also some competitors from Canada) in decked Wildwater racing Canadian canoes (C-1) and kayaks (K-1). The Team trials will begin Saturday afternoon, October 21, 2023, with sprint races. These exciting sprint races on will be great fun to watch. Their results will be combined with those from Sunday's "Classic," 8-mile race, to help determine our national team to compete 2024's Wildwater World Championship and World Cup races. For further information and to register for the Team Trials on both Saturday and Sunday see: [ACA | Canoe - Kayak - SUP - Raft - Rescue](#).

The registration fee for those competing in the downriver race is \$20 for current ACA members and \$30 for non-members. That includes a commemorative race T-Shirt and helps the club cover the permit and insurance costs for the race. Any remaining funds will go toward the GCA River Access Fund. Additional T-Shirts will be available for \$15 each while they last. Online registration and further information about Sunday's race is at: <https://www.gapaddle.com/calendar/#!/event/2023/10/22/southeastern-us-wildwater-championships-downriver-race-sunday-october-22-2023>. Late registration for Sunday's downriver race will be allowed Sunday morning from 9:00 to 10:00 a.m., though we do not guarantee to still have enough T-shirts in your size if you wait to register then. After you register online you will be directed to the ACA online waiver for the race. Please sign this even if you have already signed the ACA annual waiver (They are in two different systems.). You'll receive a confirmation email that your registration is complete.

Sunday's Race Schedule: All pre-race activities will be at at the Wayah Road USFS put-in; Racer Check-in - 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.; Volunteer Meeting - 10:00 a.m.; Competitor Meeting - 10:30 a.m.; Race Start (at 1 -minute Intervals) - 11:00 am. Parking and take-out will be at the Nantahala Outdoor Center on river, left where many of us will socialize and have lunch on our own after the race. The Awards Ceremony will begin when the results have been tabulated, soon after 1:00 p.m. at or near the Big Wesser Restaurant on river left next to the Founders' Bridge.

For further information and to volunteer to help, call or text GCA Racemaster Roger Nott at 678-316-4935 (rogernott@att.net).

This year's race is dedicated to the memory of Bern Collins, a former US Wildwater Team member who passed on 8/5/2023 at the age of 84. Bern raced in the Southeasterns for many years beginning in 1973 and was loved by all who knew him. - EL



TRIP REPORT NANTAHALA RIVER - JUNE 17, 2023

By Hank Klausman, Trip Coordinator

I am sitting here with both shoulders packed in ice. It was before cell phones and internet when I led my last GCA trip. Maybe at 83 I should let younger ones lead trips. I'd better write my recollections before my mind fades. We had big group of ten and picked up another a few miles in-more on that later.

Our four lady paddlers were Carol Moore my old friend from 20+ years ago who said she had not paddled in about 20 years, Kelly Harbac a very solid kayaker, Diane Windham and Joy, our mystery lady. We started with six guys: Eugene Blackwell who hand paddled. Roman Kol a very smooth paddler, Russell Dutta who was demoing a play boat, Shane Spikes a very strong paddler who was our lead boat most of the trip and Roger Nott, one of my oldest paddling buddies, in his open canoe who agreed to run sweep, which turned out to be a great help on one rescue.

The first concern was shuttle. Everyone came in their own car and was not sure who would be going north after take out and who going south. Eugene agreed to stay and guard the boats. We left 7 cars at the take out and brought 9 folks back up in two cars that would be going south later. My next concern was keeping that many boats together on the river. I've found the ideal size is 3 to 5, especially on tight or difficult rivers. I insist on always being able to see everyone in my group for safety. We discussed breaking into two groups, but decided to try to stay all together to start. Shane and Russell took turns as lead boat to show lines and get everyone into eddies below. Roger ran sweep in his open canoe which was perfect for one rescue. I stayed in the middle to herd cats.

The weather was perfect but the river very crowded. We had to wait at the put-in for the Kayak GA crowd to launch and on some rapids for raft flotillas to go past. The first rapid was Patton's Run and someone asked me if I run left of the rock or right. I didn't know there was a slot between the big rock coming from left bank and another kind of covered rock in almost mid river. I had always run to the right side into big waves. But when I eddied out below, I could see the channel and watched Eugene slide right down. After a mile or so, I saw a kayaker talking with some of our group. It turns out Mark James Wilson had started out with the Kayak Georgia mob and was seeking refuge with us. Mark was welcomed and took some photos which he posted on the GCA Facebook page.

We had four swims. About half way down, Eugene got sideways and slid into a rock which flipped him. He got himself to the left bank. We herded his boat below and got him back into his boat quickly. The next swim was more complicated with Diane. I didn't see her flip as she was upstream. When I looked, she was swimming to the right bank. But her boat drifted left. Shane, Russell and I pushed it into the left bank. Shane got out and drained her boat. We were discussing towing her boat to her. Then we saw Roger load Diane into his canoe and ferry her across. Having Roger as sweep was perfect.

Everyone one made it to the falls. Roger took his throw rope down and Kelly ran first and got into eddy below as chase
(continued, page 4)



Kelly Harbac at Nantahala Falls

(Nantahala trip report, continued from page 3)

boat. Joy wanted someone to follow. So, I told her I would run down center and go past the left edge of top hole, then straight into bottom wave/hole. She got messed up in the big waves on approach and flipped near the left bank. The current pushed her and her boat about mid river below the falls. Roger's rope toss was on target, almost landing in her boat's cockpit. But Joy was on other side and missed seeing the rope. Despite efforts by Shane, Russell and me, we could not get her and her boat out until the commercial take out on river right. Roman hit the big wave a bit sideways and overturned. I think Kelly helped him recover. I didn't see any of this as was busy with Joy. Somehow we all ended up at take out on river left. After, Joy, Roger and I



Hank Klausman on Nantahala Falls

stopped in Andrews to eat Mexican and relive the day. Go the NOC website to see every run at the Falls. Some pretty good stuff. And I met some new paddling buddies. Now I'll go change my ice packs. SYOTR, Hank
- EL



Roger Nott on Nantahala Falls

Keeping In Touch

To contact the GCA, write Georgia Canoeing Association, Inc., P.O. Box 611, Winston, GA 30187.

Groupmail: GCA maintains a group email list to help members share information of general interest. To sign up, send an e-mail to gcalist-subscribe@groups.io.

Website: Information about GCA, forms (including membership application and GCA waiver form), a link to the GCA Store and links to *Eddy Line* advertisers are all at <http://www.gapaddle.com>.

Facebook: Visit the GCA Facebook page for photos, video, trip reports, or to join an upcoming impromptu trip.

Overnight Platform Camping on the Okefenokee

If you're looking for untouched scenery, vast tracts of pristine nature, and nearly-guaranteed encounters with exotic wildlife, the Okefenokee Swamp should be near the top of your list. Located on the border of Georgia and Florida, it covers 700 square miles and is home to 620 species including 50 mammal, 39 fish, 37 amphibian, 64 reptile, and 234 bird species. Even a novice is likely to see alligators, ibis, and egrets, and different species of flowers bloom year round. If you're a less-robust paddler or squeamish about alligators, camping nearby and planning day paddles can be a good option. The park also offers guided tours in jon boats that hold 15-20 people. They sometimes fill, but I've also been lucky enough to have a tour with just myself and my two children, who wouldn't have been comfortable with any paddling near gators. (It's advised to keep children away from gators and pets aren't allowed on the swamp for good reason.) That said, if you're comfortable with all of the above, good with paddling distances on flat water, and know how to pack your boat for kayak camping, an overnight in the swamp on the platform can be an unforgettable experience to treasure. Despite having visited the Okefenokee a dozen or so times, I was surprised by a handful of things on my first overnight trip, so I'm sharing now in case they're useful for anyone else.

TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL TRIP

TIMING – the best times to visit are generally October through April, when bugs are at a minimum. Keep an eye out for cold snaps, and be sure to pack enough warm gear for cold nights on the platform.

PERMITS – Getting a permit can be a challenge. Plan to call 2 months in advance (Tue/Wed/Thu only), and set an alarm to start dialing early so you can be first in line for the 7 a.m. to 10 a.m. window. Even so, have a list of routes you're interested in doing – we actually had our top 12 choices mapped out (6 choices, forwards/backwards) and that seemed like ridiculous overkill until we found ourselves booking option #7.



DISTANCE – Take mileage into consideration when selecting routes. On average, boaters tend to go 2 miles per hour, but individual rates can vary significantly (especially when a boat is loaded with gear), and a relaxing paddle with time to admire the scenery can be more enjoyable than non-stop paddling. Do NOT plan to use a troll motor for a boost. It's both illegal while platform camping and a terrible idea—even the big tour boats have to clean peat moss off motors every few minutes, so your motor is unlikely to perform effectively and may well leave you on the water with an unreasonably heavy boat that you'll now have to hand-paddle.

NAVIGATION – some of the sites closest to the main entrances (Stephen C Foster on the west and Suwanee Canal on the east) have excellent signage, and clear routes. We still brought a separate GPS for easier tracking just in case, as I've been told by friends that some routes on more remote parts of the swamp are a little less obvious.

(continued, page 6)

(Platform camping on the Okefenokee, continued from page 5)

PLATFORMS – legally you’re allowed up to 20 people on a platform, but that idea may be best for masochists squeezing into two 8-person tents. I suggest 4-8 people as a reasonable number; you can fit 6 two-person tents on most platforms, though some sites are bigger than others, and some have more overhead coverage than others. You can also find videos of most Okefenokee camp sites on YouTube, to get a better visual sense of what you’re working with before you head out. Hammocks aren’t the space saver you might assume, although you can usually string a hammock or three, making sure you have overhead tarps. We preferred to allocate the overhead roof for dry seating at the platform’s picnic table, with some tents on the open platform. One of two platforms did have a fairly persistent raccoon, so we found it wise to hang our food out of reach at night.



WEATHER – the forecast will give you a rough ballpark, but can’t be relied on. Despite monitoring weather in advance, then double-checking the night before and morning of, we still found that weather on the swamp didn’t exactly line up with the forecasts. Be prepared for both rain and sun; you may get more or less than you think you’ve signed up for, although the high and low temps were generally correct.

FLORA AND FAUNA – feel free to brush up before you go; it can make the long paddles more fun if you know what you’re looking at. You can also snap photos and upload them later with apps like iNaturalist “Seek” for identification. 60 feet is the recommended distance for gators. I found that when someone would inadvertently get 10-15 feet away they would hiss or thrash their tails. (I also saw one “charge” a person on



another trip who got just 5 feet away, although it went under her boat and didn’t subsequently bother her.) The birds generally seemed a lot more skittish, flying away when you got within 50 feet (or “if you look at it too hard,” as one of our crew stated). Wildlife sightings can be one of the highlights of the trip, but please do treat all wildlife with respect so as not to harass them or change their natural behaviors. Feeding gators is an absolute “no”; not only is it illegal, but if you do it, the gators are likely to lose their wariness of humans and have to be put down.

WHAT TO WEAR – sunscreen and bug repellent are a good idea. Be sure to have something for the sun (hat, sunglasses), and an option for potential rain (neoprene, drysuit, splash jacket depending on time of year).

PACKING – In addition to the usual (tent, sleeping pad, sleeping bag, warm-enough pajamas or fleece layers, toiletry items, and food), be sure to bring water. The park recommends 4-6 quarts per day and a filter is NOT recommended as suspended organic matter makes them prone to clogging. This may be your biggest challenge when fitting everything into your boat, but it does mean your load will get lighter as you go. If at least one person in the group has a canoe instead of a kayak, that can be a huge boon for more bulky items.

(continued, page 7)

(Platform camping on the Okefenokee, continued from page 6)

Remember to position heavier items closer to the middle of the boat and lighter items toward the bow/stern. Extra toilet paper isn't a bad idea; the toilets did have some (with extra in tupperware), but one platform was down to just half a roll when we left. A bright flashlight is both useful at night and fun—gator eyes reflect red, so you can shine a bright light across the water to spot glints of eyes. I strongly recommend packing your boat at least a few days before the trip; it can be harder to fit everything than you might assume, and this gives you time to adjust.

EMERGENCIES – please do bring a first aid kit because you'll be far away from most forms of assistance. Most people do find they have 1-2 bars of service on parts of the swamp, but it's not reliable.

Last note – if you do end up booking a trip to the Okefenokee swamp, be sure to invite me along.—EL

Call for Volunteers—Tallulah Gorge Whitewater Releases

Volunteers are needed for the upcoming Tallulah Gorge whitewater releases. Volunteers are needed November 4-5 and November 11-12. There are two volunteer shifts: 8am-noon and 11am-3pm. Volunteers are needed to take waivers, control boater and visitor traffic on the bridge, control the flow of boaters at the put-in, and direct boaters to park efficiently at the put-in parking lot. If you are boating Tallulah, you can volunteer for an early shift and put on the river by 11:30.

If you are interested in volunteering, or need more information, please contact Tammy Lea at EddyLineEditor@gmail.com. - EL

ALL ABOUT THE EDDY LINE

The Eddy Line, the official GCA newsletter, is available in pdf format. To subscribe, contact Vincent Payne at 678-343-5292 or Vincent.payne9354@gmail.com, or mail your request to P.O. Box 611, Winston, GA 30187.

Submissions/Advertising: All submissions and advertising should be sent to *The Eddy Line*, at: EddyLineEditor@gmail.com.

TRIP AND EVENT SCHEDULE

- October 15—Membership Paddle on the Metro Hooch
- October 16—Roll practice at Cherokee Aquatic Center
- October 21—Hemlock Paddle on Section 4 of the Chattooga—contact Jon Micancin (jpmicancin@yhc.edu)
- October 22—Southeastern US Wildwater Championships
- October 23—Roll practice at Cherokee Aquatic Center
- October 25—Roll instruction—contact Stephen Carter at Stephencarter1@gmail.com
- October 30—Roll practice at Cherokee Aquatic Center
- November 4-5—Tallulah Gorge Whitewater Releases—to volunteer—contact Tammy Lea at eddylineeditor@gmail.com
- November 11-12—Tallulah Gorge Whitewater Releases—to volunteer—contact Tammy Lea at eddylineeditor@gmail.com

Please see the GCA Calendar for details, updates, and to sign up at www.gapaddle.com. For any questions or class suggestions, e-mail eddylineeditor@gmail.com.

To volunteer to coordinate trips email Allyson Davis at lessthaneggplant@gmail.com.

As usual, we need trip coordinators for all types of trips, from flatwater to Class 5 white-water. Our excellent trip schedule depends on the efforts of volunteers, so get involved and sign up to coordinate a trip on your favorite river today! The GCA needs YOU!

KEY TO GCA SKILL LEVELS

Flat Water - no current will be encountered; safe for new paddlers.

Beginner - mild current, occasional Class 1 riffles; new paddlers can learn basic river techniques.

Trained Beginner - moving water with Class 1-2 rapids; basic strokes and bracing skills needed.

Intermediate - rapids up to Class 3; eddying and ferrying skills needed; kayakers need solid roll.

Advanced - rapids up to Class 4; excellent boat control and self-rescue skills required.

Thank you to our sponsors/partners



WILDWOOD OUTFITTERS

H2ODREAMS
PADDLING SCHOOL



KEEP YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS CURRENT

Each month numerous "copies" of the pdf version of *The Eddy Line* bounce back due to bad or outdated email addresses. If an email to you bounces back, you will be deleted from the recipient list until we get an updated email address.

GCA welcomes paddlers from all races, genders, and sexual orientations. We will continue to strive to promote diversity among the paddling community and work to create a safe space for all to enjoy our paddling adventures.



The Eddy Line, © 2023, is published monthly as the official newsletter of the Georgia Canoeing Association, Inc., publication address: 9354 Grapevine Drive, Winston, GA 30187.



GEORGIA CANOEING ASSOCIATION, INC.

Post Office Box 611
Winston, Georgia 30187

[WE'RE ON THE WEB:]
www.gapaddle.com

The purpose of the GCA is to have fun and promote safety while paddling.

GCA is a member-operated paddling club with over 500 family and corporate memberships comprising more than 1500 Individuals. Canoeists and Kayakers of all ages and paddling abilities are equally welcome. Some of our mutual interests include whitewater river running, creeking and playboating, river and lake touring, sea kayaking, paddle camp outs and competition and racing activities. We espouse conservation, environmental and river access issues as well as boating safety and skills development. Group paddling, training and social activities of all kinds are conducted throughout the year thanks to the volunteer efforts of our many members and friends. Membership is NOT limited to Georgia residents.