

Canoeing, Kayaking & Tubing:

Nelson County offers three river options for enjoying canoeing, kayaking or tubing : the Tye River, the James River and the Rockfish River.

Tye River:

With headwaters beginning high in the Blue Ridge Mountains and the George Washington National Forest, the Tye River is one of the most beautiful whitewater streams in Virginia. The river begins at the end of two mountain passes, the North Fork and South Fork, at the foot of a mountain. It travels for about 34 miles through Nelson County, through beautiful scenery, with mountain, valley and pastoral views. The upper section can have strong whitewater for advanced paddlers, and the middle and lower sections, moderate whitewater on a seasonal basis. The rapids are rated Class I to Class II+. Depending upon water conditions, some rapids on the Tye River can approach class III to IV.

Section 1: Nash (Route 56 & Rt. 687) to Massies Mill (Route 56)

(8.5 mile distance, normally canoeable in the winter, for an average of 15-18 days/yr. Difficulty 2-4. Excellent scenery. Hazards include a low-water bridge, and several Class 4 rapids on right turns.)

Section 2: Massies Mill (Route 56) to Tye River P.O. (Route 29 & Rt. 739)

(13.5 mile distance, normally canoeable in the winter and early spring, for an average of 55-60 days/yr. Difficulty 1-2. Very good scenery. Hazards include barbed wire fences across the stream, and a seven-foot dam just below takeout. Takeout on the right bank, downstream of Rt. 29 and ABOVE the seven-foot dam about 200 yards below the bridge. (long uphill carry)

Section 3: Tye River P.O. (Route 29) to James River (Route 626)

(11.5 mile distance, normally canoeable in winter, spring and early summer, for an average of 100-115 days/yr. Difficulty 1,2,3. Very good scenery. Put-in, at Rt. 29, below the seven-foot dam. Alternatively, get permission to cross private property at Rt.739 bridge crossing for a shorter carry.

Section 4: Headwaters – North Fork Tye River above Nash

(1.5 mile distance, normally canoeable only in winter, following a prolonged wet period, for an average of 5-6 days/yr. Difficulty 3-4. Very good scenery. Hazards: continuous, strong rapids, with an impassable rapid upstream from the bridge put-in. Rocks and boulders abound, seek full information on this section before attempting.

Information above excerpted from: Virginia Whitewater – A Paddler’s Guide to the Rivers of Virginia by H. Roger Corbett. (copyright 2000)

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This website is designed to help you easily find the right stretch of whitewater to paddle based on your location and your paddling abilities. It does not have any information on current conditions or safety advisories for the location you select. You need to search for more updated information on the selected stretch of river before you go. Not having the latest information about a paddling area is extremely dangerous and may cause death or serious injury.

James River:

The James River forms the southeastern border of Nelson County, and is the longest and largest of Virginia's rivers, draining the center of Virginia, from the Appalachian Mountains to the Chesapeake Bay. Important as a transportation center, the canals, railroads, highways, factories, cities and dams show how central the role of the James River was in developing the state of Virginia. Many access points exist for canoeing or kayaking the river. Small boats (such as john boats) can also be used at most access points.

[Dept. of Game and Inland Fisheries - Public Boating Access:](#)

[Dept. of Game and Inland Fisheries - Float Trips on James River:](#)

[James River Association – James River Maps](#) : PDF maps online, but waterproof maps can also be ordered for various sections of the river.

James River : Nelson County Boating Access Points

Midway	Concrete Ramp (In James River WMA off Rt. 743; Northeast of Wingina)
Wingina	Concrete Ramp (Rt. 56, South of Wingina)
James River State Park	Boat Ramp and also a Canoe/Livery Landing

Bent Creek to Wingina

Distance: 12.4 miles

The concrete ramp at Bent Creek is best suited for canoes or small boats and is located just upstream from the Rt. 60 bridge.

A boat ramp (Dixon Landing) and a canoe landing is available at James River State Park.

At Wingina, a concrete ramp is present at the Rt. 56 bridge. However, trailer-launched boats can only be used during high flows, due to a steep dropoff at the end of the ramp. Typically, this float is a series of long, shallow pools interspersed with short, easy riffles.

Wingina to James River WMA (Wildlife Management Area)

Distance: 2.2 miles

Wingina provides a ramp for small boats/canoes, and a good concrete boat ramp is present at the James River Wildlife Management Area (WMA) (follow the signs from Rt. 626). This is a short and shallow float. During low flow periods, the river gets quite shallow through this section.

James River WMA to Howardsville

Distance: 8.6 miles

There is a good concrete ramp at James River WMA. The concrete ramp at Howardsville is located off of Rt. 626 at the mouth of the Rockfish River. This location means that this ramp is frequently covered with sand, and the launch area is quite shallow. This float is characterized by long shallow pools and short riffles. Several islands dot the river on this trip.

LIVERY SERVICES:

Several companies offer livery services for canoeing, kayaking or tubing on the James River, making it easy to get on the water and return you to your original starting point. Intermediate access points are also provided through these companies. Call or check their websites for more information.

James River Runners LLC – Canoe Livery

10092 Hatton Ferry Rd., Scottsville, VA 24590 434-286-2338

www.jamesriver.com

Canoe, kayak and rafting trips (March-October, conditions permitting) Tubing Trips (May-Sept.)

James River Reeling & Rafting

265 Ferry Street, Scottsville, VA 24590 434-286-4386

www.reelingandrafting.com

Canoe, Kayak & Rafting trips /Tubing Trips. Overnight trips available.

James River State Park

751 Park Road, Gladstone, VA 24553

434-933-4355 jamesriver@dcr.virginia.gov

800-933-PARK www.virginiastateparks.gov

Camping, Cabins, Boat Access, Hiking Trails, Fishing

Historic Hatton Ferry – Across the James River

Free, donations accepted.

Sat. 9-5 and 12-5 Sunday Mid-April thru October (or by special arrangement)

Call 434-296-1492 or check either www.albemarlehistory.org or the Hatton Ferry Facebook page to confirm ferry is in service the day of your visit.

Location: South of Route 6 East (Scottsville) on Hatton Ferry Rd.

Rockfish River (Rt. 6)

North Fork: Goodwins Creek to Rockfish River (Rt. 600 and Rt. 6)

(5.5 mile distance, normally canoeable only in the winter, with average canoeable days 10-12/yr. Difficulty 1-2. Good scenery. Hazards: low-water bridge, underwater bridge, trees and fences blocking the stream/ many portages/liftovers required. Takeout along Rt. 6 or at Rt. 634 bridge which crosses the river.)

South Fork Rockfish River – Elk Hill Baptist Church (Nellysford) to Rockfish River (Rt. 151 to Rt. 6)

(5 mile distance, normally canoeable in the winter, with average canoeable days 12-15/yr. Difficulty 1-2. Very good scenery, and a pleasant paddle. Hazards: multi-strand barbed wire fences.)

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Rockfish River

This run is scenic with just enough twists and turns to make it interesting. No rapids, but some good paddling skills required. (about 2 ½ hours) Check water levels first. Put-in by the bridge on Route 6 and take-out at the Nelson County Wayside on Highway 29.

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Other Boating Access:

Lake Nelson
801 Lake Nelson Lane
Arrington, VA 22922
434-263-7015

(From Arrington, Rt. 655 East (1.4); Left on Rt. 812 (.8) to Concrete ramp)

Lake Nelson is a 40-acre impoundment located in Nelson County, Virginia. This reservoir is owned by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF) and is managed primarily for fisheries related activities. Facilities available at this reservoir are a boat ramp, parking area and portable toilets which are available March-September. The lake is open 24 hours a day. Outboard motor use is prohibited but electric motors are permitted.

The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) requires an [Access Permit](#) for visitors to department-owned Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) and public fishing lakes effective January 1, 2012, who are age 17 and older, unless they possess a valid Virginia hunting, freshwater fishing, or trapping license, or a current Virginia boat registration.