

**The Cheoah River** is rapidly becoming one of the top whitewater runs in the country, thrilling paddlers with fast paced action, blind horizon lines and big flushy holes. Located west of Santeetlah Lake in Graham County, North Carolina, the Cheoah is a spectacular, challenging and fun whitewater adventure, providing World Class paddling opportunities previously unavailable in the Southeast until now.

This exciting river adventure is made possible under a new, 40-year federal license to rejuvenate 9 miles of dry river bed for fishermen and whitewater paddlers. For the opening season the USFS requires all paddlers to buy a fee bracelet to put-in on the river and ride a scheduled shuttle from Robbinsville. Note, however, that the Cheoah is a new recreational resource and its management will be a work in progress for the coming years.

The Cheoah is the new darling of the southeastern paddling community and a great choice if you're looking for a new rafting challenge. However, there is nothing in the southeast harder, longer, steeper, or with more big rapids than the Cheoah. Guided rafting permits for commercial rafting will be issued during opening season to accommodate experienced whitewater enthusiasts looking for a guided adventure on the Cheoah. As use on the river develops, check the USFS web site for periodic updates to river user regulations. The website address is [www.cs.unca.edu/nfsnc](http://www.cs.unca.edu/nfsnc).

Plans are underway for public access areas to be constructed at the top and bottom of the Cheoah and several enhanced roadside pull-offs in between, funded by a cost share agreement between the USFS and Alcoa Power Generating, Inc. The USFS is planning to begin construction next year at the designated put-in that will include parking for over 200 vehicles.

Graham County is home to many exciting outdoor adventures and food and lodging are available throughout the county. People can travel to experience the Cheoah River and other county activities for a weekend visit or a week long vacation. Interested boaters may

contact **Graham County Travel & Tourism** for more information on river schedules and the area by call **800-470-3790** or visiting the website at [www.grahamcountytravel.com](http://www.grahamcountytravel.com).

For additional information about the Cheoah River, visit the **American Whitewater** website: [www.americanwhitewater.org](http://www.americanwhitewater.org) or contact the **Cheoah Ranger District** at **828-479-6431**.

### River Regulations

To ensure public safety along the 9 mile high-water section of the Cheoah River, the following regulations will be enforced on the Cheoah River during recreational boating days:

- All paddlers are required to buy a fee bracelet to put-in on the Cheoah River
- No alcoholic beverages within 500 feet of the river.
- No camping within 500 feet of the river.
- No nighttime floating, rafting, or tubing (between sunset and sunrise).
- No parking within 500 feet of the river, except in designated parking areas.
- No watercraft used other than non-motorized, hard-bottom canoes and kayaks, or inflatable watercraft with a minimum of four (4) internal air chambers.
- Users must wear a helmet and a properly fitted personal flotation device (PFD) rated "Coast Guard Approved (Type III, IIIIV, or V)".

### Mileage to Robbinsville, NC from:

Asheville	.96	Dallas	.849
Atlanta	.160	Knoxville	.75
Charleston	.355	Nashville	.240
Charlotte	.190	Raleigh	.337
Chattanooga	.120	Savannah	.380
Chicago	.650	Tampa	.570
Columbia	.253	Wilmington	.415

(mileage is approximate)

## Graham County, NC



Serenely nestled between the Unicoi and Great Smoky Mountains in western North Carolina, Graham County presents unparalleled opportunities as a mountain oasis. With thousands of acres of lush forests and miles of clear, swift streams; outdoor recreational activities abound. Hiking, backpacking, mountain biking, paddling and fishing opportunities are all excellent here and

can be found within minutes of the Cheoah River. Over two thousand native plant species make this region a botanical paradise, while abundant populations of rainbow, brown and brook trout present challenging angling opportunities for any skill level. If lake fishing is your preference, then choose from several of the deep, cool, emerald waters in the area. Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest, one of the last remaining old growth forests in the east, offers a rare experience as you hike the groves of towering forest giants. Whatever your tastes, Graham County offers an unforgettable experience for the nature lover in all of us.

### Graham County Travel and Tourism Authority

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 12 North Main Street  
 Robbinsville, NC 28771  
 Phone: 828-479-3790 or 800-470-3790  
 Fax: 828-479-4733



north carolina  
[visitnc.com](http://visitnc.com) 1-800-VISIT NC



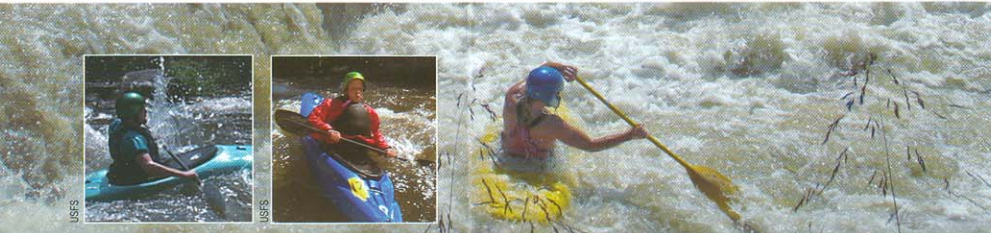
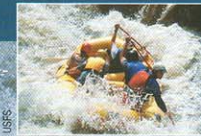
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01/07

# The Cheoah RIVER

GRAHAM COUNTY, NC

## A Frothing Class IV/IV+ White Water Adventure



CODY/DAVIS

USFS

USFS

CODY/DAVIS

USFS

USFS

CODY/DAVIS

CODY/DAVIS

BOB MAXWELL

CODY/DAVIS

# Cheoah River, Graham County NC

## Santeetlah Dam to Calderwood Lake

Class IV/IV+  
9.25 Miles  
Avg Gradient 83 fpm  
Max Gradient 146 fpm

**Gauge Information**  
Min. Sug. Level: 500CFS  
Max Sug. Level: 1500 CFC

### River Description

The recently unleashed Cheoah isn't for the faint of heart. The river has many Class IV/IV+ rapids and lots of residual vegetation that require a high skill level to

negotiate. With the exception of two or three half-mile or so sections, the Cheoah is unusually continuous with a gradient that is consistently steep for a river of its size.

Its warm, western-style paddling features some nice wave trains at higher water levels, frequent series of offset holes, and a number of classic drops. With sufficient water and its historic tree and brush-free channel restored, the crystal clear

Cheoah is becoming one of the crown jewels of the whitewater world.

The Cheoah's 9+ mile run can be broken into three sections: a narrow upper section with a number of sticky holes and a potentially troublesome river-wide ledge downstream of the hydroelectric bypass pipe; a relatively open middle section that features a steep and steady gradient; and a lower section with the most gradient and the most

well-defined drops. The lower two miles of the Cheoah drop 106 and 146 feet. This represents a whitewater experience not often found in the Southeast.

### River Information

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www.grahamcountytravel.com.  
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