

ORIENTAL TO DAWSON CREEK/MINNESOTT BEACH FERRY

(Trail #1)

Time: 2 - 3 hours

Distance: 5 - 9 miles

PADDLE DESCRIPTON

From the access at the Wildlife Ramp in Oriental paddle to the far end of the Robert Scott Bridge and cross under as you head to Windmill Point. Continue following the shoreline as you paddle pass Cooper and Wiggins Points. Just beyond Wiggins Point is a nice, sandy beach which makes a nice rest stop.

As you continue your journey to Dawson Creek make sure you steer clear of the shoreline strewn with dockage from hurricanes past. As you approach the bridge at Dawson Creek head well out beyond the shoal until you see the channel under the bridge on the far side. At this point you can opt to beach at the bridge or continue NE across the creek to a narrow gut which leads to a Wildlife Ramp with ample parking.

This trail can be extended an additional 4 miles by continuing down the Neuse River to the sandy beach at the foot of Point Road next to the Cherry Branch-Minnesott Beach Ferry. Along the way you will pass several day camps and have to round a sandy jetty just before ending the journey. In good weather be especially alert for young children learning to sail in the waters around the day camps.

DRIVING DIRECTIONS

Oriental Wildlife Ramp: In Oriental, turn off Broad St (NC-55) onto Hodges St and go west one block and turn left on Midyette St. The Wildlife Ramp is located about 1,000 yards down Midyette St.

Dawson Creek: Dawson Creek is located on SR-1308, about 4-1/2 miles from Oriental. Take Broad St over the Robert Scott Bridge 3 miles to SR-1302. Turn left and follow SR-1302 approximately 1-1/2 miles to Creek Place. Turn right at the NC Wildlife Ramp sign and follow the gravel road about 1/4 mile to the boat ramp. Ample parking is available. An option is to continue on to Dawson Creek and utilize the parking area at the bridge

Minnesott Beach: This is a private beach at the end of NC-306; however, residents do not object to occasional use if you respect their property. Public parking is available at the State Ferry.

DAWSON CREEK

(Trails 2 and 3)

Time: 2 – 4 hours

Distance: 5 – 10 miles

PADDLE DESCRIPTON

Dawson Creek is a network of two waterways – Dawson Creek and Tarklin Creek. “Dawson Creek” the TV show was created by a Pamlico County native and thus the origin of the name.

From the Wildlife Ramp at the end of Creek Place paddle out the gut and head SW 1/4-mile to the bridge spanning the mouth of the creek to observe the many shore birds enjoying the sandy shallows.

Tarklin Creek (**Trail 2**) terminates about 2-1/2 miles from the access in a tiny cypress grove. Along the way you can observe a beaver dam and, usually, some shy ducks and geese.

It is nearly 5 miles to the head of Dawson Creek (**Trail 3**). Enroute there are several nice tributaries to explore, including Deep Run, and Granny and Wheeler Guts. Located between the latter two waterways are the curious remains of Mill Dam – the site of an old grist mill.

DRIVING DIRECTIONS

Dawson Creek: See directions on Trail #1 (above).

BEARD CREEK

(Trail #4)

Time: 2 -3 hours

Distance: 4 – 8 miles

PADDLE DESCRIPTION

Beard Creek is a lovely waterway with several options for exploration. Access is via an ancient launch ramp adjacent to the east end of a bridge on Neuse Road (SR-1005). There is a small cabin near the ramp which should be respected as private. Park so you do not impede the resident's access.

You can paddle north from the ramp for about a mile up the main creek – further if no downed trees block your route – or 1-¼ miles up the East Prong, again dependent upon obstructions. The latter has mysterious, other worldly quality with overhanging thickets and clear, black water.

The Neuse River can be reached by paddling about 3-miles downstream. As you paddle under the bridge take a look at the gear which operated the original hand-operated bridge. On your way down Cedar Gut, particularly inviting, is on your left. Near the mouth of Beard Creek are several sandy beaches for a nice lunch stop.

DRIVING DIRECTIONS

Beard Creek: From the center of Arapahoe, where Neuse Road (SR-1005) intersects with NC-306, drive 2-½ miles west to the bridge. Or, from where Neuse Road (SR-1005) intersects with NC-55 east of Reelsboro drive about 8 miles east to the bridge.

GOOSE CREEK (TRAIL #5)

Time: 3 – 4 hours

Distance: 8 miles

Caution: *The access is a sandy beach but be careful to avoid rocks and oyster shells when launching. Also, while paddling out stay close to the dock on your left until you reach the center of the creek as there are several my long lines of old piling to the right which hide under the water's surface at high tide – but hazardous at all times.*

PADDLE DESCRIPTION

Goose Creek is the paddling jewel of Pamlico County. The lower half is bounded by towering marsh grasses which rattle in sway in the wind while upstream of the access you encounter small islands and dark, blackwater cypress swamps teeming with wildlife abound – including beaver.

The Neuse River is less than 2 miles to your left. On gaining the river paddling to the right around Creek Point will put you in Upper Broad Creek where you can paddle north 4-½ miles to the access at Lee Landing.

The northern route allows you to pass a gut at the 2-mile mark which bears investigating as does Alexander Swamp around the 3-mile mark. Just past the entrance to the Swamp the Goose Creek widens into an active beaver pond. Paddle quietly and you may be rewarded. Goose Creek continues to Neuse Road (SR-1005) (4-½ miles from the launch) but navigation stop well before depending on the number of trees blocking the channel.

DRIVING DIRECTIONS

From Arapahoe, take Neuse Road (SR-1005) west 3.3 miles to where it intersects with Bennett Neck Road (SR-1101) and South Goose Creek Road (SR-1102). Turn to the left beside the old store at the intersection and follow South Goose Creek Road 2.1 miles to where it meets Goose Creek Road (SR-1110) at the sharp right curve. Turn left on Goose Creek Road, go .2 miles until you see a tall, solid wood fence. Turn right before the fence and keep bearing left for .2 miles to the access. Park so as not to block traffic to the docks. *This is private property used by permission. Close the gate after entering/departing.*

From Reelsboro, turn right on Neuse Road (SR-1005) and go about 7-½ miles until you reach South Goose Creek Road. Turn right at the store and follow above directions.

UPPER BROAD CREEK (Trail #6)

Time: 3 – 5 hours

Distance: 8 – 10 miles

PADDLE DESCRIPTION

This is the longest navigable creek in Pamlico County. The locale of the access at the Wildlife Ramp at the end of Lee Landing Road is ideally situated to paddle both north and south on Upper Broad Creek.

Paddling south from Lee Landing will take you to the mouth (4-1/2 miles) at Creek Point. Around the 2-3/4 mile point the creek becomes quite broad and exposed to the wind. Canoes are not recommended beyond this point. The only tributary of note is Northwest Creek, at the mouth, which leads into the Fairfield Harbor complex. There is a restaurant at the marina. If you round Creek Point you can enter Goose Creek and paddle 1-1/2 miles north to the access off Goose Creek Road

Paddling north from Lee Landing leads you through a winding waterway of stunning beauty. You can paddle all the way to NC-55 – depending on the obstructions. Beginning with an osprey nest across from the landing, a soft marsh dotted with hammocks of cypress slowly gives way to a blackwater wonderland. This is a lively fish nursery populated by turtles, beaver, many little green herons, great blues, kingfishers, warblers, and wildflowers. If you paddle in July when the mallow is in bloom you will see flowers rare to the county. Near the head of the creek are some true cypress giants.

There are a couple of attractive tributaries to explore as you head north – Deep Run (1.7 miles) and Sasses Branch (2.6 miles).

DRIVING DIRECTIONS

Lee Landing: Lee Landing is the site of a NC Wildlife Ramp which has plenty of parking and is handicap accessible. The entrance is on Lee Landing Road which about 1-1/4 mile east of the ABC Beverage Control Store on NC-55. Turn south on Lee Landing Road, cross Neuse Road (SR-1005) and proceed 2-1/2 miles to the access at the end of the road. There is ample parking.