

## OUTDOORS

# Paddling and fishing the Saluda River Blueway

BY PHILLIP GENTRY  
FOR THE JOURNAL

**T**he Upper Saluda River rises in the mountains of Greenville and Pickens Counties and winds through the Piedmont where it is sometimes a source of hydro power for several mill villages as it makes its way to Lake Greenwood. Back in the day, Upstate residents used to call it the Polluta River because it was so dirty, presumably from sewage water dumps and before the enactment of the Clean Water Act.

Today, the Saluda is on the EPA's "watch list" for endangered rivers, presumably for the uncertainty of its future, rather than it's suffering from current problems. As for the future of the river, local county tourism agencies, along with several preservation organizations believe it's bright.

These agencies and organizations have major interest in helping preserve access points on the Saluda and adding them to the Upper Saluda River Blueway, a six-county project designed to promote eco-tourism in the Upstate of South Carolina.

The Blueway is a project aimed at linking nearly 70 miles of the Saluda together in an access friendly paddle trail. It is a project that has been a long time in planning and bringing into implementation. Funding for the individual access and portage sites is a matter of garnering interest and having each county add



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**A great way to enjoy the spring weather and the outdoors is to take a kayak fishing trip down the Saluda River Blueway.**

the project into their capital improvement plans.

The appeal of the Saluda for kayak anglers is its proximity to the Upstate and some pretty decent catch rates for several species of warm water gamefish. While the mountainous, cold-water section of the Saluda gets stockings of rainbow trout by the state, most of the focus by kayaker is on the warm water section which begins just below Saluda Lake dam on the border between Greenville and Pickens counties.

Several public access points to the Saluda River include:

- Dolly Cooper Park River Access, 170 Spearman Circle, Greenville
- Timmerman Landing River Access and Parking Area, 13 Capers St., Pelzer
- Lyman Street Land-

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Parking Area, 98 Lyman St., Pelzer

- Cooley Bridge Road River Access and Roadside Parking, 2250 Belton Hwy., Belton

- Ware Shoals Dam River Access and Parking Area Power House Rd., Ware Shoals

- Irvin Pitts Memorial Park, Power House Rd., Ware Shoals

- Ware Shoals Community Foundation River Access and Parking Area, Beacham Rd., Ware Shoals

- Souls Harbor River Access and Roadside Parking 1618 Ridge Rd., Hodges

Additionally, several unofficial — but widely used — access points are available and should be used at your own risk.

As for the fishing, local anglers claim it's not unusual to float a half day from one point to another or paddle upstream a

mile or two and float back and catch 50-60 fish in an outing. The bag will be mixed mostly between largemouth bass, bluegills, sunfish and the occasional channel catfish for good measure. It's definitely not a trophy fishery, most of the bass will be of the 10-12-inch variety and half that for the bream, but it's a light tackle paradise.

When it comes to fishing baits, most paddlers find it much easier to stick with all artificial baits. Tiny crank baits, Beetle Spins and plastic jigs all work well.

More information on paddling and fishing the Saluda River can be found at [gopaddlesc.com](http://gopaddlesc.com) and [upstateforever.org](http://upstateforever.org)

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