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**COOSA RIVER BASIN INITIATIVE AND UPPER ETOWAH RIVER
ALLIANCE PLAN PADDLE ON ETOWAH RIVER THROUGH CHEROKEE
COUNTY**

The Coosa River Basin Initiative (CRBI) and Upper Etowah River Alliance (UERA) will host a canoe/kayak paddle on the Etowah River July 31 from East Cherokee Drive to Boling Park in Canton.

The trip will allow local residents to explore a 15-mile stretch of the Etowah in Cherokee County highlighted by several Native American fish weirs and other historic sites.

Shuttles will be provided for a small fee and boat rentals are available. The trip is free to CRBI and UERA members. CRBI and UERA are offering joint year memberships for \$35 through these trips. Pre-registration is required.

To register for the trip, pay membership dues and/or rent a boat, visit <http://www.coosa.org/events/paddle-trips> or contact CRBI Volunteer Adventure Trip Coordinator Alan Crawford at 706-291-7449 or via e-mail at ibwheelin2@yahoo.com

CRBI and UERA are working with multiple stakeholders, including the City of Canton, to create a 160-mile Etowah River canoe and kayak trail stretching from Dawson County to Floyd County. The trail would include numerous public boat launches and parking areas as well as informational kiosks at key river access points.

The City of Canton is currently moving forward with plans to install a new canoe/kayak launch on the Etowah at Boling Park with funds that CRBI secured through a legal settlement with the developers of the Canton Marketplace shopping complex on Ga. 20.

The Rome-based Riverkeeper group appealed state and federal environmental permits for the project, ultimately forcing the Sembler Co. to minimize impacts to streams at the Canton Marketplace site and provide \$500,000 to purchase and preserve land in the upper Etowah River basin.

“In the Etowah River, Cherokee County has a real recreational gem,” said Joe Cook, CRBI Executive Director & Riverkeeper. “Unfortunately, with the exception of Lake Allatoona, there is not a single public boat launch on the Etowah in the county. As the area continues to grow the importance of outdoor recreational amenities will also grow. We need to take advantage of the beautiful resource that we have in the Etowah.”

Provided suitable water levels, participants in Saturday’s paddle will also get a chance to view several Native American fish dams dating back 500 to 1,000 years. These V-shaped dams were built by ancestors of the Cherokee Indians who ingeniously used them to capture fish.

The Etowah is considered one of the country’s most biologically diverse river systems with 76 native fish species. It is home to 10 imperiled aquatic species, including the federally protected Cherokee, Etowah and Amber darters.

CRBI is a 501c3 non-profit organization and member of the international Waterkeeper Alliance. Its mission is to inform and empower citizens to protect, preserve and restore North America’s most biologically diverse river basin.

Upper Etowah River Alliance is a 501c3 non-profit organization working to inform and educate citizens to conserve, sustain and enhance the beauty and environmental health of the Upper Etowah River Watershed.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT JOE COOK AT 706-232-2724 OR AT JCOOK@COOSA.ORG