



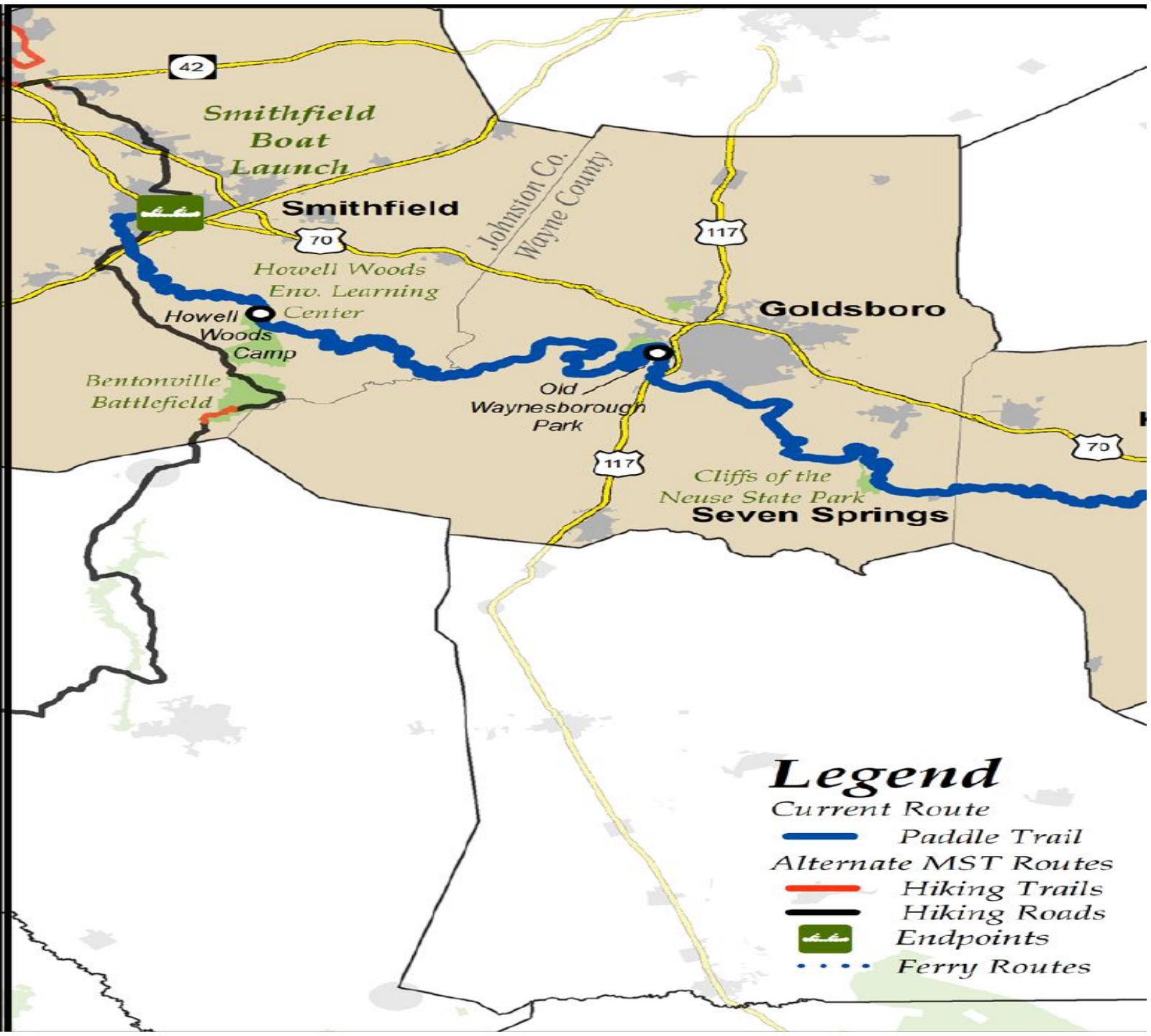
Neuse River

Jim and John Butler

Nov. 11 – 13, 2023

Smithfield to Seven Springs

76 miles



The Neuse River is a river rising in the Piedmont of North Carolina and emptying into Pamlico Sound below New Bern making it the longest river entirely contained in North Carolina.

Our trip was 76 miles. Day 1 was 16 miles from Smithfield where we put in to the Howell Woods campground. Day 2 was 32 miles to a campground near Old Waynesborough Park. Day 3 was 29 miles past the Cliffs of Neuse River Park to Seven Springs.

We were looking for a challenging 3 day stretch of the River with designated campgrounds for 2 nights. We had paddled the first 29 miles of this trip as a one day paddle back in May 2023. We made the Day 3 segment longer than required so that we could paddle past the Cliffs of Neuse Park.



Smithfield

We put in at Smithfield which is a small charming town in and the county seat of Johnston County, NC. As of the 2010 census, its population was 10,966. Smithfield is home to the Ava Gardner Museum where visitors enjoy the annual Smithfield Ham and Yam Festival, walks along the Buffalo Creek Greenway, and the historic downtown district. The town is located about 30 miles southeast of downtown Raleigh.

We got a late start around 12:30PM which is maybe why I am not smiling in the picture. We had about 4 1/2 hours of daylight to paddle 16 miles to the campground for the first night.



River Conditions

Typical of rivers in the Coastal Plain of North Carolina, the Neuse enters a basin of chocolate intermittent bottomland swamp on its journey towards its outlet. The Neuse is prone to extremes in its flow carriage, often escaping its banks during wet periods, then reducing to a trickle that can be forded on foot during prolonged drought conditions. NC is in a drought condition so the water level was very low. We had scattered showers on the Day 1 afternoon paddle.



We had to paddle hard and fast so the shore breaks were very short.



Day 1 Campground

The steps to the campground were up along a gully next to the River. The water level was so low that the steps started about 5 feet up a steep hill above the gully. We had to use a rope to pull ourselves up to the steps. Getting all the gear up the slope and the steps was very challenging.



The campground was rustic but very comfortable. We pitched our tent under the shelter.



We had a beautiful view of the River.



We got on the River at 8AM and paddled hard for 32 miles and got to the Day 2 campground just as it was getting dark.



The Wise Landing campground only had a fire ring and a small table but it was all we needed.



We started each morning with a hot cup of Horlicks.



The best part of the day is looking at the mist rising off the River.



I'm busy tending the fire in the right background



This stretch of the Neuse had incredible cypress trees with Spanish moss hanging down.



**The sun came out and we paddled
hard for 29 miles**



The Cliffs of Neuse.



At the end of 76 miles of paddling we made it to the Seven Springs landing right around dusk.

HERITAGE CENTER COLORIZED POSTCARD COLLECTION

"WHITE SWAN MOTEL" on U. S. Highway 30
two miles South of Smithfield, N. C.
19 Units — Restaurant — Reasonable Prices.



WHITE SWAN MOTEL, US 301 SOUTH, SMITHFIELD

On the way home we stopped at **White Swan BBQ** for some **outstanding BBQ**. If you are ever in the area it is well worth a detour.