

Sequatchie River

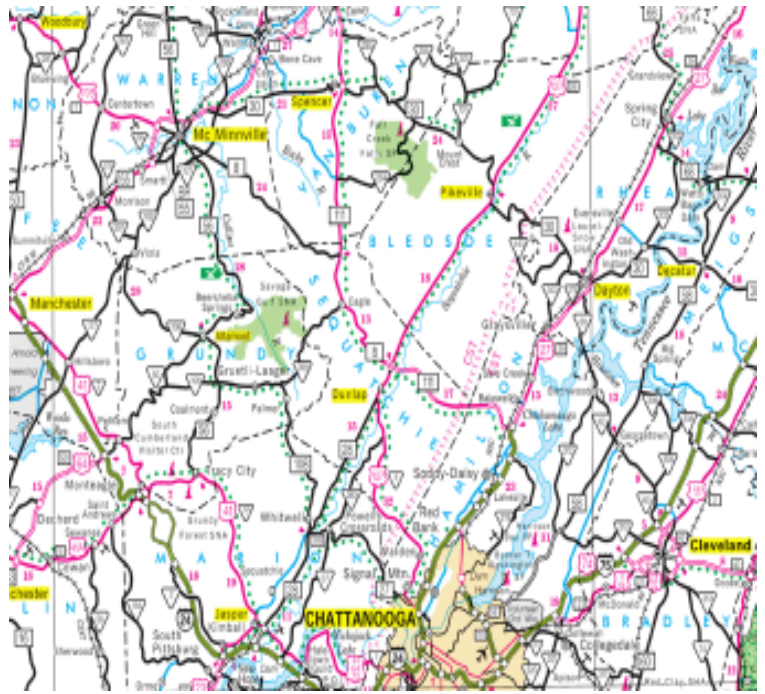
The River

The Sequatchie River Valley in eastern Tennessee is a rift valley, a rare geologic formation located between two parallel faults. The elevation of the river is roughly 700 feet above sea level. The ridges in the distance rise to 2,000 feet.

The section of the river described in this article is nine miles long and runs from Highway 127 and Condra Switch Road. The entire run takes about three hours, but some may wish to divide it over a two-day period. The put-in at Highway 127 is located about twenty miles north of Chattanooga and twelve miles north of Signal Mountain. The area is very rural and pastoral similar to the Harpeth River in that respect. The high banks and wooded areas along the banks shield paddlers from the fields and pastures located just beyond the riverbanks. Wildlife is abundant on the river, and paddlers are likely to encounter squirrels and may see foxes, geese, ducks, and raccoons. This creates a feeling of being in a true wilderness because someone could travel the entire section of the river and not see anyone else.

This twenty yard wide stream is a clear, cold, clean river with a sand and rock bottom. The current is very calm with only Class I riffles. There are some strainers (trees hanging low over river, tree limbs underwater, etc.), but the calm current makes it easy to avoid them. At 1.4 miles, the Chappell Hill Church becomes visible from the river. This beautiful church and a few other buildings are the few reminders of civilization along the river. After passing the church, the river bends to the right and forms a deep swimming hole with rock ledges along the bank.

After four miles on the river, paddlers come to a bridge where they can take out or continue on down to Condra Switch Road. After this, the river forks around a small island. On the right side of the island, there are some riffles that are easily run.



Camping

There are plenty of places below the high water mark that are suitable for camping along the bank. Paddlers should check the weather before the trip to determine if camping below the high water mark is safe. Besides camping along the banks, paddlers can camp on sandbars and islands in the middle of the river; in between mile seven and the takeout, there are several sand bars that are excellent for camping.

