

Houston Levee Rd. to Walnut Grove Rd. Germantown and Memphis, TN

Under normal conditions, the Houston Levee Rd. to Walnut Grove Rd.. segment of the Wolf River is an easy 7.1 mile paddle down a channelized riverbed. In low water, logs and sand on the river bottom might present minor obstacles, requiring some maneuvering or wading. Downed trees and other debris could require some portage. The channel is wide and straight, however, and not likely to be challenging.

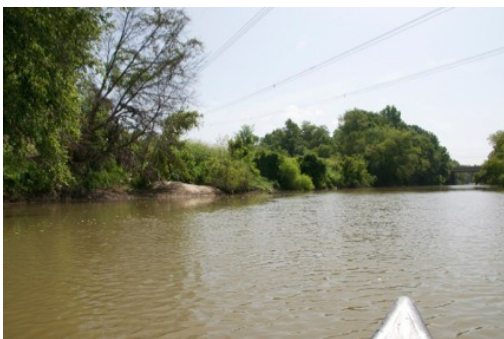


The Houston Levee put-in can be reached by taking Walnut Grove Rd. east to where it dead-ends at Houston Levee Rd., then turning right or south onto Houston Levee and continuing to the bridge over the Wolf River. There is a gravel access road to the left just before the bridge which leads to an undeveloped launch site.

For the first mile and a half from the Houston Levee put-in, the river channel will show signs of headcutting, a natural result of the channelizing project undertaken further downstream. Look for the entrance of Gray's Creek, a tributary of the Wolf, on the right. The channelization (deepening and straightening) of the Wolf River by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in the 1960's ended at this point; the river is channelized from here to its mouth at Mud Island about 15 miles downstream.



Although the river on this section displays the eroded banks and other symptoms of altered hydrology resulting from channelization, it is still surprisingly beautiful and peaceful. Ducks, herons, kingfishers and songbirds can be seen, as well as turtles such as sliders and soft-shells and other wildlife. There are, of course, signs of urbanization and misuse - trash and tires, for example, and multiple trails created by all-terrain vehicles (ATV's)- but the potential of the urban river as a natural and recreational resource is clear.



Beyond Gray's Creek, much of the property on the right side of the river has been protected, thanks to key donations to the Wolf River Conservancy. The 300-acre Boyle tract near Gray's Creek and the 318-acre Lovitt Woods tract near the Lowe's store on Germantown Pkwy.. both contain large trees and remnant wetlands. Riverwoods Natural Area is across the river from Lovitt Woods.



The take-out point at Germantown Rd. is primitive; many paddlers may prefer to use the boat ramp at the Walnut Grove Rd. bridge which is about 3.5 miles downstream. To reach the Germantown Pkwy. access, head south on Germantown Rd. for 0.7 miles from the intersection of Walnut Grove Rd. and Germantown Rd. Turn right at the Wolf River Trails and Lucius Burch Natural Area Gateway entrance.

Turn left into the first gravel parking lot, then take the gravel road at the rear of the lot for about 300 ft. to the access point on the right.

The Walnut Grove Rd. take-out point is the boat ramp on the right, just before the Walnut Grove Rd. bridge. By car, the boat ramp can be accessed from Walnut Grove Rd., heading east, by taking the very first right after crossing the bridge onto a small service road which heads back down to the river and the boat ramp.

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[FOR PHOTOS OF GERMANTOWN PKWY TO WALNUT GROVE RD., CLICK HERE.](#)