

# The Moscow to Rossville Section

by Ray Graham



**Length:** 13.7 miles

**Skill Level:** Intermediate

**Warnings:** *This section is the longest on the river, requiring an all-day float of at least nine hours.* Trot lines (fishing lines with large hooks tied to tree limbs), are heavily used near the put-in. Paddlers should avoid touching the lines.

**Important Features:**

North Fork of the Wolf River  
Large islands  
Tributaries  
Cypress Forest

**Shade/Sun Ratio:** Mixed; the beginning and ending are mostly shady while the middle portion is almost full sun.

**Recently Sighted Wildlife:**

Water Moccasin  
Great Horned Owl  
Kingfisher  
Deer  
Beaver  
Gar  
Great Blue Heron  
Cardinal  
Swallowtail Butterfly  
Non-venomous Water Snake (*Nerodia sp.*)  
Vireo  
Warbler  
Catfish

**Put-in:**

The two put-ins for this section are located at the Feemster Bridge where Hwy 57 crosses the Wolf River. If you are coming from Memphis, the put-ins are to the immediate right and left of the highway after crossing the bridge.



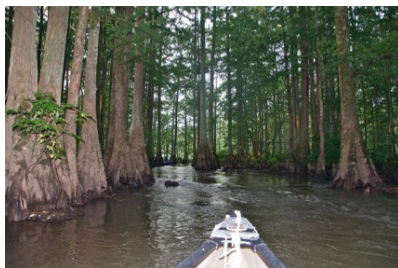
We have traditionally used the put-in on the left, on the north side of the highway at the shopping mall parking lot. Paddlers have to carry their boats about 50 yards across a grassy field to a small canal at the edge of the tree line. The canal leads another 20 yards through spatterdock (yellow pond lilies) to the open water of a small cypress lake. Some find paddling below the spatterdocks intimidating since the dense foliage can hide a variety of river denizens, though snakes are rarely seen in the canal. The owner of the shopping mall may ask for a five dollar fee to use the parking lot for unloading or loading boats, and there is a box in the parking lot for paying the usage fee.

The put-in on the left or south side of Hwy 57 is a gravel shoulder with space for a few vehicles. A short path leads to a gently sloping bank that allows for easy access to the river.

**Section Description:**

After launching, paddlers will enter a small “lake” full of cypress trees. At the downstream end of the lake, the river becomes braided and diverges into different channels. Many of the tributaries rendezvous downstream creating a small archipelago of forested islands. The channel to the right leads to private property with a boat ramp.

There is also a rail bridge that is usually only about six feet above the water. It is an unusual sensation to have a train pass only a few feet overhead. After the bridge, tributaries leave and enter the main channel. It was difficult to tell which ones were creeks and which are parts of the braided river. One of the tributaries is the North Fork of the Wolf River. At the present time, I am unclear which tributary is the North Fork and which one is Stafford Creek. At least one of the tributaries is large enough to enter when the water is high. There was also another small boat ramp at the mouth of one of the tributaries.



Paddlers will experience small rapids formed by the twisting roots of cypress trees. They are not large rapids but unique for the fact that they are formed by water flowing over wood and not rock. Cypress trees shade the first mile, after which paddlers can expect to be in almost full sun. It will be apparent that you have left the upper Wolf River and moved into the middle Wolf which is no longer a flowing cypress swamp but a river with a defined bank surrounded by mixed forest with cypress, birch, sycamore, maple, sweet gum and oak trees, among others.

This area features several small sand bars, some of which provide excellent swimming opportunities, though swimmers should be aware that the river could be as deep as 15 feet in this section. Paddlers will pass sand creeks and two large islands; some of this land is privately owned and should be avoided. The middle portion of the Moscow to Rossville section has been dredged along one bank. As a result the river is wider here but also relatively free of downed tree obstructions.

Towards the end of the section the channel narrows and takes a more natural, serpentine course. Paddlers may have to portage around fallen trees. The last mile has a row of fishing cabins on the left bank. This section ends at the Rossville boat ramp next to the William B. Clark Preserve which features a boardwalk that allows visitors to see one of the bayous that flow into the Wolf River.

The Moscow to Rossville section took my group of experienced paddlers nine hours to complete with only two thirty minute stops.

**Take-out:**

Before reaching the town of Rossville, look for a boat ramp on the right side of the channel near the William B. Clark Conservation Area trailhead. There is a gravel parking area and driveway onto Hwy 194. Turn left or south to reach Rossville and Hwy 57. A right turn leads to Hwy 193 (Macon Rd.) and the town of Macon.



To reach the take-out from Hwy 57, turn north onto Hwy 194 at the bank building, cross the railroad tracks and the bridge over the Wolf River, and turn right at the William B. Clark Conservation Area sign into the gravel parking area.

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