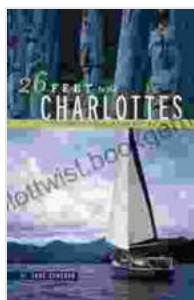


26 Feet to the Charlottes

A Paddling Odyssey in Search of South Carolina's Native Brook Trout

The Charlottes are a wild and remote river that flows through the Sumter National Forest in South Carolina. The river is home to a population of native brook trout, *Salvelinus fontinalis*, that are a remnant of the once-vast population of brook trout that once inhabited the Appalachian Mountains.



26 Feet to the Charlottes: Exploring the Land of the

Haida by Christopher Howard

★★★★☆ 4.3 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 1912 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 242 pages



Brook trout are a beautiful and elusive fish that are known for their brightly colored fins and their love of cold, clear water. They are a popular target for anglers, but they are also a sensitive species that is threatened by habitat loss and pollution.

In the fall of 2022, I embarked on a paddling odyssey to the Charlottes in search of these elusive fish. I hoped to learn more about brook trout and their habitat, and to experience the beauty of the Sumter National Forest.

Day 1

I began my journey at the put-in for the Charlottes River, which is located off of Forest Road 56 in the Sumter National Forest. The river was low and clear, and the leaves on the trees were just starting to turn color.

I paddled downstream for several miles, taking my time to enjoy the scenery and to look for brook trout. I saw a few fish rising to insects, but they were all too small to keep.

As I approached the confluence of the Charlottes River and the Green River, I saw a large pool that looked promising for brook trout. I cast my line into the pool and let it drift downstream. A few seconds later, I felt a tug on my line. I set the hook and fought the fish to the surface. It was a beautiful brook trout, about 10 inches long.

I carefully released the trout back into the water and continued downstream. I fished for the rest of the day, but I didn't catch any more brook trout. However, I did see several other fish, including rainbow trout, brown trout, and smallmouth bass.

I camped at a primitive campsite along the river. The campsite was located on a bluff overlooking the river. I built a fire and cooked dinner. As I ate my dinner, I watched the sun set over the river.

Day 2

I woke up early and had breakfast. I then packed my gear and continued downstream. The river was still low and clear, and the fishing was slow. I didn't catch any fish for several hours.

As I approached the takeout for the Charlottes River, I saw a large pool that looked promising for brook trout. I cast my line into the pool and let it drift downstream. A few seconds later, I felt a tug on my line. I set the hook and fought the fish to the surface. It was a beautiful brook trout, about 12 inches long.

I carefully released the trout back into the water and continued downstream. I fished for the rest of the day, but I didn't catch any more brook trout. However, I did see several other fish, including rainbow trout, brown trout, and smallmouth bass.

I took out at the takeout for the Charlottes River. I was tired and sore, but I was also happy. I had had a great time paddling the Charlottes River and fishing for brook trout. I had learned a lot about brook trout and their habitat, and I had experienced the beauty of the Sumter National Forest.

Tips for Paddling the Charlottes River

- The Charlottes River is a remote river with limited access. Be sure to plan your trip carefully and bring all of the supplies you will need.
- The river is low and clear during the summer and fall months. This makes it easy to see fish, but it also makes it difficult to sneak up on them.
- Brook trout are a sensitive species that are easily spooked. Be sure to use stealthy techniques when fishing for them.
- The Charlottes River is home to a variety of fish, including rainbow trout, brown trout, and smallmouth bass. Be sure to bring a variety of lures and flies to target different species.

- The Sumter National Forest is a beautiful and wild place. Be sure to take some time to explore the forest and enjoy the scenery.

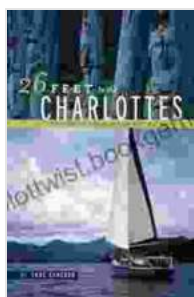
My paddling odyssey to the Charlottes was a success. I caught several brook trout, I learned a lot about brook trout and their habitat, and I experienced the beauty of the Sumter National Forest.

If you are looking for a challenging and rewarding paddling trip, I highly recommend paddling the Charlottes River. Just be sure to plan your trip carefully and bring all of the supplies you will need.

Additional Information

- Sumter National Forest website
- South Carolina Department of Natural Resources website
- Brook Trout Restoration Foundation website

All photos by the author.



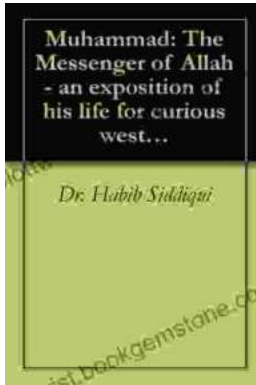
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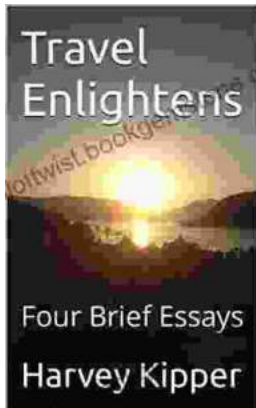
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