

White Cliffs of Epes



The White Cliffs of Epes are located on the Tombigbee River. | Photo courtesy Alabama Tourism Department and Joe Watts

On the state's western edge, an alabaster memento of central Alabama's former underwater life rises 50 feet above the Tombigbee River. The White Cliffs of Epes, formed around the same time as their famous Dover cousins, are made up of microscopic algae shells that drifted to the seafloor around 80 million years ago to become a massive chalk formation that spans three states. "To give you an idea of the size of these shells, a sugar-cube-sized piece of the chalk contains between 4 and 10 billion [shells]," says James Lamb, curator and director of Paleontology at the Black Belt Museum. The striking, 2-mile stretch in Epes offers visitors gorgeous photo ops and a scenic backdrop for boating. Find the best viewpoint on the bluff side of the Highway 11 bridge or post up on one of

the river's many popular sandbars along the opposite bank. The cliffs are not open to hikers, but the Fort Tombecbe archaeological site gives visitors a view from the bluff top.