



Florida Paddling Trails

A Guide to Florida's Top
Canoeing & Kayaking Trails



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www.VISITFLORIDA.com



Leave No Trace Principles

When you paddle, please observe these principles of Leave No Trace. For more information, log on to Leave No Trace at www.lnt.org.

- ☐ Plan Ahead and Prepare
- ☐ Camp on Durable Surfaces
- ☐ Dispose of Waste Properly
- ☐ Leave What You Find
- ☐ Minimize Campfire Impacts
- ☐ Respect Wildlife
- ☐ Be Considerate of Other Visitors

Trail Tips

When you paddle, please follow these tips. Water conditions vary and it will be up to you to be prepared for them.

1. **Know waterway conditions and be aware of water levels and currents.** Tides and winds can significantly affect the difficulty of the trip. Under normal conditions, allow a minimum of two-miles per hour paddling time.
2. **WEAR A PERSONAL FLotation DEVICE (PFD)!** Florida law requires a readily accessible and wearable Coast Guard approved PFD with attached whistle for each occupant. Children under age 6 must wear PFDs.
3. **Bring plenty of food and water.** Drinks should be in non-breakable containers; food and gear in watertight containers. One gallon of water is suggested per person per day for overnight trips. For day trips ½ gallon per person is recommended.
4. **Use bug spray and sunscreen even on cloudy days.** On bright warm days, wear a hat and sunglasses.





Florida Paddling Trails

5. **Watch for motorboats.** Stay to the right and turn the bow into their wake. Respect anglers. Paddle to the shore opposite their lines.
6. **Respect wildlife.** Do not approach or harass wildlife, as they can be dangerous. It's illegal to feed them.
7. **Bring a cell phone in case of an emergency.** Cell phone coverage can be sporadic, so careful preparation and contingency plans should be made in lieu of relying on cell phone reception.
8. **If you are paddling on your own, give a reliable person your float plan before you leave and leave a copy on the dash of your car.** A float plan contains information about your trip in the event that you do not return as scheduled. Don't forget to contact the person you left the float plan with when you return. You can download a sample float plan at <http://www.floridastateparks.org/wilderness/docs/FloatPlan.pdf>.

Additional Resources

For maps of the State Designated Paddling Trails visit:
www.FloridaGreenwaysAndTrails.com

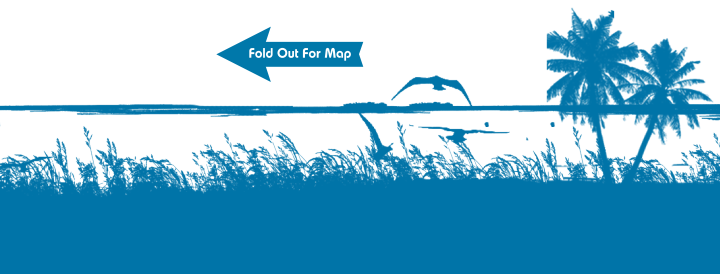
For information on FPPA outfitters and their locations visit:
www.paddleflusa.com

For paddling opportunities in Florida State Parks visit:
www.floridastateparks.org/Activities.cfm

For paddling opportunities on Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission lands visit:
www.myfwc.com/recreation/activity_search.asp

For paddling opportunities in Florida State Forests visit:
www.fl-dof.com/forest_recreation/grid1.html

For paddling opportunities on Water Management District lands visit: <http://dlis.state.fl.us/fgils/wmd.html>.



Going with the Flow

Florida is a watery paradise and the best way to experience it is by canoe or kayak. Whether you seek a gentle paddle along a winding river, a long excursion on the Suwannee River Wildemess Trail, or a bioluminescent kayak tour, you'll find ample and diverse paddling opportunities in Florida. Even though the weather is great year-round, The best times to paddle are fall and spring when temperatures are pleasant, wildflowers are blooming, and birding opportunities are at their peak.

This brochure highlights over thirty paddling trips throughout the state, along with adventure opportunities for more experienced paddlers. With more than 1,000 miles of coastline and 1,711 miles of rivers, streams and creeks, paddling opportunities abound. So choose a waterway and explore. Happy paddling!

How to use this Guide:

Each waterway and designated trail listed in the brochure is rated based on normal weather and water conditions, appropriate level of paddling experience and length. Waterway titles shown in **green** are for all skill levels including beginners. **Blue** requires intermediate skills, and those marked in **red** require advanced skills. Understand that waterways do not always fit into one category of difficulty and may change due to fluctuations in the water levels, rate of water flow, wind, access points (or lack of), tides, inclement weather, downed trees, or other disturbances and obstructions.

Beginner: New to canoeing or kayaking and may need tips and/or instruction.

Intermediate: Paddlers with experience in basic strokes and some paddling experience on the water.

Advanced: Seasoned paddlers who possess the skills and experience to paddle a variety of water types and conditions.

Local outfitters or guides can help determine the condition of a waterway, or sections of it, and level of experience needed based on current weather and water conditions. Many service multiple waterways and offer both independent and guided trips. In addition these guides can assist with trip planning, necessary paddling equipment and information on local amenities such as parking, restroom facilities, camping, picnic areas and food and beverage options. A listing of outfitters begins on page 26.



State Designated
Paddling Trail



National Wild
& Scenic River





Florida Paddling Trails

1. Coldwater Creek

Located in the Panhandle approximately three miles southwest of Munson, Coldwater Creek flows through the Blackwater River State Forest and is said to be some of the swiftest water in Florida. Because it is spring-fed, the shallow water is always pleasantly cool and makes a perfect paddle for all ages. Flowing for 20 miles through undeveloped land, it is very narrow in spots with a steep gradient. The sandy bottom and broad sandbars will remind you of nearby Gulf Coast beaches. A brisk downstream current helps carry you past pine and hardwood forests. Depending on water levels, you may encounter some obstructions although in general Coldwater Creek is a fun, shallow and easy paddle.



2. Blackwater River

This 31-mile trail near Milton flows through the unspoiled Blackwater River State Forest with trees often forming a dense canopy over the river. High bluffs occur in some sections where pine and cedar trees tower above paddlers. The water is coffee colored, the reason why Creek Indians called the river "Oka Lusa" ("water black"). Along the bends, white sandbars provide a perfect place for camping or picnicking. Wildlife in the area include deer, turkey and bobcat. Mississippi kites can be seen soaring overhead during the summer months. Paddling along Blackwater River is generally easy, which makes it a perfect waterway for beginners. Several access points enable paddlers to take shorter trips.



Blackwater River - Milton





3. St. Joseph Bay

In Port St. Joe, the St. Joseph Bay is 15 miles long and the only body of water in the eastern Gulf of Mexico that does not have any rivers or streams flowing into it. The clear waters of the St. Joseph Bay Aquatic Preserve provide homes and nurseries for numerous fish and sea animals such as sea urchins, scallops and snails. A popular paddling destination along the bay is the St. Joseph Peninsula State Park Wilderness Preserve, one of only six in the state park system. It encompasses more than 1,750 acres on the northern end of the peninsula, an unspoiled landscape of large dunes, coastal scrub and grasslands. Paddling in the bay is easy when the wind is mild, but high winds and waves can make paddling challenging so pay close attention to weather conditions. Primitive camping is allowed with advance reservations. For more information visit www.reserveamerica.com.

4. Chipola River

Beginning at the bridge on State Road 166 in Marianna, this scenic 51-mile canoe trail flows through river swamps and hardwood forests. Limestone bluffs and caves, visible from the water, add a unique touch. Several shoals are found in this pale-colored stream, especially during low water, and should be attempted only by intermediate or experienced paddlers. Paddlers should take note of the shoal known as “Look and Tremble” below the State Road 274 bridge near Blountstown and portage if necessary.



Look and Tremble





Florida Paddling Trails

5. Wakulla River

Wildlife is abundant along the 10-mile, clear, spring-fed river located just 30 minutes south of Tallahassee.

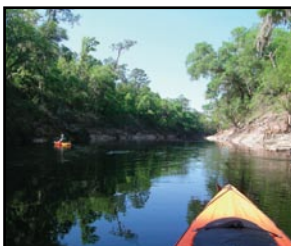
The river is fed by Wakulla Springs, a first magnitude spring with an average flow of 100 million gallons per day. Anhinga, cormorant, limpkin, osprey and gallinule can be seen on the river along with turtles and otters. Manatees are often spotted in warmer months. Paddlers can choose between a four- or six-mile trip below Wakulla Springs State Park. The current is usually mild enough to paddle up and back for any distance desired.



Wakulla River

6. Suwannee River

The Suwannee, made famous in the song “Old Folks at Home” by Stephen Foster, originates in the Okefenokee Swamp in Georgia and meanders for approximately 207 miles before reaching the Gulf of Mexico near the town of Suwannee. Numerous access points and outfitters along the trail make it easy to customize your trip or do it in sections. Lined with oaks, pines, palmettos, and tall cypress, the Suwannee offers white sand beaches that make good campsites. Paddlers of all ages and skill levels will find the upper Suwannee an enjoyable experience. However, it's recommended that paddlers portage Big Shoals, the only Class III rapids in Florida above White Springs. **Big Shoals should only be attempted by experienced paddlers.** The upper Suwannee is about 75 miles in length, beginning at Roline boat ramp near the Georgia border, and ending at Suwannee River State Park.



Cruising the Suwannee





(Suwannee River Continued)

The middle Suwannee, from Suwannee River State Park to Branford, is springs country. The river widens, with numerous springs and small shoals adding to its character. The river boasts more than 70 springs, many of which are found in the middle region, and at Troy Springs you can see the remains of a Confederate river runner, the *Madison*, resting on the bottom.

South of Branford, the lower Suwannee runs deep and wide through pine flatwoods and wetlands as it flows into the Gulf of Mexico. Sandy banks become lower and slope gently toward the river. Most of the lower Suwannee River is wide, tranquil and gentle, and the scenery is spectacular. This section has more motorboats than the upper section, but wildlife is still more common than people.

7. Ichetucknee River

Located four miles northwest of Fort White, off of State Roads 47 and 238, the pristine Ichetucknee River flows for six miles through shaded hammocks and wetlands before it joins the Santa Fe River. Since the river is spring fed, it is crystal clear and always 72 degrees. In 1972, the headspring of the river was declared a National Natural Landmark by the U.S. Department of the Interior. From the end of May until early September, tubing down the river is the premier activity in the area. Visitors can also enjoy snorkeling, scuba diving, swimming, hiking and wildlife viewing. Picnic areas, equipped with tables and grills, are available throughout Ichetucknee Springs State Park. The Ichetucknee is an easy, leisurely paddle. Note: in order to preserve the area, no food or drink is permitted on the river or surrounding springs.



Relaxing on the Ichetucknee

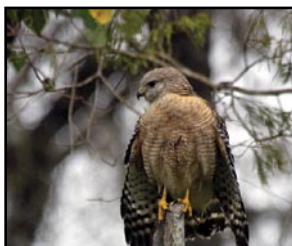


Florida Paddling Trails



8. Santa Fe River

This beautiful trail begins in O'Leno State Park, where the Santa Fe reappears after flowing underground for more than three miles. For the next 30 miles, this tributary of the Suwannee River curves past hardwood hammocks and through river swamps. Many clear springs feed the Santa Fe. There are some small shoals during low water, but they are almost always passable. The trail ends three miles upstream of the confluence of the Santa Fe and Suwannee Rivers.



Spectacular Wildlife

9. St. Mary's River

Picturesque hardwood forests frame the gentle curves of this river, originating in the Okefenokee Swamp in Georgia. Cypress and tupelo trees and snow-white sandbars contrasting with the tea-colored water dominate the scenery. Paddlers can choose from several access points along the 60-mile trail, and the gentle current makes for easy paddling. Be on the lookout for osprey, bald eagle, otter and beaver. You might even catch a glimpse of a black bear!



10. Florida Sea Islands Trail

Four rivers and their salt marshes, plus several barrier islands, create the perfect location in northeast Florida for exceptional coastal saltwater paddling. These trails give you an opportunity to enjoy the tranquility of estuaries and tidal creeks, observe a vast array of birds and wildlife, learn the history of early cultures and settlement of this region and most importantly, relax and appreciate the interplay of water, light and land.

While a number of the trails take advantage of the quiet water between islands, there's ample opportunity to paddle bigger open water and ocean. Pay close attention to weather conditions as high winds and waves can make paddling challenging.



Exploring Florida Sea Islands Trail



11. Bulow Creek

Bulow Creek is 13 miles long and begins at Bulow Plantation Ruins State Park and leads upstream and back and then downstream to the entrance of the Intracoastal Waterway. The sugar mill, a spring house and the foundations of the mansion are all that remain of the Plantation today. As you approach the Intracoastal Waterway, the water begins to turn brackish. Much of the trail flows through grassy coastal marsh typical of the Atlantic Coast. The waterway is affected by tides, winds and waves so be aware of weather conditions prior to departure.



Bulow Creek

12. Juniper Creek

This seven-mile creek is in the Juniper Springs Recreation Area, in the heart of the Ocala National Forest, 20 minutes east of Ocala. Many people consider Juniper Creek to be among the best paddles in Central Florida because of its intimate character and lush, wild setting. The upper section of the creek is narrow, shallow, clear, winding, and covered by a lush canopy. You'll need some skill to navigate over, through, or around submerged snags, overhanging limbs, and other obstacles. There is a nice picnic spot with a small wooden dock at about the halfway mark, where the Florida National Scenic Trail passes by. Toward the end of the trip, the creek widens, and the canopy opens up. You can learn about the spring's history in the old mill house on site.



13. Ocklawaha River

The Ocklawaha River is approximately 110 miles long. It originates in several lakes and flows northward from Central Florida, along the edge of the Ocala National Forest and through the Cross Florida Greenway, until it joins the St. Johns River near Palatka. Early in the morning, mist rises over spring-fed streams. Clear water runs gently through semi-tropical forests and moss-draped trees. Many portions of the river have remained undisturbed so bobcats, deer, and black bears are common sites along the shore, while otters swim the channels and side creeks.



Curious Wildlife

14. Withlacoochee River (South)



Flowing out of the Green Swamp in West Central Florida near Brooksville, this river (not to be confused with the North Withlacoochee River) twists and bends through lush cypress swamps, hardwood and pine forests. Overhanging limbs form a lacy canopy. Camping is available at Silver Lake Recreation Area. For more information visit www.fl-dof.com/forest_recreation/. During dry seasons, paddlers may need to maneuver around logs and hyacinth jams. Although the trail is 83 miles long, numerous access points enable paddlers to choose shorter trips.





15. Homosassa River

The Homosassa River is a beautiful, six-mile meandering river flowing to the Gulf of Mexico. The source is a crystal-clear spring located within the Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park. One of the largest herds of West Indian Manatee in Florida gathers near the constant 72 degree headwaters. Paddlers frequently spot them from their canoes or kayaks.



Manatee Encounter

A few yards downriver of the wildlife park, the Homosassa becomes colored with tannin and turns a light shade of brown. The Halls River, which confluent the Homosassa from the north, offers additional backwater paddling opportunities. The river narrows as it makes its way to the Gulf of Mexico and the fresh water begins to mix with saltwater to become brackish, producing a beautiful environment with many small mangrove islands and saltwater grassy flats.

16. St. Johns River/Blue Spring Run

Located in Blue Spring State Park near Orange City, the Blue Spring Run is a half-mile stretch of crystal clear water. Plant life is abundant along the shoreline up to the spring boil, which releases close to 100 million gallons each day at 72 degrees. This helps draw Florida's favorite mammal, the West Indian Manatee, during the winter months resulting in the run being closed to swimmers and paddle watercraft, usually from November 15 through March 1. The main river provides an ample playground for the more experienced paddler who can cover more area and enjoys numerous oxbows and back country areas.





Florida Paddling Trails

17. Wekiva River/Rock Springs Run



Beginning just north of Kelly Park in Apopka, Rock Springs Run winds its way swiftly downstream to join the spring run flowing out of Wekiwa Springs State Park. The trail continues north approximately 15 miles to the St. Johns River.

A mixture of swift and placid water offers a frequent change of pace. Traveling through sand pine scrub, pine flatwoods, hammocks and swamps, paddlers will see a variety of wildlife. Numerous islands, tributaries and lagoons provide opportunities for side trips and camping. Primitive camping by permit is available at some sites along the trail. For more information regarding primitive campsites call (407) 884-2009. For all other reservations visit www.reserveamerica.com.



A Deer Sighting on Wekiva

18. Indian River Lagoon

The Indian River Lagoon extends 156 miles along Florida's East Coast from Ponce de Leon Inlet to Jupiter Inlet and is considered to be North America's most diverse estuary. Overlapping boundaries of tropical and subtropical climates have helped to create a system that supports 4,300 plants and animals, 72 of which are endangered or threatened. Nearly 1/3 of the nation's manatees live here or migrate through the lagoon seasonally. Premier paddling opportunities along the lagoon include the Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge, Turkey Creek, the St. Sebastian River, the Banana River, Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge, and the Mosquito Lagoon in Canaveral National Seashore. High winds and waves can make paddling challenging so pay close attention to weather conditions before venturing out.



Serenity on Indian River Lagoon





19. St. Sebastian River

Located along Florida's East Coast near Vero Beach, the meandering St. Sebastian River starts out narrow with overhanging branches before it opens up into a sunny, peaceful river. Resident manatees are sometimes spotted eating from submerged branches. The beginning of this trip is very winding and there are some branches to navigate around, over or under but once the river widens, it is an easy paddle. Wildlife such as manatee, scrub jay, red-cockaded woodpecker, southern bald eagle, bobcat, river otter, deer and turkey can be seen along the river. A variety of wading birds, including wood storks and roseate spoonbills, use the property seasonally.



A Getaway on St. Sebastian

20. Hillsborough River

The Hillsborough runs from Crystal Springs to the City of Tampa's Rowlett Park. From nearly pristine conditions, this 31-mile trail winds its way to Tampa Bay through rural, suburban, and urban settings. White ibises can be seen resting on limbs of water oaks draped in Spanish moss, while pileated woodpeckers work high in the pines. Untouched clusters of lilies dot the waterscape, while bobcats explore the surrounding terrain.



The scenic north section is short and well suited for beginner paddlers. The river's headwaters begin here as a slow-moving sheet flow through a heavily vegetated forest with no discernible channel. The middle section is suited for beginner to intermediate paddlers, with some portages possible. The south section is rated for intermediate paddlers because of its length and the possibility of high winds, waves and motorboat traffic.



21. Honeymoon Island/Caladesi Island

Honeymoon Island and Caladesi Island State Parks are two unspoiled jewels that lie side-by-side, within easy reach of the mainland. Paddlers can cruise along Honeymoon Island's 80-acre old-growth slash pine forest with its high density of active osprey nests, or paddle an easy three-mile, round-trip trail through a mangrove forest along Caladesi Island. Since Caladesi Island is only accessible by boat, many paddlers access the island from the Dunedin Causeway, where there are numerous launch points. Kayaks are recommended over canoes. Paddling among the islands can be easy when wind conditions are mild, but high winds and waves can make paddling challenging so pay close attention to weather conditions.



Reflecting Egrets

22. Little Manatee River

Near Bradenton, this tannin-tinted river has a sandy bottom and steep banks. With numerous access points along this 7-mile trail, paddlers will journey through a variety of habitats including sand pine scrub, willow marsh, and hardwood forest. Look for otter, and turtles along the way and an occasional eagle soaring overhead. The trail ends on the south bank at Little Manatee River State Park.





23. Myakka River

Few rivers in Florida equal the short but scenic Myakka when it comes to an all-around paddling experience. The river begins in a hardwood swamp and runs through more than 60 miles of varied terrain before emptying into the fertile fishing grounds of Charlotte Harbor. Fourteen miles of the river flow through Myakka River State Park offering easy access to paddlers. Most kayakers and canoeists choose a six-mile loop around Upper Myakka Lake (a great day trip for bird watchers) or a short stretch to the south in the wilderness preserve above Lower Myakka Lake. It is possible to travel all the way to the harbor, but this is not recommended for beginners. Rangers limit access in the preserve to 30 people a day, so start early. The Myakka River offers a diverse experience, including Little Salt Spring and Warm Mineral Spring.



Myakka River

24. Peace River

The Peace River, true to its name, is a serene, slow-moving river with few signs of civilization. Along the 67-mile trail, from Ft. Meade to Arcadia, the pale, tea-colored river shows many different faces. Sometimes the river is narrow, passing swiftly between high banks. Around a curve, the river may widen and the current becomes slow-moving. Past another curve, the river becomes a quiet, shallow pond before narrowing again. The Peace River is split by tiny islands and joined by numerous creeks. Sandy beaches and sloping banks provide excellent camping spots.



Finding peace on the Peace River





25. Boca Grandes/Placida

Charlotte Harbor Blueways Trails in the Boca Grande/Gasparilla Island and Placida area take paddlers to every extreme – from remote creeks to the Intracoastal Waterway and the ultimate in sea-kayaking on the Gulf of Mexico for an advanced level experience. Paddlers with beginner to intermediate experience will feel right at home in the mangrove canopies of the Woolverton Trails. Along the way, paddlers are treated to sightings of magnificent birds, diverse marine life, uninhabited keys, cypress forests, sand beaches, fish-house restaurants, and glimpses of Old Florida. Placida and north Gasparilla Island provide four launching ramps into protected waters but high winds and waves can make paddling challenging. Pay close attention to weather conditions. A copy of the Charlotte Harbor Blueways Trails map can be downloaded from www.CharlotteCountyFL.com/Parks/Blueways.htm.



Grand Tours in Placida

26. The Great Calusa Blueway

The Great Calusa Blueway is a meandering 100-mile paddling trail with easy-to-find markers that guide canoeists and kayakers through shallow areas away from powerboat traffic. The trail stretches along the pristine waters of Estero Bay to Sanibel and Pine Island Sound, where paddlers can explore mangrove tunnels, spy leggy wading birds nesting, see gamefish jetting by underwater, and come face to face with dolphins, manatees and sea turtles.

The trail is perfect for a one-hour trip for beginners as well as avid and experienced back-country paddlers. Anglers, bird watchers, day-trippers, families, and adventure enthusiasts will truly enjoy this Blueway. For the tech-savvy geocachers, GPS coordinates are available online. Keep in mind that high winds and waves can make paddling conditions challenging so pay close attention to weather conditions. Free maps identify launch sites, outfitters, historical and cultural points, and more. To find out more about the Great Calusa Blueway or to order a map visit www.greatcalusablueway.com.

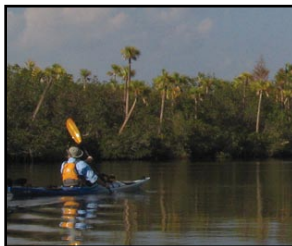




27. Loxahatchee River

Over nine-miles of the upper portion of this river is worthy of its status as Florida's first National Wild and Scenic River, the first in Florida to receive such designation.

The Seminoles named the river "Loxahatchee", which means river of turtles. The coffee-colored stream meanders through an unspoiled subtropical river swamp where bald cypress, pond apple, orchids, and ferns line the shores while heron and osprey fly overhead. Trapper Nelson's cabin is a point of interest near the trail's terminus in Jonathan Dickinson State Park, located 12 miles south of Stuart.



Touring the Loxahatchee

28. Oleta River

Oleta River State Park resembles a coastal Central Park in its urban Miami metropolitan setting located on Biscayne Bay. Exceeding 1,000 acres, this is the largest urban park in the state. The beautiful mangrove-lined, seven-mile, Oleta River is the dominant feature, offering kayaking opportunities for beginners and experienced paddlers alike. Frolicking porpoises and manatees are commonly seen in the area. High winds and waves can make paddling challenging so pay close attention to weather conditions prior to venturing out. Rustic, air-conditioned cabins are available for overnight visitors and can be reserved online at www.reserveamerica.com.





Florida Paddling Trails

29. Florida Keys

Paddling in the Keys is a great way to experience both tropical splendor and unique culture. Just a short distance from launch areas are lush, uninhabited islands and winding tunnels through mangrove forests. Paddlers can enjoy viewing a rich diversity of marine life and bird life. Civilization in the form of great restaurants, lodging, and evening entertainment is often within easy reach of the water, along with several historic points of interest.

Paddling options range from short day trips to a 110-mile journey from Key Largo to Key West along the Florida Keys Overseas Paddling Trail. Kayaks are recommended over canoes. High winds and waves can make paddling conditions challenging so pay close attention to weather conditions.



The Great Escape

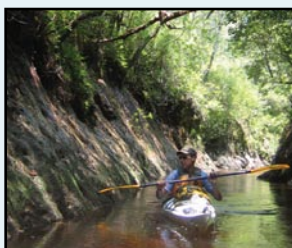




Adventure Seekers: The following waterways are in very remote areas or open waters where high winds and waves can make paddling conditions challenging. Beginners should not attempt these waterways without the assistance of a knowledgeable guide.

A. Econfinia Creek

This trail is an unusually beautiful, swift-flowing creek in Northwest Florida and empties into the Gulf of Mexico near Panama City. The upper 11 miles of the trail (between Scott's Bridge and Walsingham Park) are one of the most difficult stretches of river in the state. Narrow passages, with tight curves and several fast water chutes, log jams and shallow water also make paddling challenging on the upper river so expect to portage. The lower section is spring-fed and slower. The creek is ever-changing and the type of paddling experience and degree of difficulty is dependent on widely fluctuating water levels.



Econfinia Creek

B. Apalachicola River Paddling Trail System

Excellent opportunities entice paddlers with a variety of scenic waterways along the lower estuary of the Apalachicola River. Short, easy trips meander through remote mysterious tupelo swamps while a variety of multi-day trips flow through rivers and open bays where fishing opportunities abound. *Paddler* magazine and the American Canoe Association recently named this trail system one of the top 12 recommended paddling destinations. There are about 100 miles of paddling trails and access points are limited so prepare and plan your trip accordingly. If you are not familiar with paddling or the river, consider utilizing the services of a knowledgeable guide. To receive a free map call (850) 488-5520 or visit www.myfwc.com/recreation/apalachicola_river/paddling.asp.



C. Aucilla River

With high limestone banks and an arching canopy of live oaks, cypress and other trees, the Aucilla is as picturesque as it is wild. The river runs 75 miles to the Gulf of Mexico, but only 25 miles is navigable starting near Lamont. Wildlife commonly seen in the area includes river otter, hawks and a variety of wading birds.. This river has rapids and shoals that paddlers can find challenging, especially at low water. Paddling difficulty is moderate to strenuous and is not recommended for beginners.



Riding the Aucilla

D. North Withlacoochee River

This river gently curves through Twin Rivers State Forest past hardwood forests, crystal-clear springs, and sandbars along the bends. Primitive camping is allowed on Twin Rivers State Forest lands along the river without a permit. Primitive campsites can be found at three sites along the river with yellow blazes on trees visible from the river. There are some small shoals not generally requiring portaging. The Withlacoochee contributes a significant amount of water to the Suwannee River and joins it at Suwannee River State Park. The trail ends at the boat ramp in the state park, about a quarter-mile upstream on the Suwannee River.



On the Lookout



E. Big Bend Saltwater Paddling Trail



This 105-mile paddling trail, located on the Gulf of Mexico between the St. Marks River lighthouse and the Suwannee River, offers outstanding opportunities for experienced paddlers to explore the Big Bend Gulf coast. Primitive campsites have been established on the Big Bend Wildlife Management Area for use by through-paddlers, who must possess an approved permit from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. Permits (at no cost) are required in order to conserve and protect this beautiful but fragile coastal wilderness, and to ensure adequate camping space for paddlers. Information on ordering the Big Bend Saltwater Paddling Trail guide and permit application may be found at http://myfwc.com/recreation/big_bend/paddling_trail.asp.



Big Bend Fishing

F. Everglades

Everglades National Park, one of Florida's premier natural treasures, attracts paddlers from throughout the world. This vast watery wilderness of islands, sawgrass, mangroves, forests, waterways and open water often appears little different than when the dugout travelers fished the waters and set up villages and camps. The park boasts a unique combination of subtropical and tropical plants, birdlife and marine creatures, and is the only place in the world where alligators and crocodiles co-exist. Paddling opportunities include day trips from Flamingo, Everglades City and Collier-Seminole State Park. Hardy adventurers have their choice of taking the 99-mile Wilderness Waterway, or island hopping along the Gulf and Florida Bay. Insects can be pesky, especially in the summer months. High winds and waves can make paddling conditions challenging so pay close attention to weather conditions.



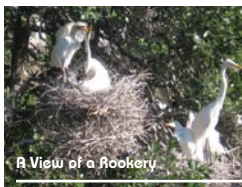
The Everglades



Florida Paddling Trails



Quality Time



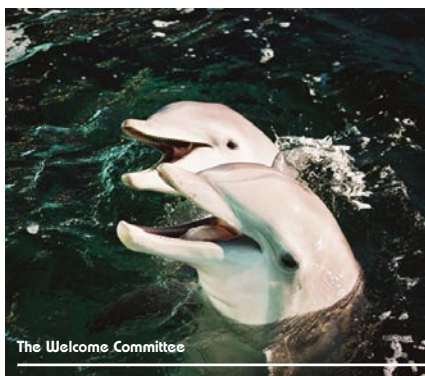
A View of a Rookery



Wekiva



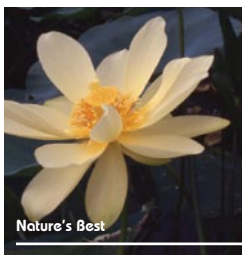
A New Beginning



The Welcome Committee



Enjoying the Great Outdoors



Nature's Best





T1. Suwannee River Wilderness Trail



For those who believe “the journey is the destination,” the Suwannee River provides a scenic route past springs, limestone outcrops and sandy banks. The Suwannee River Wilderness Trail (SRWT) runs 207 miles from the river’s headwaters in rural north Florida to the Gulf of Mexico.



Suwannee River Wilderness Trail

The Trail provides a managed wilderness experience while educating visitors about protecting the natural, cultural and heritage resources in the Suwannee River Basin. Visitor opportunities extend outward from the river to include recreational “hubs,” trails, parks, museums, cultural sites and other nature and heritage attractions in adjacent cities, towns and rural landscapes throughout the area.

Each hub provides opportunity for daytime activities and overnight accommodations in cabins, camping areas or private sector lodgings. Seven river camps at points located between the hubs support multi-day river, hiking, bicycling and riding tours.



A Cabin on the Suwannee

To assist those planning a trip to the SRWT, Florida State Parks web site has information on the trail and links to state parks in the area, current package tour offerings and SRWT partners providing services along the trail. Visit www.SuwanneeRiver.com or call (800) 868-9914.





T2. Bioluminescent Kayak Tour –

An experience of a lifetime!

In some places in the ocean and estuaries, bioluminescent particles are so abundant that any disturbance such as a boat, a fish, or even a hand passing through the water can produce a shimmering light show. In bioluminescence, electrons are excited by a very efficient chemical reaction that generates no heat at all. Bioluminescent creatures are beautiful, fascinating, and critical to the very existence of most marine life. They are also little known and little appreciated because so few people have the opportunity to see them with their own eyes.



A Unique Experience

Guides are recommended to take you to the best areas, but they are not necessary. Your paddle should start right at dusk, then as it gets dark, you'll be able to see almost everything in the water from schools of darting fish to manatees. Even the flow of the water over the sea grass will generate a ghostly radiance. Every movement produces a beautiful blue-green light. In shallow areas, mullets explode out of the water like a rocket all around your vessel and give the appearance of popcorn on the surface and fireworks down below. Other wildlife includes crabs, stingrays, and bottle-nosed dolphins, all glowing. Try dragging your hand through the water and your skin will seem covered with green glitter. This is one experience that you won't want to miss!

Bioluminescence is strongest near Titusville along Florida's Space Coast, especially in Mosquito Lagoon. Prime months during which bioluminescence occurs are May through September. Contact a local outfitter for additional information or to plan your trip.





Florida Circumnavigational Saltwater Paddling Trail

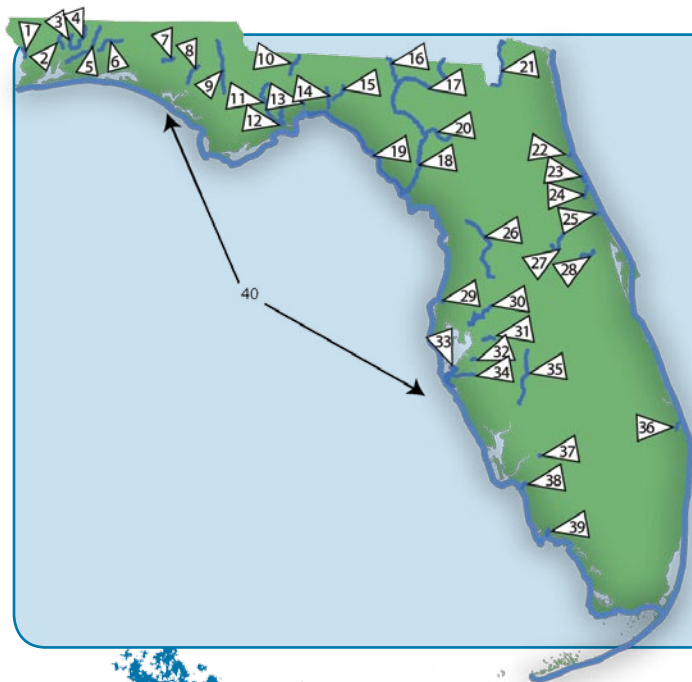


It's the saltwater version of the Appalachian Trail. Beginning at Big Lagoon State Park near Pensacola, extending around the Florida peninsula and Keys, and ending at Fort Clinch State Park north of Amelia Island, the Florida Circumnavigational Saltwater Paddling Trail is a 1,500-mile paddling paradise.

The trail is targeted for completion in 2008 and will include every Florida coastal habitat type, from barrier island dune system to salt marsh to mangrove. Depending on the segment and weather conditions, levels of skill range from beginner to experienced. Sea kayaks are recommended. To download segment guides and maps, follow the link from www.FloridaGreenwaysandTrails.com.



Leading the Way





Florida's Designated Paddling Trails



The Florida Greenways and Trails Designation Program

recognizes paddling destinations for their quality and variety of experiences. The Designation Program is intended to promote good stewardship of paddling trails and enhance recreational experiences. Waterways that meet the program criteria can be designated through Florida's Office of Greenways and Trails. For more information on the Designation Program and Florida's Designated Waterways, and maps of the trails, visit the Office of Greenways and Trails web site at www.FloridaGreenwaysAndTrails.com.



Paddling the Trails

Florida's Designated Paddling Trails

1. Perdido River
2. Coldwater Creek
3. Sweetwater/Juniper Creeks
4. Blackwater River
5. Yellow River
6. Shoal River
7. Holmes Creek
8. Econfinia Creek
9. Chipola River
10. Ochlocknee River North
11. Ochlocknee River South
12. Sopchoppy River
13. Wakulla River
14. Wacissa River
15. Aucilla River
16. Withlacoochee River North
17. Suwannee River North
18. Suwannee River South
19. Big Bend Saltwater Paddling Trail
20. Santa Fe River
21. St. Mary's River
22. Pellicer River
23. Bulow Creek
24. Tomoka River
25. Spruce Creek
26. Withlacoochee River South
27. Wekiva River/Rock Springs Run
28. Econlockhatchee River
29. Pithlachascotee River
30. Hillsborough River
31. Alafia River
32. Little Manatee River
33. Paddle Manatee
34. Upper Manatee River
35. Peace River
36. Loxahatchee River
37. Hickey's Creek
38. Estero River
39. Blackwater River/Royal Palm Hammock
40. Florida Circumnavigational Saltwater Paddling Trail



Outfitters

VISIT FLORIDA Partners as of 4/20/07

Icons for outfitters:

Florida Professional
Paddlesports Member



Retail 

Guided tours 

1. Adventures Unlimited
8974 Tomahawk Landing Rd., Milton
(800) 239-6864

www.adventuresunlimited.com



2. Blackwater Canoe Rental
10274 Pond Rd., Milton
(800) 967-6789
www.blackwatercanoe.com

3. Action on Blackwater Canoe Rental
6293 Hwy. 4 West, Baker
(850) 537-2997
www.actiononblackwater.com



4. Arrowhead Campsites
4820 Highway 90 E., Marianna
(850) 482-5583
www.arrowheadcamp.com

5. Econfina Creek Canoe Livery
5641-A Porter Pond Rd., Youngstown
(850) 722-9032
www.canoeeconfinacreek.com



6. The Wilderness Way
4901 Woodville Hwy., Tallahassee
(850) 877-7200
www.thewildernessway.net



7. Blue Water Sports
2320 Apalachee Pkwy., Tallahassee
(850) 656-9257
www.bluewatersports.net

8. TNT Hide-a-Way, Inc.
6527 Coastal Hwy., Crawfordville
(850) 925-6412
www.tnthideaway.com



9. Great Adventure Outfitters
225 N. Jefferson St., Monticello
(850) 997-5900
www.greatadventureoutfitters.com

10. Canoe Outpost - Suwannee River
2461 95th Dr., Live Oak
(800) 428-4147
www.canoeoutpost.com



11. American Canoe Adventures
10610 Bridge St., White Springs
(386) 397-1309
www.aca1.com



12. Canoe Country Outpost
29506 Scotts Landing Rd., Hilliard
(866) 845-4443
www.canoeountryoutpost.com

13. Kayak Amelia
13030 Heckscher Dr., Jacksonville
(888) 30-KAYAK
www.kayakamelia.com



14. Santa Fe Canoe Outpost
2025 Santa Fe Blvd., High Springs
(386) 454-2050
www.santaferiver.com





Florida Paddling Trails

15. Adventure Outpost
19930 NW Hwy. 441, High Springs
(386) 454-0611
www.adventureoutpost.net



16. Ichetucknee Family Canoe & Cabins
8587 Southwest Elim Church Rd., Ft. White
(866) 224-2064
www.ichetuckneecanoeandcabins.net



17. Suwannee Guides & Outfitters
1548 SE Hwy. 346, Old Town
(352) 542-8331
www.suwanneeguides.com



18. Steinhatchee Landing Resort
228 NE Highway 51, Steinhatchee
(352) 498-3513
www.steinhatcheelanding.com



19. Kayak Cedar Keys
8050 A Street, Cedar Key
(352) 543-9447
www.kayakcedarkeys.com



20. Ocklawaha Canoe Outpost & Resort
15260 NE 152 Place, Ft. McCoy
(866) 236-4606
www.outpostresort.com



21. Florida Pack and Paddle
Call ahead - Silver Springs
(800) 297-8811
www.floridapackandpaddle.com



22. Manatee Tour & Dive
267 Northwest 3rd Street, Crystal River
(888) 732-2692
www.manateetourusa.com

23. Nobleton Outpost
29295 Lake Lindsey Rd. (CR476), Nobleton
(800) 783-5284
www.nobletonoutpost.com



24. Oak Orchard Canoe Kayak Experts
840 Second St., North, Clermont
(352) 242-1064
www.oakorchardcanoe.com/rentals.php



25. St. Johns River Cruises
2100 W. French Ave., Orange City
(407) 330-1612
www.sjrivercruises.com



26. Wekiwa Spring State Park Nature Adventures
1800 Wekiwa Cir., Apopka
(407) 884-4311
www.canoevekiwa.com



27. Adventures in Florida
2912 E. Marks St., Orlando
(407) 924-3375
www.adventuresinflorida.com



28. A Day Away Kayak Tours
3532 Royal Oak Dr., Titusville
(321) 268-2655
www.adayawaykayaktours.com



29. Adventure Kayak of Cocoa Beach, Inc.
745 Orchid Ln., Merritt Island
(321) 480-8632
www.advkayak.com



30. Blazing Paddles Kayak Tours
731 Cressa Circle, Cocoa
(321) 890-9992
www.floridablazingpaddles.com





31. Canoe Escape
9335 E. Fowler Ave., Thonotosassa
(813) 986-2067
www.canoeescape.com



32. Oak Haven River Retreat
12143 Riverhills Dr., Tampa
(813) 988-4580
www.oakhavenriverretreat.com

33. Sail Honeymoon, Inc.
61 Causeway Blvd., Dunedin
(727) 734-0392
www.sailhoneymoon.com



34. Canoe Country Outfitters, Inc.
6493 54th Ave. North, St. Petersburg
(727) 545-4554
www.canoeccountryfl.com



35. Canoe Outpost – Little Manatee River
18001 S. US 301, Wimauma
(813) 634-2228
www.canoeoutpost.com



36. Ray's Canoe Hideaway
1247 Hagle Park Rd., Bradenton
(888) 57-CANOE
www.rayscanoehideaway.com



37. Walk on the Wild Side
3434 N. Tamiami Trail, Ste. 817, Sarasota
(941) 351-6500
www.walkwild.com



38. Sarasota Bay Explorers
1600 Ken Thompson Parkway, Sarasota
(941) 388-4200
www.sarasotabayexplorers.com



39. A Silent Sports Outfitters
2301 Tamiami Trail N., Nokomis
(941) 966-5477
www.silentssportsoutfitters.com

40. Canoe Outpost - Peace River
2816 NW County Road 661, Arcadia
(800) 268-0083
www.canoeoutpost.com



41. Canoe Safari
3020 NW County Rd. 661, Arcadia
(863) 494-7865
www.canoesafari.com



42. Grande Tours
12575 Placida Road, Placida
(941) 697-8825
www.grandetours.com



43. Tropic Star of Pine Island
13921 Waterfront Dr., Pineland
(239) 283-0015
www.tropicstarcruises.com

44. Tarpon Bay Explorers, Inc.
900 Tarpon Bay Road, Sanibel Island
(239) 472-8900
www.tarponbayexplorers.com



45. GAEA Guides - Guided Kayak
Nature Tours
340 Kingston Drive West, Ft. Myers
(239) 694-5513
www.gaeaguides.com



46. Everglades Rentals & Eco Adventures
107 Camellia Street, Everglades City
(239) 695-3299
www.evergladesadventures.com





Florida Paddling Trails

47. Everglades Area Tours.com
702 Begonia St., Everglades City
(239) 695-9107
www.evergladesareatours.com



48. Crystal Seas, Inc.
Everglades National Park, Everglades City
(877) 732-7877
www.crystalseas.com

49. Kayaks, Etc.
2626 U.S. Highway #1, Vero Beach
(888) 652-9257
www.kayaksetc.com



50. Jonathan Dickinson State Park
River Tours
16450 SE Federal Hwy. #1, Hobe Sound
(561) 746-1466
www.floridaparktours.com



51. Canoe Outfitters of Florida
9060 W. Indiantown Road, Jupiter
(888) 272-1257
www.canoes-kayaks-florida.com



52. Blue Moon Outdoor Center
3400 NE 163rd St., N. Miami
(305) 957-3040
www.bluemoonmiami.com



53. EcoAdventures
4000 Crandon Blvd., Key Biscayne
(305) 365-3018
www.miamidade.gov/parks



54. Dragonfly Expeditions, Inc.
1825 Ponce De Leon Blvd. #369,
Coral Gables
(888) 9-WANDER
www.dragonflyexpeditions.com



55. Florida Bay Outfitters
104050 Overseas Hwy., Key Largo
(866) 539-9251
www.kayakfloridakeys.com



56. Big Pine Kayak Adventures, Inc.
1791 Bogie Drive, Big Pine Key
(305) 872-7474
www.keyskayaktours.com





Paddling Checklist

What to do prior to launch:

- ☐ File a float plan (leave with responsible person)
- ☐ Place copy of float plan in car in visible location
- ☐ Check daily weather forecast
- ☐ Check tidal conditions, current & water levels
- ☐ Have a vehicle waiting, with dry clothes, at take-out point
- ☐ Apply sunscreen & insect repellent
- ☐ Secure extra paddle to boat
- ☐ Secure keys, cell phone & ID to boat in a waterproof bag
- ☐ Wear appropriate clothing for weather & water conditions

Essentials to bring along:

- ☐ Personal Floatation Device (PFD) with whistle
(1 PFD per person / the law requires that each PFD have an attached whistle)
- ☐ Map, compass or GPS
- ☐ Spare paddle (1 per boat)
- ☐ Bilge pump and/or sponge
- ☐ Waterproof bags
- ☐ VHF radio if on open waters
- ☐ Weather radio
- ☐ Signaling device: flashlight, mirror, air horn
- ☐ Sunglasses & wide brim hat
- ☐ Long-sleeved shirt for extra protection
- ☐ Sunscreen & lip balm with SPF (apply often)
- ☐ Insect repellent
- ☐ First aid kit
- ☐ Extra set clothing & shoes in waterproof bag
- ☐ Towel
- ☐ Food - if allowed on waterway
- ☐ Drinking water (1/2 gallon per person per day)
- ☐ Binoculars
- ☐ Camera & film
- ☐ Pocketknife or multi-purpose tool
- ☐ Rope
- ☐ Duct tape or repair kit



Legend:

Outfitters ★

Waterways

Beginner ●

Intermediate ●

Advanced ●

Specialty ●

See "How to use this Guide" for a more detailed description.

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www.floridastateparks.org



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