

## S10 Day Paddles - ICW

### Bowles Creek Paddle Information Sheet

**Description:** This is an out and back paddle. Head northwest and follow the shoreline north to Bowles Creek. It's best to stay at least a quarter mile off shore to avoid the shallow areas running along the eastern shore. Within the first half mile will be nice views of the Ringling Mansion and New College's beautiful Bayfront buildings. There is a small island just before reaching Bowles Creek with a nice sandy beach on its western side. This is an inviting spot to take a break. The turnaround on the mostly residential Bowles Creek is just before the Sara Bay Country Club. The next small island going north in the bay, just off Bayshore Park, is the turnaround point and has a nice beach on the west side. Return is back along the shoreline.

**Skill Level:** Intermediate/Advanced

**Distance/Approximate Time:** 9.6 Miles/4.5 Hours

**Launch Site:** Sapphire Shores Park Paddle Launch

**Special Considerations:** Kayaks can be wheeled down the side walk to the beach, but there is about a 2 foot drop from the sidewalk to the beach requiring that the kayaks be carried about 40 feet onto the beach. The bay can be quite rough on windy days, especially with northwest winds, so weather must be taken into consideration in planning this paddle. Boat traffic can be heavy on weekends. Stay alert for motorboats during the paddle and also shallow areas and old dock pilings just under the surface if paddling close to shore.

#### Skill Level Definitions

**Beginner:** New to paddling and may need tips and or instructions about paddling strokes, safety procedures, and entering/exiting kayaks. Comfortable on short trips of 1 to 3 miles on protected waters, when wind does not exceed 5 mph.

**Novice:** Paddlers acquainted with basic paddle strokes and can manage kayak handling independently in winds not exceeding 10 mph on protected waters. Comfortable on trips up to 6 miles.

**Intermediate:** Paddlers with experience in basic strokes and some experience on different venues, including some open water. Comfortable on trip distances of 6 to 10 miles, winds not exceeding 15 mph.

**Advanced:** Seasoned paddlers who possess skills and experience to paddle all venues and conditions. Experienced in self-rescues. Should be comfortable paddling more than 10 miles in a day.

**NOTE:** Great care has been taken to ensure this guides accuracy, but weather, tides, and water conditions can change rapidly and create hazardous conditions. These maps are for visual reference only, please consult NOAA Charts for navigation. Paddlers should have all proper safety equipment and check conditions before departure. All paddlers should always wear PFDs while on the water, and leave a float plan. There are inherent dangers in any paddle sport. There are special hazards along the Florida coast due to shifting tides, changing wind and weather, shallow waters, and treacherous bottoms with soft mud, rocks, and oyster bars. It is up to each paddler to be aware of these dangers, to accept and be prepared for the risks involved, and to be certain they have the skills to safely paddle in these conditions.