

S11 Day Paddles - Myakka River

Myakka River State Park Paddle Information Sheet

Description: This is one of Florida's unique paddles with an opportunity to see a lot of wildlife depending of the season. This section of the river flows through a flood plain with an occasional oak hammock and mostly grassy banks. This paddle varies tremendously depending on the water level. During wet periods, the flood plain may be inundated with water making a series of lakes. During dry periods, the water level may be so low as to be impassible. At moderate water levels, there are a few cul-de-sacs that may necessitate some trial-and-error paddling to find the actual river channel. Paying attention to the current flow often helps to avoid paddling up dead ends. During the fall, winter and spring, this is one of the best places in the state to see a wide variety of wading birds. Myakka River State Park has one of the highest densities of alligators in the state

Skill Level: Intermediate

Distance/Approximate Time: 6.2 Miles/3 Hours

Launch Site: Myakka River SP - State Park Rd Paddle Launch

Special Considerations: Special considerations: Best to do this paddle with a water level of 2.8 feet or higher. Before attempting the paddle, check out the gage height by doing a "Myakka River Water Level" search online. Look for USGS 02298830 Myakka River near SR 72. Since the river is often narrow with many twists and turns, many of the alligators will be viewed at very close quarters. This is not a trip for anyone who is afraid of alligators.

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 stokes 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.

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