

## S11 Day Paddles - Myakka River

### Upper Myakka River Paddle Information Sheet

**Description:** A free permit, which can be obtained at the entrance station, is required to enter the wilderness area of the park. You will need a permit to do this paddle. This is a superb paddle that takes you through a variety of habitats from the low-banked flood plain above and below the lower lake to the high-banked lower part of the river. You will pass by grassy flood plains with scattered oak hammocks on the upper part of the river and both hardwood and pine forests lower down river. At roughly the 9.5 mile mark, you will encounter Down's Dam. At some water levels and depending on your skill level, it may be possible to paddle through the gate. However, with the exception of highly skilled paddlers, it is safer to err on the side of caution and portage around the dam on the right side of the river. This side of the river is private property. There may be "No Trespassing" signs. Do not linger while portaging around the dam. Do it as quickly as possible and continue on your way. There are plenty of places downstream for nice rest stops.

**Skill Level:** Advanced

**Distance/Approximate Time:** 13.7 Miles/4.5 Hours

**Launch Site:** Myakka River State Park Paddle Launch

**Takeout Site:** Venice Myakka River Park Paddle Launch



**Special Considerations:** It can be a challenge to find the entrance from the river into Venice Myakka River Park.. Only those who know the river well and are experienced paddlers should undertake this paddle when the river is at flood stage GPS highly recommended. This paddle is best done at a water level above 4 feet as measured at the USGS 02298830 water gauge. Use of a plastic kayak is recommended when the water level is below 4 feet. There are times when water hyacinths may block portions of the river requiring portages. Taking out at the park requires exiting your kayak onto a floating dock. A kayak cart is recommended. This paddle requires a shuttle. Park entry fee.

#### 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.