

Watson Place Camp Trip Information Sheet

Description: Watson Place is one of the more historic campsites in ENP. Originally settled by the infamous Ed Watson in the early 1890s. With nearly 30 acres of “high ground”, Watson had a successful sugar cane operation, not to mention plenty of shady dealings. This is an extremely long paddle, not for the faint of heart. After heading out of Everglades City and around the southern tip of Chokoloskee, head up the Lopez River, through Sunday and Oyster Bays and into Huston Bay. At the southwest corner of Huston Bay, hang a right in a more southerly direction for a shortcut to the Chatham River. Once at the River, continue down river a short distance and the campsite is on your right (north) side of the river. For an excellent background on Ed Watson and this site read “Shadow Country” by Peter Matthiessen.

Skill Level: Advanced only

Distance/Time: 18.2 Miles each way/8 Hours each way

Launch Site: Everglades National Park Visitors Center in Flamingo

Special Considerations: Extremely long paddle. Map, compass and GPS recommended. All back country camping requires permits from Everglades National Parks. Please review ENPs Backcountry planning site and check with rangers to make sure site is open. Please practice “Leave No Trace” principles.

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.