

S13NC Day Paddles - Northwest Coastal Area

Wiggins Bay/Hickory Bay Paddle Information Sheet

Description: The route starts out in a series of channels and bays with Trail Markers 1 through 15 for about the first mile. When you pass Marker 15 you're in the ICW that runs north from Wiggins Pass to Little Hickory Bay. Dolphins and manatees are common and the fishing is good.

Skill Level: Intermediate

Distance/Time: 6 Miles/3 Hours

Launch Site: Barefoot Beach Preserve Paddle Launch is a Collier County owned and maintained facility at the south end cul-de-sac of the Lely Barefoot Beach public Park. The park opens at 8 AM. There is a guard house and the entrance line builds quickly in season. They rent canoes. There is a rest room near the launch. The launch area is large, flat, and sandy into a protected cove with Trail Marker 1 at the launch.

Special Considerations: GPS, compass and maps or aerial photos suggested. There is a shallow area at low tide near markers 13 to 14. The channel is very wide in many areas. Flow in the channel is tidal and there are high speed power boats and wakes, so pay attention.

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.