

S13TT Day Paddles - Ten Thousand Islands

NWR Trail #3 Information Sheet

Description: This trail can only be used after heavy rains or during the rainy season. Water generally sits shallow (about 2 feet) through the area and a little deeper (4 feet) in the lakes, but the lakes have muck bottoms. You'll travel in and out of flooded marshes, tunnels, channels, lakes and areas of small mangrove islands. US 41 is within a 1 miles to the northeast. The trail is very well marked with 4" white PVC pipes and small blue diamonds on the pipes with directional arrows. See map for marker locations. It's an easy paddle. If you are more adventurous, you can explore the red trail which is not marked and not part of the official Refuge trail system.

Skill Level: Novice Blue Trail; Intermediate Red Trail due to navigation issues and difficult paddling.

Distance: Official NWR Trail (Blue Trail) 1.8 Miles Out and Back; Southeast Loop (Red Trail) 2.1 Miles; Total (Blue and Red Trails) 3.9 Miles.

Launch Site: There is no parking area. You'll park on the shoulder of US Hwy 41. Launch coordinates are on the trail map. Pull well off the road. You'll see the plastic trail markers. The launch is an opening in the mangrove/grass road fringe with a sign that says NWR Canoe Trail 3. Coming west it's about 2.3 miles past the Port of the Islands canal. Going east it's about 0.67 miles past the Marsh Trail Parking Lot entrance.

Special Considerations: Although the official NWR blue trail is very well marked, map and compass are highly recommended, and if you choose to paddle the red trail, which are not part of the official NWR trail system, GPS, map and compass are a must.

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.