

S13TT Day Paddles and Overnight Trips - Ten Thousand Islands

NWR Trail #4 Information Sheet

Description: This trail can generally be used after the other trails have dried up. In the wet season, water generally sits shallow (about 2 feet) throughout the area, and a little deeper (4ft) in the lakes. You'll start off down a straight .33 mile narrow channel through the cattails. The trail is very well marked with 4" white PVC pipes with small blue diamonds and directional arrows. See marker locations on accompanying map. It's an easy paddle to the big lake. You'll travel in and out of flooded marshes, tight tunnels, channels, lakes and areas of small mangrove islands where everything looks the same. From the lake you can return in the opposite direction. If you are more adventurous, you can explore the red unmarked side trails, which are 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) 3 Miles Out and Back; East Loop (Red Trail) 3.9 Miles; West Loop 2.4 Miles; Total (Blue and Red Trails) 8.1 Miles.

Launch Site: There is no parking at the launch site. Please park roadside beyond the guard rail so as not to impede use of the ramp. See launch coordinates on the map. There is a sign that says NWR Canoe Trail 4. Going west it's about 1.2 miles past the Port of the Islands Canal. Going east it's about 1.8 miles past the Marsh Trail parking lot.

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 trails, 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.