

**Leg 2 - Whitehorse to Panther Information Sheet**

**Description:** This area is so remote, with no places to spend the night, that the only way to see them is to spend the day paddling and then camp on the "outside" islands. Note that the "inside" is very shallow so plan ahead for the tides. This leg of our trip starts at Whitehorse Key and heads northeast up the pass to Dismal Key which has a lot of history. It's worth stopping to see the cistern and other ruins; the access is through a small clearing in the mangroves on the west side of the island. Then we head around the top of Dismal Key and east to Santina Bay keeping to the south side to avoid the shallow sandbars. We then head in a more southerly direction past mangrove islands sticking out into the bay and finally come to the rather hidden entrance to a creek that cuts all the way through a convoluted mangrove island. This creek will dump us out across from an island that almost connects to the northern tip of Panther Key. We can follow the western shore, where about halfway down, we come to a cut that takes us through to the south side of Panther where the main camping beach is located. See the trip description for Panther Key Camp Trip for details about this camping location.

**Skill Level:** Intermediate/Advanced

**Distance/Time:** 7.3 Miles/Approximately 4 Hours

**Launch Site:** Whitehorse Key

**Take-out Site:** Panther Key

**Special Considerations:** There is no camping on Panther Key From May through September due to nesting sea turtles and shorebirds. Map, compass and GPS are a must. Bring plenty of water and food.

**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.