

S15LK Day Paddles - Lower Keys

Five Mile Creek Loop Information Sheet

Description: This is a great windy day paddle. Most of the trail is in narrow mangrove creeks and mangrove tunnels. Any open areas along this Loop are short paddles. Mangrove Snapper are commonly seen in these creeks.

Skill Level: Intermediate

Distance/Approximate Time: 7.2 Miles/4 Hours

Launch Site: Sugarloaf Key - Sugarloaf Marina Paddle Launch

Special Considerations: Try to use the tides to your advantage to make this out and back trek easier. Currents can be fairly strong in the creeks, and can become difficult in the tunnels, especially for long boats. Some places may require you to fasten your paddle to your boat, and use your hands to pull yourself through the tunnels. Recommended paddling on medium to high tides. The bays can become quite shallow on low tide.

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.