

S15LK Day Paddles - Lower Keys

Upper Sugarloaf Sound Paddle Information Sheet

Description: This is a nice loop paddle allowing for exploration of Upper Sugarloaf Sound and Tarpon Creek, a twisty half-mile mangrove creek. To make the trip more enjoyable, time it to go out the 2-mile long canal with the outgoing tide. Halfway down the manmade canal is a bridge that is cut off to vehicle traffic. This is the old State Road 4A that preceded our current US1. Locals use it as a swimming hole with daredevils jumping off the bridge into the deep water below. This is a good place to pull over and take a break for a picnic or a swim. As you exit the creek you will hit the Atlantic Ocean. Paddle approximately 2 miles and look for the PVC markers that indicate Tarpon Creek. There is much life along this sandy bottom creek. Look for sea stars and schools of fish underneath the mangroves. This natural canal will intersect with a manmade canal at a burned out bridge, another spot to pull over and rest.

Skill Level: Intermediate

Distance/Approximate Time: 9.7 Miles/4 Hours

Launch Site: Sugarloaf Marina Paddle Launch

Special Considerations: Currents can be strong in the creek and cuts.

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.