

S1 Day Paddles - Coldwater Creek

Lower Coldwater Creek/Blackwater River Information Sheet

Description: Flowing through the Blackwater River State Forest, Coldwater Creek has some of the swiftest water in Florida. The sandy bottom and broad sandbars will remind you of nearby Gulf Coast beaches. A brisk downstream current helps carry you past pristine pine and hardwood forest land and into the Blackwater River. This 15.7 mile paddling trail is for intermediate level paddlers. Several access sites allow paddlers to choose trips of varying distance. Because it is spring-fed, the shallow water is always pleasantly cool and makes for a perfect paddle for all ages. Flowing for nearly 16 miles through undeveloped it is very narrow in spots with a steep gradient. Depending on water levels, sandbars are suitable for camping. Obstructions could include cypress knees, logs, and wide gravel bars that extend into the stream from shorelines in the creek portion.

Skill Level: Intermediate

Distance/Approximate Time: 15.7 Miles/6 Hours

Launch Site: Adventures Unlimited Outdoor Center Paddle Launch

Takeout Site: Russell Harbor Landing Paddle Launch on the Blackwater River

Special Considerations: Fee at Adventures Unlimited launch. This paddle requires shuttling. Best paddled when Blackwater River Gage (https://waterdata.usgs.gov/fl/nwis/uv/?site_no=02370000&PARAMeter_cd=00065,00060) is between 2.5' and 5'.

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.