

## S1ER Day Paddles - Escambia River

### Williams Lake Ramp to Cotton Lake Landing Paddle Information Sheet

**Description:** The Escambia River, primarily alluvial by nature, is a 92-mile river of which 54 miles are found in Florida. The river has its headwaters in southern Alabama and is called the Conecuh in that state, changing names as it comes into Florida as it drains into Pensacola Bay. The Escambia is the fourth largest river in Florida and harbors the richest assemblage of native North American freshwater fish of any Florida river with 85 native freshwater species. Much of the river is bordered by floodplain forest. Water levels fluctuate considerably throughout the year, subject to rainfall amounts. On medium to low water levels, this section of the river has quite a few sandbars to get out on to stretch your legs.

**Skill Level:** Advanced

**Distance/Approximate Time:** 11.2 Miles/4.5 Hours

**Launch Site:** Williams Lake Ramp

**Takeout Site:** Cotton Lake Landing Ramp

**Special Considerations:** Possible deadfalls and snags. Do not paddle when the water levels are high or at flood stage.

#### 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.