

S1 Day Paddles and Overnight Camping Trips - Inland Lakes

Bear Lake Information Sheet

Description: Bear Lake is a 107-acre man-made impoundment constructed in 1959, opened to fishing in 1961 in the Blackwater River State Forest, and designated as a Fish Management Area. The lake has an average depth of 8 feet with a maximum depth of 23 feet. A considerable amount of flooded timber remains, and the lake is stocked with various fish. A dual-launch concrete boat ramp is located within the Bear Lake Campground. The Florida Forest Service maintains the campground, which includes bath/restroom facilities, along with camping and picnic areas. The Florida Forest Service charges a car fee to all persons entering the Bear Lake Campground area. Two primitive dirt boat landings are accessible from Hurricane Lake Rd. and are not currently subject to this fee.

Skill Level: Novice

Distance/Approximate Time: 3 Miles/1.5 Hours

Launch Site: Bear Lake Campground Ramp

Special Considerations: Gasoline boat motors are prohibited from use on Bear Lake; however, use of electric trolling motors is allowed. For camping reservations contact Reserve America at (800) 326-3521.

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.