

S1 Day Paddles - Pensacola Bay

Bayou Chico Paddle Information Sheet

Description: This is a paddle through heavy residential shorelines with a smattering of light industry sites. Launch south of Grotto Hall on S K St. Paddle west a short distance into the mouth of Bayou Chico. Follow the east shore northward as you paddle interior of the Bayou. Explore both the right and left forks before heading back south. Once back in the Bayou, you can hug the west shoreline toward the SR295 A bridge. Turn around just before the bridge, and head back into the Bayou and on to the ramp. The water in the Bayou and associated creeks is dark and brackish.

Skill Level: Intermediate

Distance/Approximate Time: 6.7 Miles/ 3 Hours

Launch Site: Sanders Beach Rec Complex Ramp

Special Considerations: Due to the areas light industry and many waterfront homes with boats, powerboat traffic can be heavy, especially where the mouth narrows. Always be aware of where you are and what is behind and ahead of you. Barges are quiet and can sneak up behind you. There are very few places to get out and stretch your legs on this paddle.

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.