

Day Paddles and Overnight Camping Trips - St Lucie River - South Fork

South Fork Paddle Information Sheet

Description: Launch at the full facility free Leighton public park and head south on the South Fork of the Saint Lucie River. Turnaround is at Phipps Park Campground, a Martin County Park Campground. A sandy launch site is under the I-95 (2nd) bridge at the end of this trail. At the turnaround, you are in the Intracoastal system which crosses the lower part of Florida via Lake Okeechobee and a canal system with Locks.

Skill Level: Novice/Intermediate

Distance/Time: 5 Miles/Approximately 2.5 hours

Launch Site: Leighton Park Ramp 2701 SW Cornell Avenue, Palm City, FL at the SW corner of the SW Monterey Road Bridge

Takeout Site: Phipps Park Ramp 1907 SW Belcrave Terrace, Stuart, FL off SW Locks Road

Special Considerations: There is lots of open water and power boat traffic. During heavy rains, expect northern currents.

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.