

S22 Day Paddles - St Johns River

Five Lakes Paddle Information Sheet

Description: This paddle consists of a protected trail through 5 lakes—Little Salt Lake, Salt Lake, Loughman Lake, Clark Lake and Ruth Lake, and ends with a short paddle on the St Johns River to Hatbill Park. The shoreline of all five lakes and connector creeks are almost exclusively grass lined, with some sandy shore during lower water levels. Usually plenty of gators, turtles and birds, depending on the water level. Don't miss the great Hatbill Observation Platform between Loughman Lake and Clark Lake.

Skill Level: Intermediate

Distance/Approximate Time: 7.3 Miles/3 Hours

Launch Site: Six Mile Creek Ramp

Takeout Site: Hatbill Park Paddle Launch

Special Considerations: Be careful of airboats, especially in the creeks connecting the lakes. Paddle with a flag on a high pole. There is an airboat ride business at the north end of Loughman Lake with a restaurant. This paddle requires shuttling vehicles.

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.