

S22 Day Paddles - St Johns River

SR 50 Midway Ramp to Hatbill Park Paddle Information Sheet

Description: This is a fairly short protected paddle down the St Johns River. Most of the trail is through grasslands and occasional small clusters of cypress and palm trees, with some hardwood hammocks in the distance. There are usually plenty of big gators to see, along with plenty of birdlife. You may even encounter some free range cattle along the banks. You can't miss Hatbill Park, it's the first ramp on your right after leaving Hwy 50.

Skill Level: Intermediate

Distance/Approximate Time: 8.8 Miles/3.5 Hours

Launch Site: SR 50 Midway Ramp

Takeout Site: Hatbill Park Boat Ramp and Paddle Launch

Special Considerations: There are a few side ribbon creeks, so a good map, compass, and GPS are highly recommended. Use a flag on a high pole while paddling the area as it's known as airboat country and they have a difficult time seeing low kayaks hidden along the twists and turns through the high grasses. Recommend paddling during periods of medium water levels. 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.