

S23 Day Paddles - Econlockhatchee River

Upper Econlockhatchee River Paddle Information Sheet

Description: The upper Econ is a black water stream originating from a large area of swamps and seasonally flooded area to the south. The basic habitat is cypress/hardwood swamp or lowland with an occasional area of pine/palmetto reaching to the river's edge. Seasonal flooding keeps encroachment to a minimum with only a few homes barely visible from the river. Squirrel, otter and deer are the most commonly seen mammals. Wild hog, gray fox and swamp cottontail have been observed. The most common birds are kingfishers, egrets, herons, ibis, red shouldered hawks and barred owls. Alligators are commonly seen, some very large. A few have visible injuries, like a missing limb or the end of its tail.

Skill Level: Intermediate

Distance/Approximate Time: 8.1 Miles/ 3 – 5 Hours depending on water levels

Launch Site: CR 419 Bridge. Access to the river is by walking about 100 yards from the parking area on Northeast side of CR 419 bridge down a grassy easement to the unimproved launch under the bridge. A cart is recommended.

Takeout Site: Snow Hill Road Bridge Paddle Launch

Special Considerations: Deadfall may require pullovers at water levels below 13 feet. These increase as the water drops. This trip becomes impractical below 11 feet. At high water levels, the river leaves its banks and provides an interesting opportunity to paddle through the woods. Beware of possible strainers. Check USGS gauge (near Oviedo) for water levels; river is at flood stage if gage is over 18 feet. Map, compass and GPS recommended. No Launch Fee. 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.