

## S23 Day Paddles - Lower Ocklawaha River

### Bear Creek/North Ribbon Loop Information Sheet

**Description:** This counter-clockwise out and back paddle takes you on the Ocklawaha River, Bear Creek, and back on one of the many ribbons of the Lower Ocklawaha. Shortly after launching, take a right to get on Bear Creek, and stay on the creek all the way to the St. Johns River. A short distance north on the St Johns is the entrance to the Ocklawaha, you can't miss it. About 1 mile up the Ocklawaha, take a right into the north ribbon, which exits back into the Ocklawaha about 2 miles from the launch ramp. A good part of this paddle is shaded. Generally there is little traffic on Bear Creek and the northern ribbon, nor are there any signs of development along this paddle except at the St Johns. There are plenty of ibis, herons, cranes, limpkins, and anhingas to be seen, and you are likely to hear the calls of barred owls. You may also spot a few gators and otters. Flora includes cypress, red maples, cabbage palms, asters, Bartram's air plants, and plenty of spatterdock and watershield.

**Skill Level:** Intermediate

**Distance/Approximate Time:** 10 Miles/4.5 Hours

**Launch Site:** Johnson Field Ramp

**Special Considerations:** Due to the many side ribbons on this paddle, a GPS is highly recommended. As with all creeks in Florida, there may be occasional deadfall, especially after storms. The St Johns is wide and can get rough on windy days. Except during low water, there are no places to get out of your boat.

#### 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