

## S23 Day Paddles - St Johns River

### Blue Creek Paddle Information Sheet

**Description:** This 11-mile Blue Creek Paddle leads paddlers from the community of Astor to the St. Johns River. This is a side creek running from the St. John's River north and west to Lake George. Blue Creek is known for its diverse wildlife, including a large population of alligators. Evening boaters have been known to spot as many as a dozen gators along the creek bed. Astor is known for its quaint-style of living with family-owned restaurants and small vacation homes. Once a bustling commercial center on the St. Johns River, citrus from Lake County groves was sent to Astor by rail and then shipped to Jacksonville by steamboats. Once in the creek, you're in a peaceful place. Much of the shoreline on both sides is undeveloped once you move through Astor. Forest property owners have placed birdhouses at frequent intervals along the creek, and it's fun to find new ones. Return is back through Hitchens Creek, Axle Creek, and the St Johns River to your launch site.

**Skill Level:** Advanced

**Distance/Approximate Time:** 11 Miles/5 Hours

**Launch Site:** Astor Butler St Ramp

**Special Considerations:** Be mindful of heavy power boat traffic on the St Johns River, especially on the weekends.

#### 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.