

S28 Day Paddles - Lakes

Lake Alto Paddle Information Sheet

Description: This short paddle is along the 573 acre Lake Alto in Alachua County. Lake Alto and Santa Fe Lake are considered the headwaters of the Santa Fe River.. In the late 1870s, a 1.9 mile canal was dug to connect Lake Alto to Little Lake Santa Fe. The Santa Fe Canal was used to deliver produce, and for easy access to the railroad in Melrose. The canal was plied by several steamboats until the mid 1920's when improved roads made the canal obsolete. The entrance is in the southeast corner of the lake. The lake is mostly undeveloped, with some residences on the Southwest side. It has the highest lake elevation in Alachua County. The lake is lined with Bald Cypress, and is a popular local fishing lake.

Skill Level: Novice

Distance/Approximate Time: 4.1 Miles/2 Hours

Launch Site: Lake Alto Park Ramp

Special Considerations: None

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.