

S28 Day Paddles - Lakes

Northwest Orange Lake Paddle Information Sheet

Description: This paddle encompasses the northwest side of the 12,500 acre lake. Orange lake has over 20 miles of beautiful Bald Cypress shoreline, and is fed by Lochloosa Lake through Cross Creek, at the takeout. Max depth is 20 feet and it averages 5 – 6 feet in depth. Orange Lake is famous for it's floating tussock islands. During low water, vegetation takes root in exposed muck. When the lake refills, air trapped in the soil around these "tussocks" of vegetation cause them to break free and float on the surface. Floating islands are born. These tussocks often become rookeries for the abundant birds and amphibians. Orange Lake is a birdwatchers paradise, as well as a popular fishing lake. Don't forget to visit the historic Sate Park at the takeout before your departure.

Skill Level: Intermediate

Distance/Approximate Time: 13.3 Miles/6.5 Hours

Launch Site: Heagy Burry Park Ramp

Takeout Site: Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Historic State Park Ramp

Special Considerations: This paddle requires shuttling. State Park entry fee. Depending on water levels and wind, you may have to be flexible with your route, as the floating tussocks, as well as other floating vegetation, tends to get blown around the lake. Water levels can vary by 2 –3 feet, partially due to a sink hole at the lakes edge.

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.