

## S29 Day Paddles - Harris Chain Of Lakes

### Lake Harris Paddle Information Sheet

**Description:** This is a long paddle, but you can make it as short as you want to. Lake Harris is the largest lake entirely in Lake County at 13,788 acres. Lake Harris' depth is much greater than Lake Okeechobee to the south, with many deeper holes and ledges. Named initially Lake Astatula, which translates in Native American to "Lake of Sunbeams," the municipalities of Astatula, Howey-in-the-Hills, Leesburg and Tavares all border Lake Harris. The lake is surrounded by sandhills and cypress trees, part of the Central Florida Ridge. This region has the highest elevations in Central Florida, including Sugarloaf Mountain reaching 312 feet (95 m) above sea level. The lake is generally lined with cattail and bullrush. The depth in these tall grasses normally ranges from 2 to 5 feet (0.61 to 1.52 m). The bottom is mostly hard sand, except for some marshy areas where the bottom is considerably softer. These sheltered areas around the shore can offer a good place to paddle during inclement weather. Alligators are a common sight.

**Skill Level:** Advanced

**Distance/Approximate Time:** 18.4 Miles/8 Hour

**Launch Site:** Singletary Park Ramp

**Special Considerations:** Lake Harris is a large lake, and can get quite choppy on windy days. There usually a lot of power boat traffic, especially on weekends and holidays.

#### 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.