

## S29 Day Paddles - Upper Ocklawaha River

### Eureka West Ramp to Cypress Bayou Ramp Paddle Information Sheet

**Description:** The Ocklawaha River starts at Lake Griffin and flows northward 74 miles to the St Johns. Ocklawaha is derived from the Creek word for “muddy”. There are 2 water control structures along the entire river, the Moss Bluff Spillway and the Rodman Dam. In addition to alligators, turtles, and the occasional otter, the Ocklawaha provides a great birdwatching opportunity, with plenty of ducks, shorebirds, wading birds, and raptors. Flora consists of mostly cypress and bays along the shore, and pickerel weed, arrowhead, bulrush, maidencane, spatterdock and water lettuce along the waterway. This stretch of the river was intended to be part of the Cross Florida Barge Canal. The now defunct canal was started in the 1930s, construction continued on and off for years, and was finally stopped by President Nixon in 1971, mainly due to mounting environmental concerns. Springs in this stretch begin to appear in larger numbers. See the “Springs Locator” button for locations. Most are covered with floating vegetation, and those that are accessible are difficult to see because of the rivers’ tannic water. These are best viewed during a drawdown, which occurs every 3-4 years. Points of interest include the locks, the Sentinal Cypress, the Dr. Strange house and the karst windows at Tobacco Patch Landing Spring.

**Skill Level:** Intermediate

**Distance/Approximate Time:** 7.4 Miles/3 Hours

**Launch Site:** Eureka West Ramp

**Takeout Site:** Cypress Bayou Ramp

**Special Considerations:** This paddle requires shuttling. GPS recommended for locating the springs and points of interest.

#### 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.