

S2 Day Paddles - Choctawhatchee Bay

Rocky Creek Paddle Information Sheet

Description: Rising deep within restricted areas, Rocky Creek is a blackwater stream that winds through some of the Eglin's reservation's most pristine hardwood forests. Fallen trees are ABUNDANT and challenging obstacles. Rocky creek experiences some of the highest gradients on Eglin, making for a very fast current. Heading downstream, School House Branch Creek enters from the east. When Little Rocky Creek enters from the west, the width and depth of the main channel increases. The bridge at Reservation Road 219, called "Mud Landing," offers a nice place to stop for lunch or rest.

Skill Level: Intermediate

Distance/Approximate Time: 9 Miles/4 Hours

Launch Site: Eglin AFB - RR 259 Bridge Rocky Creek Paddle Launch

Takeout Site: Fred Gannon Rocky Bayou SP Ramp

Special Considerations: State Park entrance Fee. This paddle requires shuttling vehicles. Permits are required from Eglin AFB <https://eglin.isportsman.net/outdoorrecpermits.aspx>. Always make sure the day of the paddle that this area is not closed due to military exercises. Check with the Public Access Map <https://eglin.isportsman.net/files/Public%20Access%20Map%20%28PAM%29%2FRecmap.pdf>. Before Rocky Creek enters Rocky Bayou, it spreads out into a swamp, losing its central channel, and branching into many confusing channels. Follow the strongest areas of current to maintain downstream direction. *Tip:* throw a leaf into the water and watch its movement to orient yourself to downstream flow. Rocky Creek flows approximately due West in the swampland section. GPS recommended.

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.