

## Day Paddles and Overnight Camping Trips - Lower Aucilla River

**Lower Aucilla West Cutoff Paddle Information Sheet**

**Description:** Launch at the Mandalay Ramp, and head down river. Stay on the right side of the big island and enter West Cutoff, which ends at Sulpher Creek by a group of cabbage palms and cedars. From there it's out to the Gulf and then back up the river. Once you hit the Cutoff, this is a salt marsh paddle consisting mostly of black needlerush with some smooth cordgrass scattered along the water's edge. Eagles and ospreys are frequently seen, as well as a good mix of shorebirds, especially on lower tides. During the winter months, you may be lucky enough to hear the call of solitary loons out in the Gulf in the early morning hours.

**Skill Level:** Intermediate

**Distance/Time:** 6.4 Miles/Approximately 3 Hours

**Launch Site:** Mandalay Ramp at the end of Mandalay Road off HWY 98

**Special Considerations:** This paddle is influenced by tidal action. Open water paddling in the Gulf. Best paddled on medium to high tide due to oyster bars.

**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.