

S5ARDay Paddles - Aucilla River

Pinhook River Camp Trip Information Sheet

Description: This paddle takes you down the wooded Aucilla River, and winds it's way through saltmarsh creeks on the Pinhook Cut-off. Once you turn off the Aucilla, the marsh paddle consists of black needlerush until you start paddling up the Pinhook River. The shoreline increasingly transitions from salt marsh to wooded softwood and hardwood hydric hammocks. The last section just before the Florida Trail bridge, is an idyllic old Florida setting, and feels like you just stepped into the past. If you get to the bridge, a great place to get out for a break is on the northeast side of the bridge. From there, you can hike west across the Florida Trail bridge about 200 yards to find a Florida Trails campsite on your right. Paddlers are also allowed to use the hiking trail campsite, however gear would have to be lugged 200 yards to the site, and your boat would likely have to be left by the bridge. Fauna you may see includes manatees, dolphins, hogs, alligators, great blue herons, cormorants, eagles and osprey.

Skill Level: Intermediate

Distance/Approximate Time: 5 Miles/3 Hours Each Way

Launch Site: Aucilla River Mandalay Ramp

Special Considerations: Paddle recommended on medium to high tides only. Although you don't have to paddle out into the Gulf, there are several places where the creeks widen and the Gulf becomes visible, so this paddle is not recommended on windy days. Be cautious of the occasional airboat through Pinhook Cut-off.

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.