

Day Paddles and Overnight Camping Trips - Keaton Beach

Sweetwater Creek Paddle Trip Information Sheet

Description: This paddle is along the coast of the Big Bend northward up to the entrance of Sweetwater Creek. The paddle is through the marsh, but towards the end approaches the piney woodline and a few small cedar islands. Once in the creek, the water level becomes deeper than at the mouth, and only becomes shallow again towards the end. You can continue beyond the turnaround point if you are more adventurous, you'll be rewarded with a medium size pond at the end. The bottom is mostly hard sand with an occasional small oyster bar.

Skill Level: Intermediate, due to open water paddling

Distance/Time: 5.2 Miles Total/ 3 Hours

Launch Site: Hodges Park - Take CR 400 (Beach Road) north out of Steinhatchee, go about 18 Miles, after turning north from the river, to Keaton Beach. Turn left and follow the main road south to the County Park at the end of the road. Beach Launch.

Special Considerations: Medium to high tide only. Open water paddling, not recommended on a windy day.

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.