

Day Paddles and Overnight Camping Trips - Suwannee Area

Cat Island Paddle Information Sheet

Description: Depart from the Suwannee Community Center and head out to the Gulf for an open water Paddle across the Sound to Cat Island. Cat Island provides a diverse range of habitats for wildlife species in a remarkably small area. A sandy beach, a thin band of high ground, and a relatively large area of salt marsh support a variety of wildlife. Horseshoe crabs, marine turtles, and shorebirds use the beach. Hunting ospreys and other birds use the taller trees for roosting and nesting sites. The salt marsh provides food and shelter for many fishes and invertebrates. Cat Island is privately owned. Along most of the western and southwestern aspects of the island is an erosional escarpment that reveals a shell bearing midden with aboriginal pottery, shell tools and occasional human skeletal remains over 4,000 years old. After a brief stop, return through the pass between Goodson and Odulund Islands back to the Community Center.

Skill Level: Intermediate

Distance/Time: 4.8 Miles/Approximately 3 hours

Launch Site: Suwannee Community Center

Special Considerations: Open water. Spray skirt recommended if windy.

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.