

Day Paddles - Waccasassa River

Otter Creek/Chicken Slough Paddle Information Sheet

Description: This paddle starts at the end of CR 326 and proceeds down river to the mouth of Otter Creek. The trail ends at logjams in both creeks. Typical plant habitat is hydric hammock area with a transition to salt marsh as you get closer to the river. Flora consists of sawgrass, cypress, sabal palms, cedars, loblolly bay, and saltbush. You will likely see gators, otters, osprey, eagles, wood ducks, and a selection of shorebirds along the river banks. This trail is navigable on low tide.

Skill Level: Intermediate

Distance/Time: 7.6 Miles/ Approximately 3.5 Hours

Launch Site: Waccasassa River Ramp - Turn west off HWY 19 on to CR 326. Proceed down to the boat ramp at the end of the road.

Special Considerations: Usually moderate current flow in the river, but can be considerable after heavy rains, and boat traffic. This paddle is tidally influenced and most of the flow, once in Otter Creek, is tidal, except after heavy rains.

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.