

Day Paddles and Overnight Camping Trips - Ozello Area

Head Creek Paddle Information Sheet

Description: This paddle starts out on the Salt River and down the St Martins River for a short distance before heading into the upper part of Head Creek. The entrance is located between two houses on islands. Head Creek consists of a mix of mangrove and black needlerush and a few hydric hammocks along the way. The upper part has plenty of side creeks to explore for the more adventurous. After leaving the lower part of the Creek, the return is back up the St Martins. The Creek bottom consists of mud, sand, rocks, and quite a few oyster bars. You may encounter a fisherman or two and/or an Ozello Tour airboat. Fauna may include osprey, eagles, marsh hawks, herons, egrets, ibis, pelicans (including white pelicans in the winter months), hogs, dolphin, and the ever present Florida turkey vultures.

Skill Level: Intermediate

Distance/Time: 6.5 Miles/3 Hours

Launch Site: John Brown Park Paddle Ramp

Special Considerations: Paddle on medium to high tides only. Be aware of airboats, especially in the Creek. Another option to launch is the Ozello Marina which is a little closer, however there is a launch fee at that location. A good map/ GPS is recommended, especially if you decide to explore off the main creek.

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.