

S8 Day Paddles and Overnight Camping Trips - ICW

Shell Key Primitive Camping Trip Information Sheet

Description: This is a short paddle to the back side of Shell Key and a short walk to a beach camping area. Camping is most common on the south end of the island, but it can get hectic and noisy. A better bet is beach camping farther to the north, at the south end of the protected bird nesting area where there is much less traffic. Great place for watching the sunsets, shelling, walking the beach, fishing or swimming.

Skill Level: Intermediate

Distance/Approximate Time: 2.1 Miles/1 Hour

Launch Site: Fort Desoto Park Ramp

Special Considerations: **Free camping permit is required** and can be obtained online from PinellasCounty.org. There is an overnight parking/launch fee at Ft Desoto Park. Please practice "Leave No Trace" principles and follow the rules listed on your Permit. The water behind can get very shallow and almost unpassable on extreme low tides. Bunces Pass is a very heavily used channel by power boaters, extreme care should be used when crossing this channel.

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.