

## S8 Day Paddles - Hillsborough River

### Upper Hillsborough River Paddle Information Sheet

**Description:** This is a beautiful river, with many rest stops and plentiful wildlife. Hillsborough county has done an excellent job of putting a park with drinking water, picnic tables and rest rooms about every 4 to 5 miles along the river. Sargeant Park is where most people put in. They have a Canoe Outfitter that rents kayaks & canoes, and will pick you up downriver. This part of the river is narrow (30 feet across) and beautiful.. This upper section is mostly wild with little signs of development. There is a 7.5 mile section above Sargeant Park down river from Hillsborough River State Park that includes 5 miles of Seventeen Runs, which requires considerable skills to navigate and only for advanced paddlers. It has many parallel ribbon runs most of which are not passable due to deadfall and snags. Even the main trail is usually cluttered with deadfall and snags. For more information on that section go to:

[https://floridadep.gov/sites/default/files/Hillsborough\\_Guide.pdf](https://floridadep.gov/sites/default/files/Hillsborough_Guide.pdf)

**Skill Level:** Intermediate due to distance

**Distance/Approximate Time:** 11 Miles/5 Hours

**Launch Site:** John B Sargeant Park Ramp

**Takeout Site:** Lettuce Lake Park Paddle Launch

**Special Considerations:** 400 Foot portage to vehicles at Lettuce Lake Park takeout. This paddle requires shuttling vehicles. Park fees at Sargeant Park and Lettuce Lake. There is a floodgate just before the I-75 bridge that is usually open except at high water.

#### 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.