

S23 Day Paddles - Lower Ocklawaha River

Lower Ocklawaha River Paddle Information Sheet

Description: This paddle consists of the entire lower Ocklawaha starting from the Rodman Dam and ending in Welaka. This lower part of the Ocklawaha River is as it was hundreds of years ago, in its pristine natural beauty, totally unmarred by restaurants, marinas, gas pumps or waterfront homes. There are two places to rest and swim on the route. You will be paddling downstream the entire way. Davenport Landing is on the right four miles downstream and a perfect place to lunch. Dead Creek takes off to the left about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile from the intersection of the original channel and the spillway channel. It is the same size as the river, so stay to the right. The natural landscapes are mostly hydric hammocks and flatwoods, with scrub pine ridges. The Ocklawaha is teeming with wildlife including alligators, snakes, otters, and hornets. There are several sandy beach landings along the river including the historic Davenport Landing. The Ocala National Forest manages a campground here. Seven miles downstream down is the Highway 19 Bridge and Johnson Field boat ramp. Continue across the St Johns to the Welaka ramp.

Skill Level: Advanced

Distance/Approximate Time: 13.2 Miles/6 Hours

Launch Site: Kirkpatrick Dam Paddle Launch

Takeout Site: St Johns River Welaka Ramp

Special Considerations: The river is narrow and there may be motorized boat traffic so pay attention to the noise and move to the side. The St Johns can get rough on windy days.

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.