

*Visit Natural*  
**NORTH FLORIDA**

**Florida Circumnavigational  
Saltwater Paddling Trail  
Segments 5 and 6**



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Compiled October 1, 2016 by

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## Office of Greenways & Trails

### Florida Circumnavigational Saltwater Paddling Trail

*Florida's Longest and Most Ambitious Sea Kayaking Trail*



Beginning at Big Lagoon State Park near Pensacola, extending around the Florida peninsula and Keys, and ending at Fort Clinch State Park near the Georgia border, the Florida Circumnavigational Saltwater Paddling Trail (commonly referred to as The CT) is a 1,515-mile sea kayaking paradise. The trail includes every Florida coastal habitat type, from barrier island dune systems to salt marsh to mangroves. Numerous historical sites and points of interest are accessible by kayak along with colorful fishing communities and urban centers.

The CT is divided into 26 segments. Each segment is unique, ranging from the remote Big Bend Coast and Everglades/Florida Bay wilderness, to the more urbanized coastlines of Pinellas County and Fort Lauderdale. The trail is utilized by thousands of Florida residents and visitors alike who paddle the trail for a few hours, days, weeks or months. Some hardy souls have paddled the entire trail, and others seek to complete the trail in segments over several years, similar to how hikers often tackle the Florida or Appalachian Trail.

The CT is a strategic long-term priority of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, being coordinated by the Office of Greenways and Trails, but it relies heavily on the involvement and cooperation of numerous other government agencies at the federal, state, regional and local levels, along with private outfitters, businesses, paddling clubs and individual volunteers. The non-profit [Florida Paddling Trails Association](http://www.floridapaddlingtrails.com/) (<http://www.floridapaddlingtrails.com/>) was formed in 2007 to act as volunteer stewards of the CT, along with other paddling trails. The "Paddling Community" page of their website shows paddlers who have completed the entire trail.

The CT has incorporated and partnered with several existing local and regional trails such as the Big Bend Saltwater Paddling Trail, The Nature Coast Trail, the Gulf and Wilderness waterways in Everglades National Park, and several county blueways trails. Also, the trail now connects to the states of Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina and Virginia via the [Southeast Coast Saltwater Paddling Trail](http://www.secoastpaddlingtrail.com/) (<http://www.secoastpaddlingtrail.com/>).

Also, long-distance hikers on the [Eastern Continental Trail](http://www.floridatrail.org/html/page.cfm/Eastern%20Continental%20Trail) ([http://www.floridatrail.org/html/page.cfm/Eastern Continental Trail](http://www.floridatrail.org/html/page.cfm/Eastern%20Continental%20Trail)) may want to consider the CT for all or part of their Florida journey.

Highlighting and educating paddlers about Florida's rich history and fragile coastal environment, the CT traverses 20 national parks, seashores, wildlife refuges and marine sanctuaries, 37 Florida aquatic preserves and 47 Florida state parks, along with numerous local parks and preserves. Sea kayaking is one of the country's fastest growing outdoor sports and requires less infrastructure and fossil fuels than most other coastal boating activities. It is especially suited for Florida's growing population of retirees and senior citizens because new materials and manufacturing designs are helping to make kayaks lighter and easier to maneuver.

Segment guides, photos and maps can be downloaded from this website at no charge. If desired, all of the text information in the form of a printed guide is available for purchase on Amazon.com, with proceeds directed to the Florida Paddling Trails Association. Color maps must still be downloaded from this website, and a link to all of the maps in one document is available on the Trail Segment Descriptions, Maps, and more page. Also, thru paddler Mike Ruso has put together an informative and practical website guide to paddling the CT: <http://thrupaddlingflorida.jimbo.com/>, and thru paddler Warren Johnson put together a Google Earth map of the trail and waypoints, <http://findingwarren.com/gm/fct/>.

If you are planning a through trip on the CT please let us know a little about your plans and contact us with any questions. We also appreciate your comments and updates so we can keep maps and segment guides up to date. Contact OGT Assistant Chief Doug Alderson at [doug.alderson@dep.state.fl.us](mailto:doug.alderson@dep.state.fl.us) or Liz Sparks, OGT Paddling Trails Coordinator, at [liz.sparks@dep.state.fl.us](mailto:liz.sparks@dep.state.fl.us).





## **Segment 5**

### **Crooked River/St. Marks Refuge**

#### **Emergency contact information:**

911

Franklin County Sheriff's Office: 850-670-8500

Wakulla County Sheriff's Office: 850-745-7100

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission 24-hour wildlife emergency/boating under the influence hotline: 1-888-404-3922

**Begin:** St. George Island State Park

**End:** Aucilla River launch

**Distance:** 100-103 miles

**Duration:** 8-9 days

**Special Considerations:** Extreme caution is advised in paddling open water areas from St. George Island to Carrabelle and in paddling across Ochlockonee Bay.

#### **Introduction**

From traditional fishing communities to wild stretches of shoreline, tidal creeks and rivers, this segment is one where paddlers can steep themselves in "Old Florida." This is also the only segment where paddlers can follow two scenic rivers for a significant distance: the Crooked and Ochlockonee rivers. The Crooked River is the only area along the trail where paddlers have a good chance of spotting a Florida black bear. Several hundred black bears roam the Tate's Hell/Apalachicola National Forest area, one of six major black bear havens in the state. Florida black bears are protected under Florida law. Keep food and garbage tightly packed and hanging in a bag from a tree branch at least ten feet off the ground.

In paddling the Crooked River paddlers will enjoy a slice of the untrammelled 200,000-plus-acre [Tate's Hell State Forest](#). This scenic route also features [Ochlockonee River State Park](#) where there is a full-service campground a short distance from the water. For camping reservations, visit [Reserve America](#) or call (800) 326-3521.

Along the coast, paddlers can observe a major geologic change. St. George and Dog islands mark the end of a chain of barrier islands that have been formed by sediments deposited by the Apalachicola and Ochlockonee rivers. The numerous wild islands east of Ochlockonee Bay are chunks of land that have been isolated by a millennia of rising sea levels, thus the reason why their shapes are not as elongated.

[Dr. Julian Bruce, St. George Island State Park](#) and [Bald Point State Park](#) are natural highlights along the coast. Paddlers can enjoy camping in both of these premier parks and explore wild coves and shoreline. In the case of Bald Point, miles of winding tidal creeks lead to unspoiled lakes and ponds which must be accessed on a rising tide. Both parks also offer excellent fishing, wildlife viewing and hiking opportunities. Other public lands include a scenic county park at Mashas Sands along the east side of Ochlockonee Bay, and state lands along Dickerson Bay near Panacea that have been purchased under the Florida Forever program.

The last stretch of the trail, including three campsites, is part of the [St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge](#). Permits must be obtained for camping and these may only be used by long distance paddlers traversing the entire refuge portion of this segment. A nominal one dollar per person per day fee is charged, the same fee charged for long distance Florida Trail hikers. Bear in mind that no camping is allowed other than at the designated sites. Click [here](#) for permit information or call (850) 925-6121. Obtain your permit at least two weeks prior to your arrival; you can change your date of arrival by phone later than that if you are unexpectedly delayed. The refuge needs to know the location of anyone camping on the refuge so they can safely plan management activities such as prescribed burning. The almost 70,000-acre refuge was established in 1931 to provide wintering habitat for migratory birds. Numerous small streams that wind through unspoiled expanses of marsh and coastal forests in the refuge offer countless hours of paddling enjoyment.

A good day trip off the main route of this segment is the [Alligator Harbor Aquatic Preserve](#), which is enclosed by the Alligator Point sand spit. This area is a pristine coastal water body and its seagrass beds and salt marshes serve as important nursery grounds and refuges for a variety of sea life. There are also several clam leases in the preserve marked by PVC poles.

This segment complements the [Apalachee Bay Maritime Heritage Paddling Trails](#), a network of ten coastal paddling trails through the St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge and Bald Point State Park.

For kayak rentals, shuttle support and other services, check [Journeys of St. George Island](#), [The Wilderness Way](#) and [St. Marks Outfitters](#) who also offers on-the-water boat support.

[Leave No Trace](#) principles should be followed in camping at designated primitive sites in order to keep them open for paddlers.

### **1. Gap Point Campsite to Oxbow Campsite, 16.5 miles.**

From the Gap Point Campsite, you can proceed northeast to the end of St. George Island before paddling diagonally across the bay towards Carrabelle. Along the mainland, you can take a rest break at the Carrabelle Beach Park, where there is fresh water, restrooms and picnic shelters (see map). Continue on the Crooked River about 3 miles past the US 98 Bridge to the shady Oxbow campsite on a small bluff overlooking a bend in the river. Make a reservation early as this is a popular site.

If a motel is desired, there are several places to stay in Carrabelle. Visit the Chamber of Commerce website [here](#).

Carrabelle is a good supply stop where you can easily access a medium-sized supermarket, post office and a library from the city ramp along the Carrabelle River.

Campsites along the Crooked River are \$10 per night and can be reserved by phone up to six months in advance, but you must pay by mailing a check, by paying in person, or by dropping money into an iron ranger at the Carrabelle office after hours or on weekends. For west-bound paddlers, you can use the iron ranger at the Womack Creek campsite. Keep the pay stub with you.

The address of the forest headquarters just south of Carrabelle is: 290 Airport Road, Carrabelle, FL 32322. Make check payable to D.O.A.C.S. and write your driver's license # on the check. The phone # is: 850-697-3734 or 850-681-5950 (for reservations). By kayak, you can land at the Timber Island public ramp near Carrabelle and walk a little

more than a mile to the headquarters. When you reach Highway 98, veer left and you'll see Airport Road on your right and a sign for the headquarters. Paying by mail will alleviate this hike.

The Crooked River is aptly named, with numerous twists and turns. After Carrabelle, most of the river is completely undeveloped. Note that during high water it may be difficult to go under the CR 67 Bridge, so portaging may be necessary.

## **2. Oxbow Campsite to Crooked River #1, 12.5 miles**

Bear in mind that campsites at Warren Bluff, Sunday Rollaway and Loop Road are also hunt campsites that are occupied from mid-November through early February.

Campsites at Rock Landing, Crooked River #1, Crooked River #2 and Womack Creek are mixed-use campsites that are available during the hunting season, so you should have better luck at reserving them at any time. Rock Landing has three sites in a row, good for groups, and Womack Creek Campsite has 13 sites, good for very large groups. Additionally, Womack Creek is the only camping area in [Tate's Hell State Forest](#) with restrooms that include hot showers. Showers can also be used by non-campers if paddlers pay the day use fee.

## **3. Crooked River #1 to Ochlockonee River State Park, 17 miles**

From Crooked River Campsite #1, you have the option of a shorter day by camping at Rock Landing Campsite, about 7.5 miles, or paddling another 2 miles to Loop Road Campsite. If paddling to the [Ochlockonee River State Park](#), leave the Crooked River and head down the Ochlockonee River past the exposed pilings of an old railroad bridge. The state park is on the northern shore. You can land near the park boat ramp and access the main campground by walking about a quarter of a mile.

As an option to staying at the state park, you can proceed north about two miles from the Crooked River junction to Tate's Hell State Forest Womack Creek campsite. This is a more developed first-come, first-serve campground featuring hot showers.

If you are in a group, another option is to utilize the isolated youth camp on the shore of the Dead River just off the Ochlockonee River. It is available to adult groups of six or more on a first-come, first-serve basis, or you can make advanced reservations for

organized youth groups. Call the park at 850-962-2771 for more information and to check on availability. Be sure to hike the park's scenic nature trail through open pine flatwoods. Scan the mature pines for cavities of the endangered red-cockaded woodpecker, the only native woodpecker that nests in living trees. You might also glimpse some of the park's unusual white squirrels.

#### **4. Ochlockonee River State Park to Chaires Creek Campsite at Bald Point State Park, 11 miles**

Head south on the ever-widening Ochlockonee River to the bay. One option for camping is the [Holiday Campground](#) just before the bay bridge on the left. The campground offers a bathhouse, laundromat, pool and recreation room. To make reservations, call (850) 984-5757. On the east side of the bridge is a small convenience store and several restaurants. Local taxi service is available for a ride into Panacea to pick up supplies at a supermarket: (850) 984-4991.

From the bridge area, cross the bay and hug the southern shore a little less than 2 miles to Chaires Creek in Bald Point State Park. Proceed up the creek about a mile to the primitive campsite on your left. A second campsite is less than a mile away near a small bridge along a western branch of the creek. Call the park headquarters at 850-349-9146 if you plan to use either of these two sites.

For side trips, you can follow Chaires Creek all the way to Tucker Lake if the tide is high, or take more narrow creeks to small ponds. Part of the beauty of this marshy wilderness is the lack of human-made noises. Jet and highway noises are generally absent. Only occasional boats can be heard.

From the campsite, you can link up with the park's many miles of scenic hiking trails and unpaved roads. More than 500 different plant species and over 230 different animal species have been documented in the park. More species will likely flourish here as restoration of former slash pine timber plantations continues. With luck, you may glimpse one of the area's Florida black bears. In autumn, monarch butterflies often pause here before their bold migration across the Gulf of Mexico.

For birdwatchers, Bald Point is an exciting place to explore. According to the Great Florida Birding Trail guide, raptors such as peregrine falcons and harriers migrate along

the shore in October. Black-bellied plovers and dunlins are seen in winter, and springtime often heralds colorful indigo buntings and other songbirds. Year-round residents include brown-headed nuthatches in the piney woods and clapper rails in the extensive marshlands.

#### **5. Bald Point State Park to Spring Creek, 12-15 miles.**

From Chaires Creek, be watchful of high winds as you cross the wide Ochlockonee Bay. Mashas Sands County Park, at the head of the bay on the east side, offers a good rest stop with picnic tables and restrooms. You can then wind around the islands of scenic Dickerson Bay with the option of stopping on a small beach in order to visit Gulf Specimen Marine Lab and Aquarium (small entrance fee required) just across the road. The aquarium features marine exhibits and touch tanks, focusing more on smaller marine life such as seahorses, rays, starfish, urchins, crabs, anemones, octopuses, jellyfish, spiny boxfish, sea turtles, small sharks, eels and a variety of fish. No leaping dolphin acts. You can picnic here or stop at a city park just to the east, where you can land along a tiny creek near a fishing pier. A blue crab festival occurs here during the first weekend in May. Both of these Panacea access points are marked on the map. Numerous restaurants and a grocery store are within easy walking distance.

Another access point and kayak launch marked on the map is the Wakulla County Visitor's Center, where you can use restrooms and learn more about the area. Across the road is the Panacea Mineral Springs Park, site of an old motel that once housed visitors seeking the healing qualities of this natural sulfur springs. A seafood retailer aptly named Mineral Springs Seafood on US 98 at east end of town offers excellent fresh and smoked fare, an excellent opportunity to sample a local favorite, smoked mullet.

Paddling into Dickerson Bay and stopping at Panacea will add two to three miles to your day. From Panacea, you can cruise on the inside of Piney Island and traverse Oyster Bay. You can take a short cut to Spring Creek via a small creek, or you can round the point near Shell Point and take Spring Creek north. At the town of Spring Creek, tent camping for a small fee is at a small RV camp at a boat landing. An abandoned white building that once served as a crab processing house borders one side of the camp. Restrooms are available, but no showers. A nearby restaurant is open for dinner.

Curator of the site is Lee Spears. His mobile home is across from the ramp and you'll need to pay a small camping fee in cash.

Spring Creek is a traditional fishing community that is under tremendous development pressure as coastal land prices soar and historic fishing activities fade due to changes in net regulations. For now, you can enjoy a taste of Old Florida by viewing historic tin-roofed buildings, old docks, and derelict fishing vessels. More importantly, several residents are fifth-generation commercial fishermen who often regale visitors with tales of fishing on the open water and in the areas tidal creeks and bays.

Take time to explore around Spring Creek by kayak as several high magnitude springs can be seen in and around the camp and along small inlets. Researchers believe that these springs connect with Wakulla Springs to the north, although water discharge has mysteriously diminished, beginning in 2006.

From the campground, you can paddle up palm-lined Spring Creek about two miles until it narrows and becomes impassable with fallen trees. In spring, look for blooming purple flag irises, clusters of yellow senecio flowers, and the white blooms of duck potato. Bald eagles are commonly seen in cool months, and on warm sunny days, alligators often sun themselves along the shore and on fallen logs. As you travel inland, look for freshwater-loving cypress, live oak and bay trees. The brown tint of the water is generally due to harmless tannins released by fallen leaves and other decomposing vegetation from swamps that feed the stream. Most of this stretch falls under the protected auspices of the St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge.

## **6. Spring Creek to Apalachee Point campsite, 10 miles**

As you journey down Spring Creek toward the Gulf, you can deviate from the marked serpentine channel if the tide has covered the numerous oyster bars, one advantage of a shallow-water kayak. You can take a break at the [Shell Point Beach](#), a public park, where there are picnic tables and restrooms.

From Shell Point and Live Oak Island, paddle towards the St. Marks Lighthouse, visible along the eastern horizon in good weather conditions. In choppy conditions, you may want to hug the shoreline, although this will add more miles. A primitive campsite is on a spoil island near the mouth of the St. Marks River about two miles from the lighthouse. In

the 1700s, the Spanish called this the Apalachee River after the local Native American tribe. The campsite has a small rise that provides for an excellent view of the area and it's a good spot to catch a breeze.

A good access point for this area is Wakulla Beach, a small sand landing and beach that is an ideal access point for kayaks, although it is not advisable to leave vehicles parked overnight and low tide can make access challenging. It is the terminus of Wakulla Beach Road off Highway 98. Tidal creeks in the area make for great side trips through more wild lands of the St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge.

**Note:** There is no available fresh water until Econfinia River State Park. [Plan on leaving Spring Creek with one gallon per person per day for 4 days.](#)

## **7. Apalachee Point Campsite to Ring Dike Campsite, 9.5 miles**

A good rest stop is the [St Marks Lighthouse](#), a national historic site. First built in 1829, but rebuilt more solidly two years later and then again in 1842 and 1866, the lighthouse has withstood many severe hurricanes and storms. One 1843 storm washed away every building except for the tower, killing several people in the area except for the lighthouse keeper's family, who clung to the garret floor near the top of the tower. Various lighthouse keepers lived at the site with their families until the light became fully automated in 1960. The lighthouse is only open to the public on rare occasions. There is no museum.

East of the lighthouse, you'll paddle an open stretch of water along an untrammelled shoreline of trees and marsh. The Ring Dike Campsite is a mile up Deep Creek from the Gulf. The campsite is distinguishable from the open marsh habitat by a ring of large live oaks. With open views in all directions, this campsite is one of the most scenic on the trail. Florida Trail hikers who are traversing the refuge also use this campsite. Click [here](#) for permit information or call (850) 925-6121. Obtain your permit at least two weeks prior to your arrival; you can change your date of arrival by phone later than that if you are unexpectedly delayed.

## **8. Ring Dike Campsite to Pinhook River Campsite, 8.5 miles**



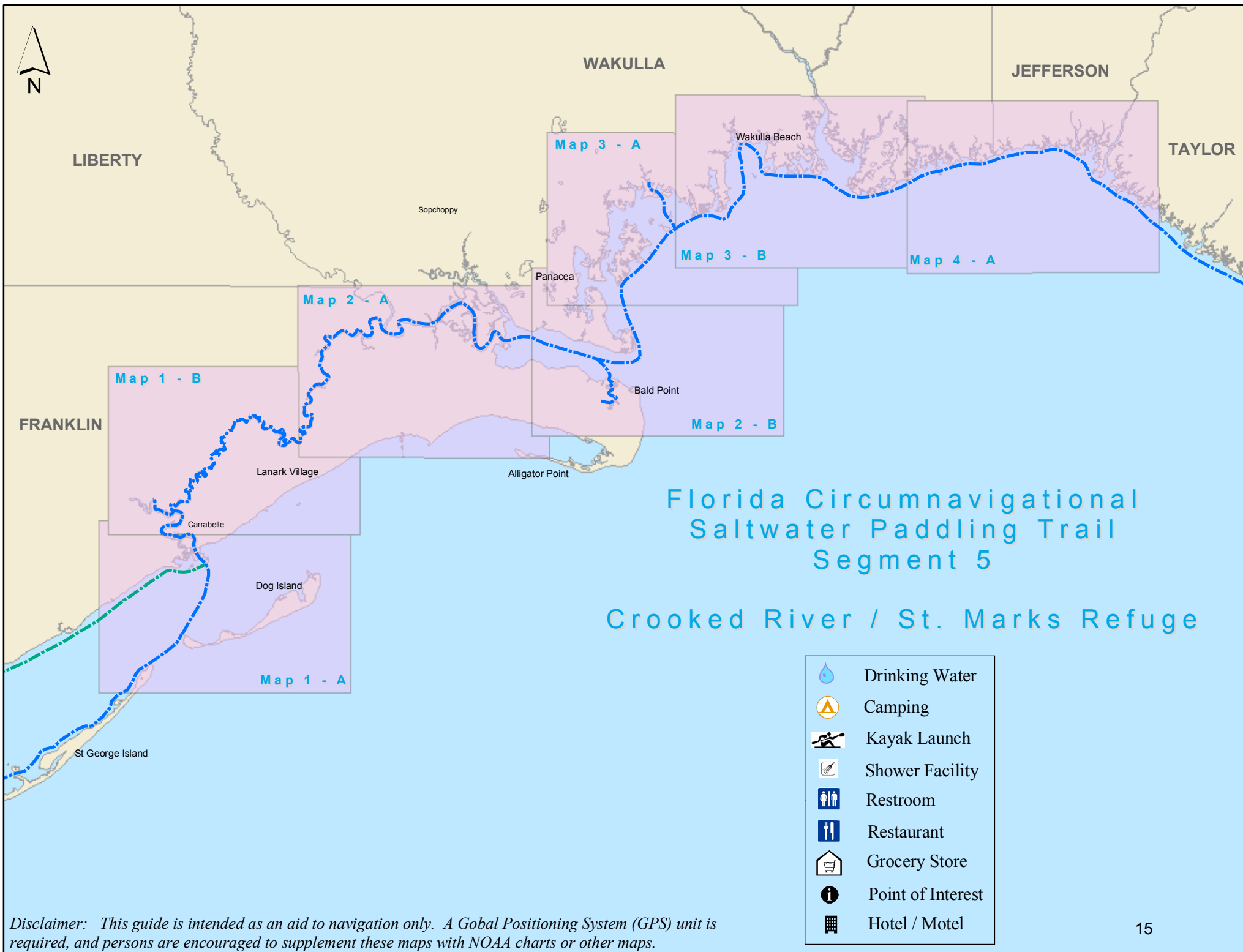
After cruising along a true Gulf Coast wilderness, you'll paddle approximately three miles up the Pinhook River. Keep to your left at both forks in the river. At the wooden bridge, there is a small beach on the northeast side where you can land. The campsite is approximately a hundred yards on the northwest side of the bridge along an unpaved road, then follow the blue blazes a short distance. This is also a Florida Trail campsite. You should be able to paddle the ditch alongside the road during high tide for closer access by boat.

#### **9. Pinhook River Campsite to lower Aucilla River launch, 7 miles**

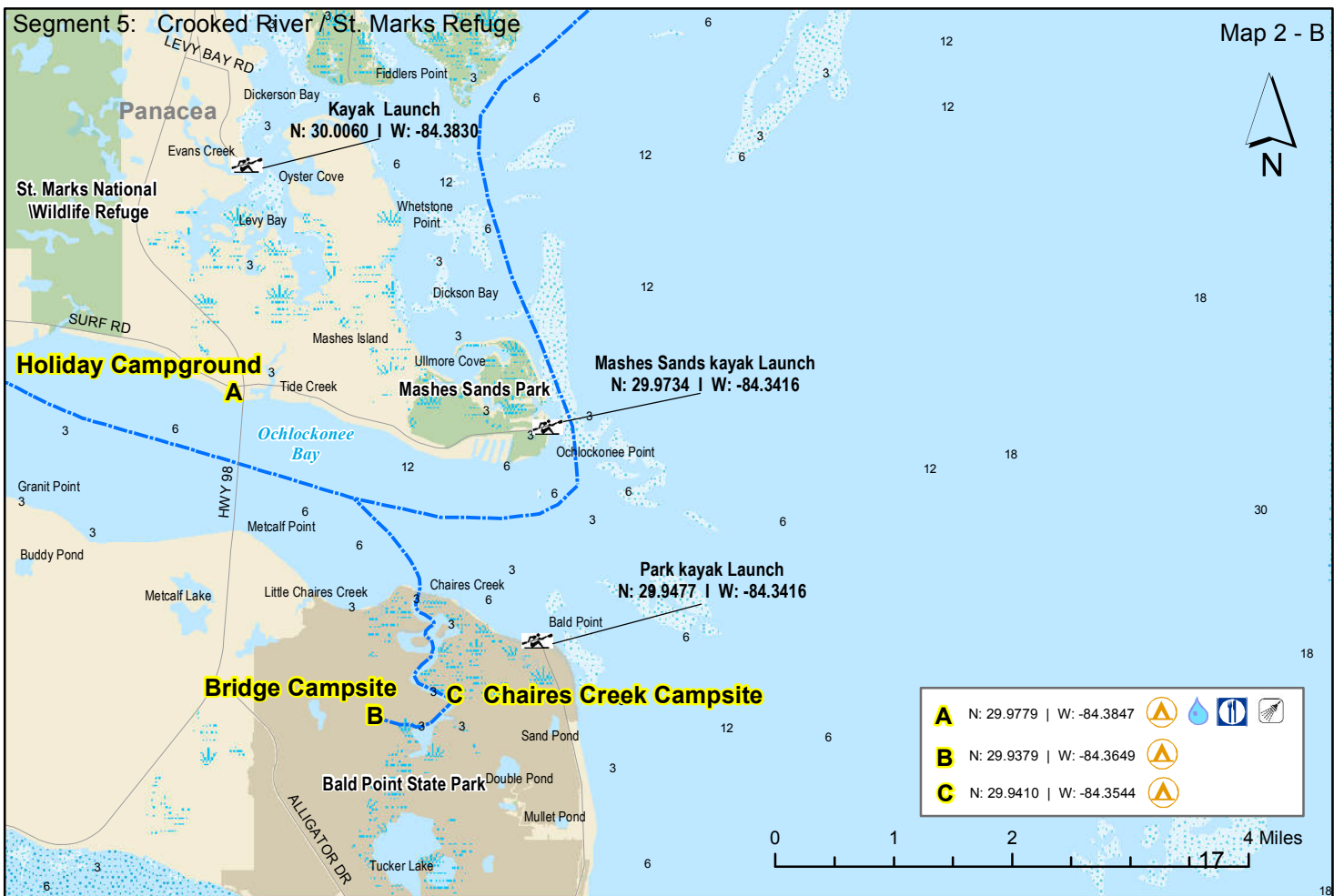
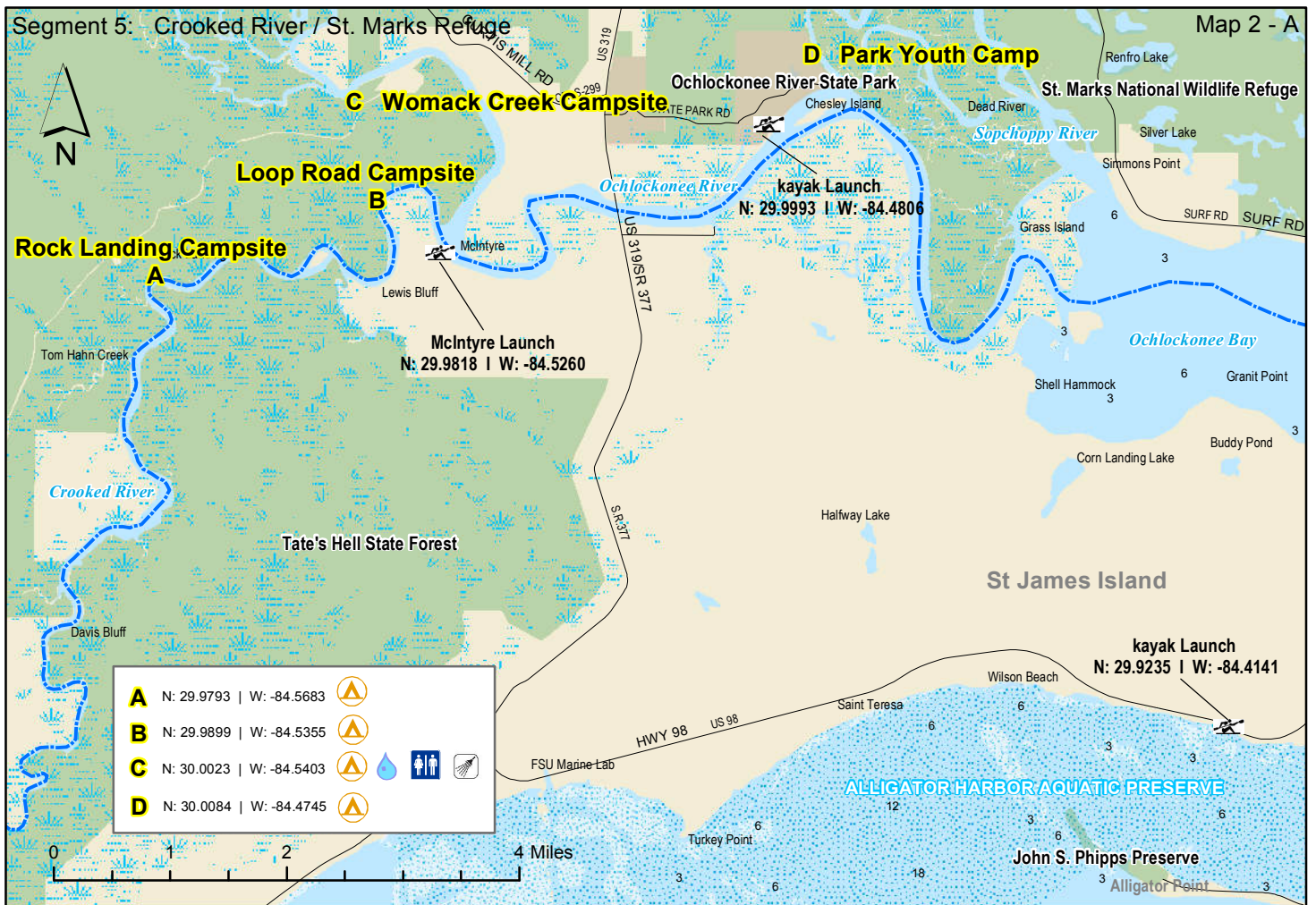
After returning to the Gulf, you'll have more seemingly endless vistas of marsh and palm hammocks as you paddle to the mouth of the Aucilla River. Paddle upstream to the landing on the east bank if you are ending your trip here.

If you are on an extended trip, you may skip the Aucilla River launch and paddle directly to the Econfinia River campsite, about 11.5 miles. See segment 6 for maps, text description and permit information.



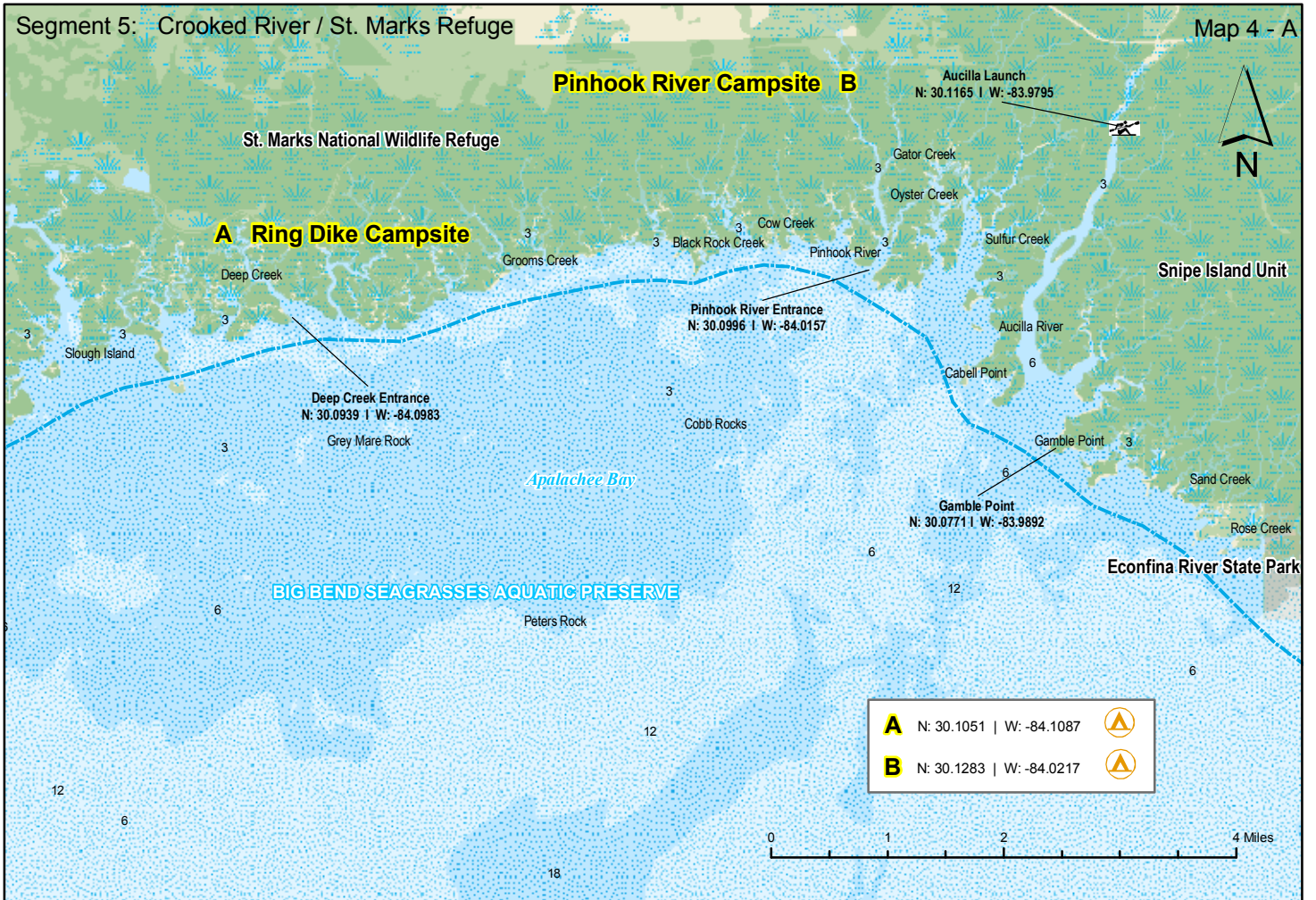


















## **Segment 6**

### **Big Bend**

#### **Emergency contact information:**

911

Jefferson County Sheriff's Office: (850) 342-0211

Taylor County Sheriff's Office: (850) 584-7288

Dixie County Sheriff's Office: 352-498-1220

Levy County Sheriff's Office: 352-486-5111

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission 24-hour wildlife emergency/boating under the influence hotline: 1-888-404-3922

**Begin:** Lower Aucilla River launch

**End:** Cross Florida Greenway spoil island campsite near Yankeetown

**Distance:** 153.5 miles

**Duration:** 14-15 days

**Special Considerations:** This is a remote area where cell phone coverage can be non-existent. Being properly equipped and prepared and leaving a float plan is very important. Also, you may travel two to four days at a time without being able to replenish fresh water supplies, and opportunities for replenishing food supplies are also scarce, so plan accordingly. The coast here can be very shallow and

low tides can present a problem for navigation and when seeking to land or launch at campsites. Keep a tide chart to help plan your trip and count on tides making access a challenge. You may have to paddle a mile or two off the coast during extreme low tides.

## **Introduction**

With the exception of the Ten Thousand Islands/Everglades segment, this is the remotest segment of the trail, featuring long stretches of unspoiled shoreline, marsh expanses, and sea islands. The Big Bend also has the most stable population of bay scallops in the state and the most intact seagrass beds. These seagrass beds serve as vitally important nurseries for fish, shrimp, crabs and a host of other marine species, one reason the [Big Bend Seagrasses Aquatic Preserve](#) covers much of this segment. Spanning more than 945,000 acres, the aquatic preserve is the largest and possibly the most pristine in the state.

Fortunately, much of the Big Bend coastline is in public ownership. The first 105-mile stretch of the trail, including six primitive campsites, is managed by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) as part of the [Big Bend Saltwater Paddling Trail](#). Free permits must be obtained before using any of the campsites and an online calendar makes checking availability and reservations simple. Campsites are marked by white poles and signs and limited to 8 persons and 4 backpacking size tents to better protect the fragile coastal environment, a general rule to follow along the entire

segment. The six campsites are closed during the busy July and August scallop season. These are not the best months for overnight camping anyway with almost daily storms, biting insects and intense heat. The FWC trail guide is recommended for paddlers in this section as it provides more detailed information and waterproof maps. To purchase the trail guide, click [here](#) .

Near the Suwannee River, you'll pass through lands managed by the [Lower Suwannee National Wildlife Refuge](#). The refuge covers numerous islands and more than twenty miles of the famed river of song. A number of excellent paddling trails [maps](#) are available.

Near Cedar Key, the [Cedar Keys National Wildlife Refuge](#) encompasses 13 historic and wildlife-rich islands ranging in size from 1 to 120 acres, totaling 762 acres,

It is unlawful to camp on either the Lower Suwannee or Cedar Keys national wildlife refuges.

Two state parks are part of this segment—[Econfina River State Park](#) and [Waccasassa Bay Preserve State Park](#) . Econfina River encompasses more than 3,000 acres of pine flatwoods, oak/palm hammocks, and broad expanses of marsh and tree islands. The 34,000-acre Waccasassa Bay Preserve State Park offers sweeping marsh vistas and tree islands between Cedar Key and Yankeetown.

There are many friendly trail towns in this segment that offer restaurants, small grocery stores, and some have motels. Advice and fishing yarns are generally free of charge. Click for information on local communities along the trail in [Taylor County](#) and [Dixie County](#). For kayak rentals, shuttle support and other services, check [Suwannee Guides and Outfitters](#) and [St. Marks Outfitters](#) who also offers on-the-water boat support.

[Leave No Trace](#) principles should be followed in camping at designated primitive sites in order to keep them open for paddlers.

### **1. Lower Aucilla River Launch to Econfinia River State Park, 10-11 miles**

From the Aucilla River mouth, it is about four miles to the mouth of the Econfinia, and another 2.5 miles to the [Econfinia River State Park](#) boat ramp.

The primitive paddler's campsite is about a mile upriver from the boat ramp and is on high ground in the river forest along the west bank. Shoals just above a small bridge before the campsite may inhibit passage at low tide or during low water conditions. If this is the case, you may want to wait an hour or so at the boat landing before attempting again with a rising tide or elect to stay at the private campground. The primitive campsite is free and requires no permit. However, the park would like for campers to notify them if using the site so they can gauge use, 850-922-6007. There is a two-night maximum stay.

If the primitive site is occupied or cannot be reached, then arrange for camping through the park concessionaire [Econfina River Resort](#) at 850-584-2135, or visit their store. The campground and store, along with showers and bathrooms, are a quarter mile north of the park boat ramp along a paved road. There is a fee. The store is closed on Mondays. You can also access the store from the primitive campsite by hiking a red blazed trail to the park road and turning left for a total of about a mile. The trail, like other hiking trails in the park, are best utilized in cool weather when venomous snakes and ticks are dormant. The area is known for having an abundance of pygmy rattlesnakes.

The river above the campsite is remote, uninhabited and full of wildlife. Large live oaks and other hardwoods arch over the waterway, and numerous wildflowers often bloom along shore.

## 2. Econfina River State Park to Rock Island Campsite, 10.5 miles **Big Bend - Saltwater Paddling Trail Permit Required**

Leave Econfina River State Park with a 2-day supply of water. An optional rest stop about halfway to Rock Island is the Hickory Mound Impoundment, where there is a picnic area and an observation tower. The tower will likely be visible from the water. You'll need the FWC trail guide for the best route up a tidal creek to the picnic area.

Rock Island is the larger of two offshore islands, where you can land in a narrow rocky cove on the north side. The island, about 20 acres

in size, is interesting to explore, with its many tidal pools and exposed limestone. It can be buggy in warm weather, however. Be sure to stow away food to keep out vermin.

3. Rock Island Campsite to Spring Warrior Creek Campsite, 11 miles  
**[Big Bend - Saltwater Paddling Trail Permit Required](#)**

Leaving Rock Island, it is a little over two miles to the mouth of the Fenholloway River, which may have an unpleasant smell due to effluent from a paper mill. A good rest stop is Big Spring Creek, about three miles past the Fenholloway, where you can access a picnic area and a spring run (3 miles roundtrip).

About 3 miles from the mouth of Big Spring Creek is the Spring Warrior channel marker. It is 1.6 miles to the campsite. Paddling up Spring Warrior can be challenging in a falling tide. Before the campsite, you can obtain fresh water from the [Spring Warrior Fish Camp](#) which also offers lodging option. If unattended, you can use a hose on the side of the building, but this water may not be potable. The campsite is along a bend on the right side about a half-mile upstream from the fish camp. The campsite was once a Thanksgiving gathering place for a local family. You can explore the scenic river for about another half mile upstream until logjams may restrict passage.

4. Spring Warrior Creek Campsite to Sponge Point Campsite, 12.5 miles

**[Big Bend - Saltwater Paddling Trail Permit Required](#)**

As you cruise along the marsh, you may notice small outcroppings where cedar trees are growing. These are often the brick and stone remnants of Confederate saltworks where furnaces and iron kettles were set up during the Civil War to boil seawater to obtain salt. Salt was vitally needed to cure meat for the Confederate Army. Many of the salt works were destroyed by Union raids near the end of the war.

A must stop is the county park at Keaton Beach where you can have a picnic, take an outdoor shower, replenish water supplies, and eat in a nearby restaurant. There are a couple of small convenience stores along the town's main road along with an opportunity for lodging at the [Keaton Beach Marina and Motel](#) (850-578-2897). Inexpensive beach house rentals are available through the Gulf Coast Realty (850-587-2039). Leave Keaton Beach with enough water for two days.

Sponge Point, marked by majestic coastal live oak trees, appears to be an island as it is separated from the mainland by an expanse of marsh. Its name was derived from spongers that once frequented the Big Bend Coast. A massive 1940s outbreak of red tide, coupled with the advent of synthetic sponges, severely curtailed the native sponge industry. Be watchful of prickly pear cacti when hiking the island.

For restrooms and a covered picnic shelter, you can paddle to Hagen's Cove a half mile to the east, although no camping is allowed.

#### 5. Sponge Point Campsite to Dallus Creek Campsite, 8 miles

##### [Big Bend - Saltwater Paddling Trail Permit Required](#)

This is a short day along more shallow tidal creeks, but there are several options to further explore the area. From your campsite, you can paddle up Dallus Creek another 1.3 miles to a boat ramp and picnic area where you can hike a 1-mile loop trail. During high tide, you can paddle Dallus Creek past the boat ramp to its swampy origin or take a 3.5-mile loop around Clay Creek (see FWC guide).

The remote campsite is in a grove of coastal live oaks at the end of a cleared trail through needlerush. Be watchful of rattlesnakes during warm weather. The campsite may be difficult to reach during low tide or possibly inundated during a very high tide.

#### 6. Dallus Creek Campsite to Steinhatchee, 8 miles

##### [Big Bend - Saltwater Paddling Trail Permit Required](#)

Steinhatchee is the largest town in this segment until you reach Cedar Key. Here, you can rent a motel room or campsite, sample restaurant fare, and stock up on supplies. You should arrange for your stay in advance by selecting a motel or private campground by visiting either [Steinhatchee to Perry](#) or [Pure Water Wilderness](#). One easily accessible overnight stop in Steinhatchee, and clearly marked from the water, is the [Sea Hag Marina](#) (352-498-3008). Another paddler-friendly option with an innovative kayak-friendly dock is the [Good Times Motel and Marina](#) (352-498-8088) on the south side of



the river. There are two public boat ramps on both sides of the river (see map).

7. Steinhatchee to Sink Creek Campsite, 10 miles

**Big Bend - Saltwater Paddling Trail Permit Required**

Sink Creek, one of the more remote spots along the trail, is an island-like spot surrounded by tidal creeks, marsh and sand flats. It is about a half mile in from the mouth of the creek on the south bank. A high tide will make accessibility easier.

Behind the campsite at low tide, you can hike the salt flats--an open sandy ribbon between marsh and tree hammocks. Look for evidence of rising sea levels as many cedars and other trees have died, leaving behind their naturally sculpted trunks.

A brackish spring is a quarter mile upstream near a remote boat ramp. Here, you can take a swim, explore numerous small sinkholes, and hike the back roads for great vistas. The spring area is where mullet fisherman camped and traded salted fish for farm produce and other goods in the early 1900s. A fish house once stood on the shore, but like many of the Big Bend's shoreline areas, storms and rising sea levels have erased most obvious signs of human existence.

8. Sink Creek Campsite to Butler Island Campsite, 14 miles

**Big Bend - Saltwater Paddling Trail Permit Required**

From the campsite, Bowlegs Point is a good rest stop, about 2.5 miles away. Past the point, you can only cruise between Pepperfish Keys and the mainland at high tide. Otherwise, stay on the Gulf side. Northern Pepperfish Key is a bird rookery, so keep at least 300 feet (a football field length) from the island so as not to disturb nesting birds.

A good rest stop near the end of the day is a county park at the town of Horseshoe Beach. You can replenish water supplies—enough for two days--and walk a short distance to a convenience store and a restaurant. An overnight option is to rent a room at the [El-Seas Fish Camp](#), accessible by floating dock along the main canal through town on right (just less than a quarter mile in from the Gulf). Call (352) 498-8036 for reservations and directions (see map).

The Butler Island Campsite is 1.7 miles from Horseshoe Point, on the south side of the island. Camping is beneath a canopy of live oaks, palms and a rare stand of mature cedars, but beware of poison ivy. As with other sites, the low-lying coontie palm grows here, a protected species. The starchy tubers—poisonous if not prepared properly--were once an important food source for Native Americans and early settlers.

#### 9. Butler Island Campsite to Anderson Landing River Camp in Suwannee, 11.5 miles

From Butler Island, you'll pass through a maze of oyster bars across Horseshoe Cove. As you enter the [Lower Suwannee National Wildlife Refuge](#), several tidal creeks offer scenic paddling opportunities, and Fishbone Creek has an observation tower about 1.5 miles from the mouth. If you want to explore the area further, one option is to stay at the county campground at Shired Island (pronounced Sheered), about 5 miles from Butler Island (fee required). The water is not potable and has a strong sulfur smell. Nearby, a large Indian shell midden about 12 feet high, with sides exposed due to erosion, is worth viewing.

Several islands in the refuge, such as Big Pine Island, offer inviting white sand beaches and palm-lined shores, great for rest stops. Bear in mind that Cat Island, near the mouth of Salt Creek, is privately owned but camping is allowed on an emergency basis and it is an enjoyable rest stop. From Cat Island, follow the gps point on the map to the canal along the east side of Suwannee and Highway 349. Paddle along the canal about a mile to Anderson Landing. There is a small fee for primitive camping and a motel is next door at [Bills Fish Camp and Motel](#). For reservations call 352-542-7086. Suwannee has two restaurants within walking distance.

#### 10. Anderson Landing River Camp to Shell Mound Park campground, 12 miles

From the campsite, it is a fairly straight shot to the lower Suwannee River via a canal. Paddle downstream to the river mouth through

West Pass, being wary of strong currents and boat traffic. Continuing southeast along the coast, a good rest stop is the white sandy beach of Deer Island. One option for camping near Deer Island is the private Clark Island, where you can stay for a fee. Call Nature Coast Expeditions at 352-543-6463 for more information. As with many areas along the Big Bend, access at low tide can be tricky.

The county campground at the Shell Mound County Park is inexpensive and on the water, although the ramp can be difficult to reach at low tide and airboats use the ramp frequently.

The historic shell mound is a must see and several scenic [Lower Suwannee National Wildlife Refuge Hiking Trails](#) make this an interesting destination and chance to stretch your legs. This five-acre, 28-foot tall Timucuan Indian mound affords a panoramic view of a Gulf Coast wilderness. It was primarily built from discarded oyster and scallop shells over the course of generations that may have spanned 3500 years.

#### 11. Shell Mound Campground to Hall Creek Campsite, 10 miles

The shortest route is to paddle close to the mainland and pass beneath the bridge to Cedar Key on your way to Hall Creek. You'll pass numerous small islands on your way. Hall Creek, Kelly Creek, Waccasassa River and Turtle Creek campsites are part of the Waccasassa Bay Preserve State Park and are available free of

charge on a first-come, first-serve basis. The campsites are not exclusively for paddlers, so you may be sharing them with boaters.

Don't miss the historic town of Cedar Key which is well worth a day or two of exploration. Cross under the bridge and paddle around Scale Key to a cove on the southwest part of town where you can land at the Cedar Key Park (see map). This will add up to two miles to your day. At charming Cedar Key, you can buy groceries, eat in a variety of restaurants, visit a museum, and peruse numerous shops. In the late 1800s, Cedar Key was a major port city and processor of cedar logs for the pencil industry. Several factors contributed to its downfall: hurricanes, the emergence of Tampa as a major port, and the depletion of old-growth cedar trees. Today, tourism is a major industry although the popular destination is amazingly devoid of chain motels or restaurants and maintains a small town charm. Cedar Key has an important clam industry and is known for its tasty clams.

A good option is to stay at [Cedar Key](#) in one of many waterfront motels and kayak to the scenic islands of the [Cedar Keys National Wildlife Refuge](#). All beaches along the islands are open for public access with the exception of Seahorse Key from March 1 through June 30 due to bird nesting. Atsena Otie Island, a half mile south of Cedar Key, is the only island where the interior is open for hiking year-round. Here, you can view an explanatory kiosk and the historic ruins of the Faber cedar mill near the dock and walk to the eastern end of the island to view the historic cemetery.

Seahorse Key is another must stop when the beaches are open. This former prison for Confederate soldiers has the highest elevation on Florida's west coast, rising 52 feet. Other nearby islands include Snake Key and North Key. The interiors of these islands are closed to the public, and for good reason. They have venomous snakes and thick undergrowth.

Find information on lodging, restaurants and other [Cedar Key](#) offerings and be sure to take the historic walking tour. Brochures can be purchased from the Cedar Key Historical Society Museum in the old downtown.

If paddling from the Shell Mound Campground to the spoil island campsite near Yankeetown and beyond, skipping Cedar Key, be sure to bring enough water for four to five days.

After entering Hall Creek, follow the winding main channel through the marsh to the first tree island on the left. You'll see a small side creek that takes you closer to this one-acre site.

## 12. Hall Creek Campsite to Kelly Creek Campsite, 8 miles

Kelly Creek is another unspoiled tidal creek along the marshy coast. The campsite is about a mile upstream from the mouth of Kelly Creek. After entering the mouth, stay in the main channel as you proceed up the creek. You'll begin passing through an area of bleached dead cedars and palms. The campsite is a large 2-3 acre

tree island on the right. Land on the backside (north) where you can more easily get out of the current. There's plenty of room to spread out and the island has a stone fire ring.

### 13. Kelly Creek Campsite to Waccasassa River Campsite, 7 miles

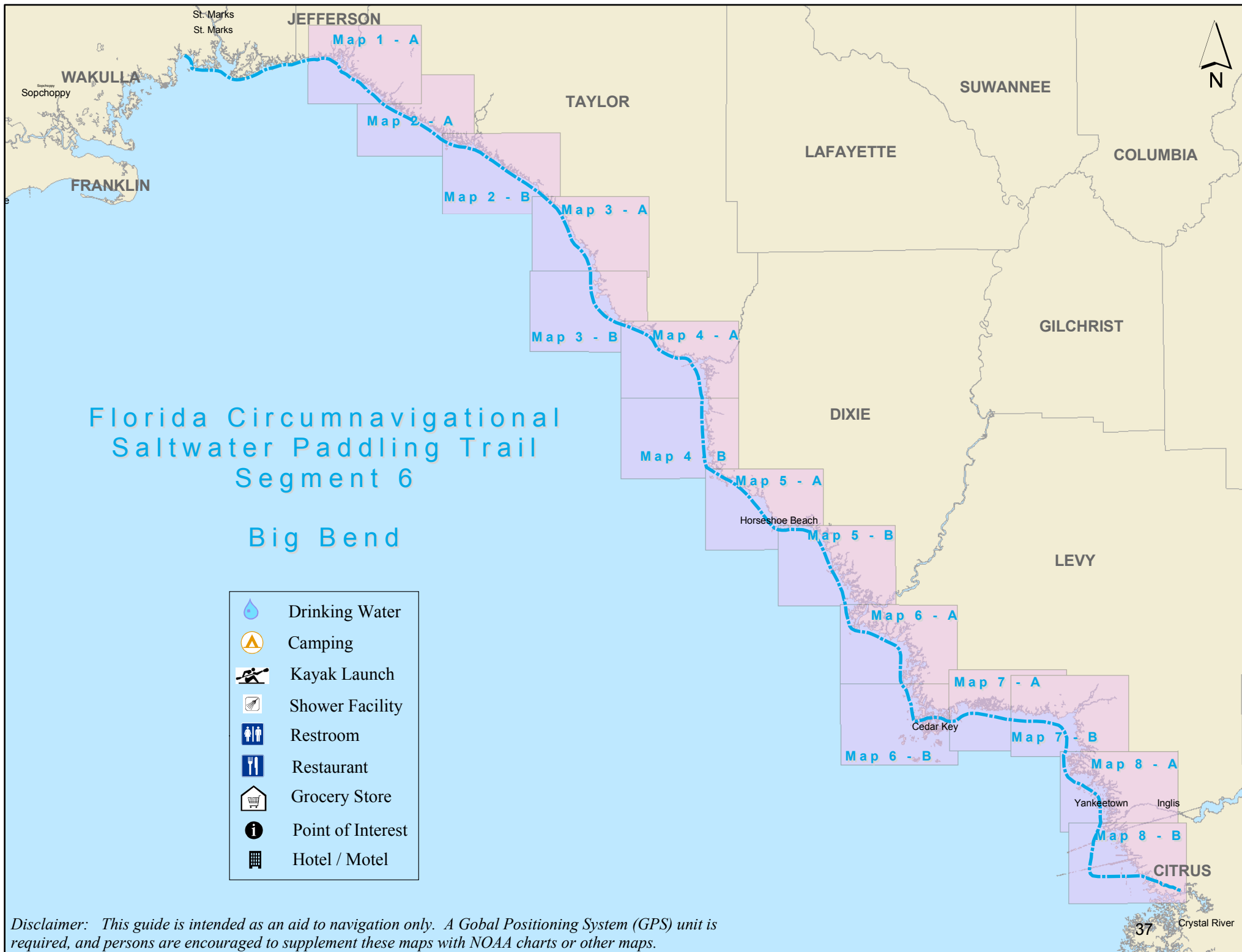
One option for this day is to paddle up the Waccasassa River, initially following channel markers that stretch into the bay. The campsite is along a small side creek on the west side of the river called Double Barrel Creek. If you're not a thru paddler, you can access this area from a remote boat ramp along the upper Waccasassa River at the end of County Road 326 near Gulf Hammock, about 4 miles upriver from the river campsite.

### 14. Wacassassa Campsite to Cross Florida Greenway Spoil Island Campsite, 15 miles

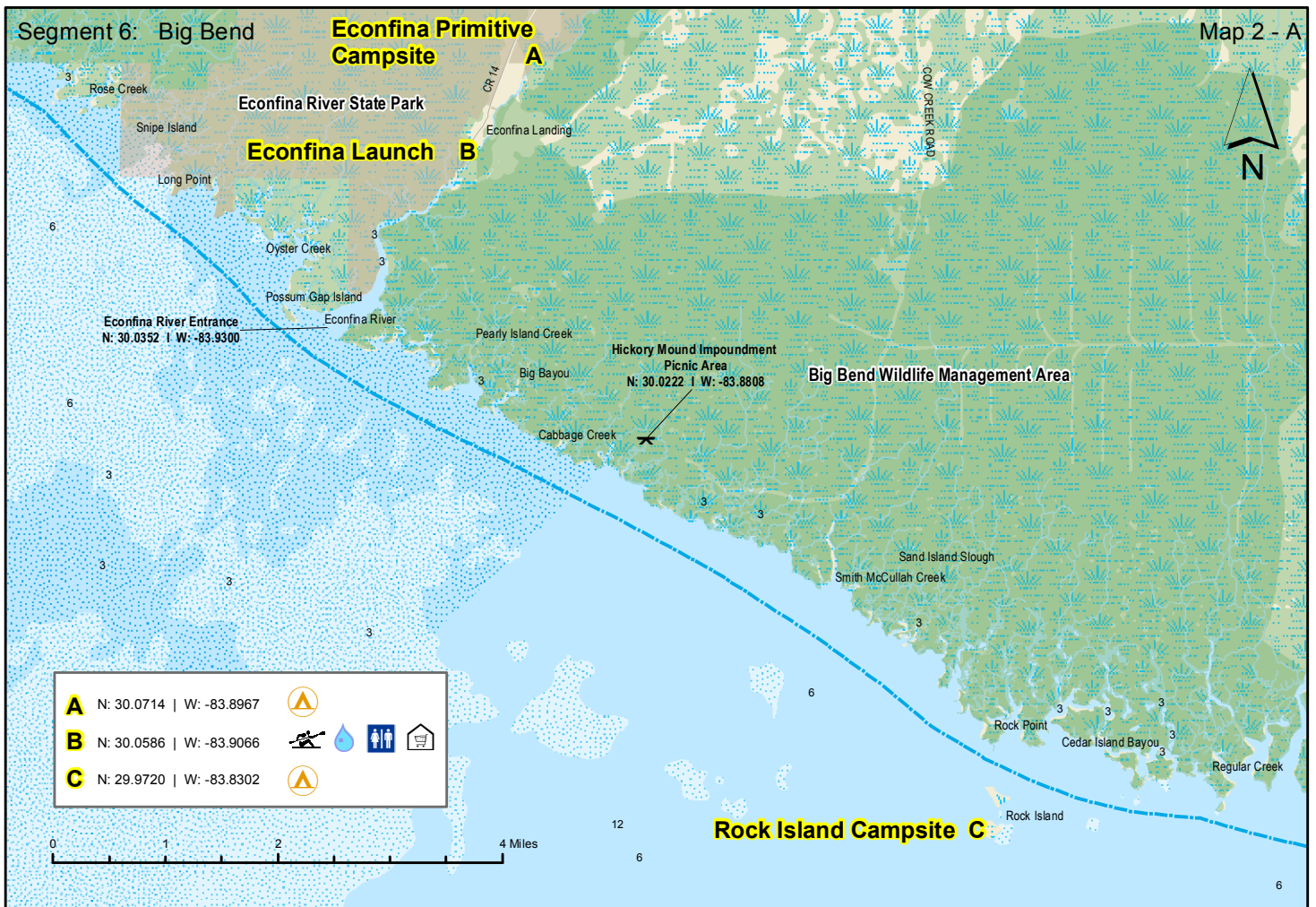
It may seem that the wild tidal creeks, marshy vistas and scenic tree islands will never end as you paddle to the boat ramp near Yankeetown at the mouth of the Withlacoochee River. The town itself is 3.5 miles up the Withlacoochee River where limited supplies can be obtained. [B's Marina and Fish Camp](#) in Yankeetown offers tent camping with showers, restrooms and a small grocery store (352-447-5888). Yankeetown is a picturesque fishing village with old-growth trees and stately homes.

The spoil island campsite is about two miles past the ramp (see map for GPS point). This island was created by dredging a channel for the now defunct Cross Florida Barge Canal. The old canal lands are now primarily managed for recreation as part of the [Cross Florida Greenway](#). Primitive camping is on a first-come, first-serve basis.

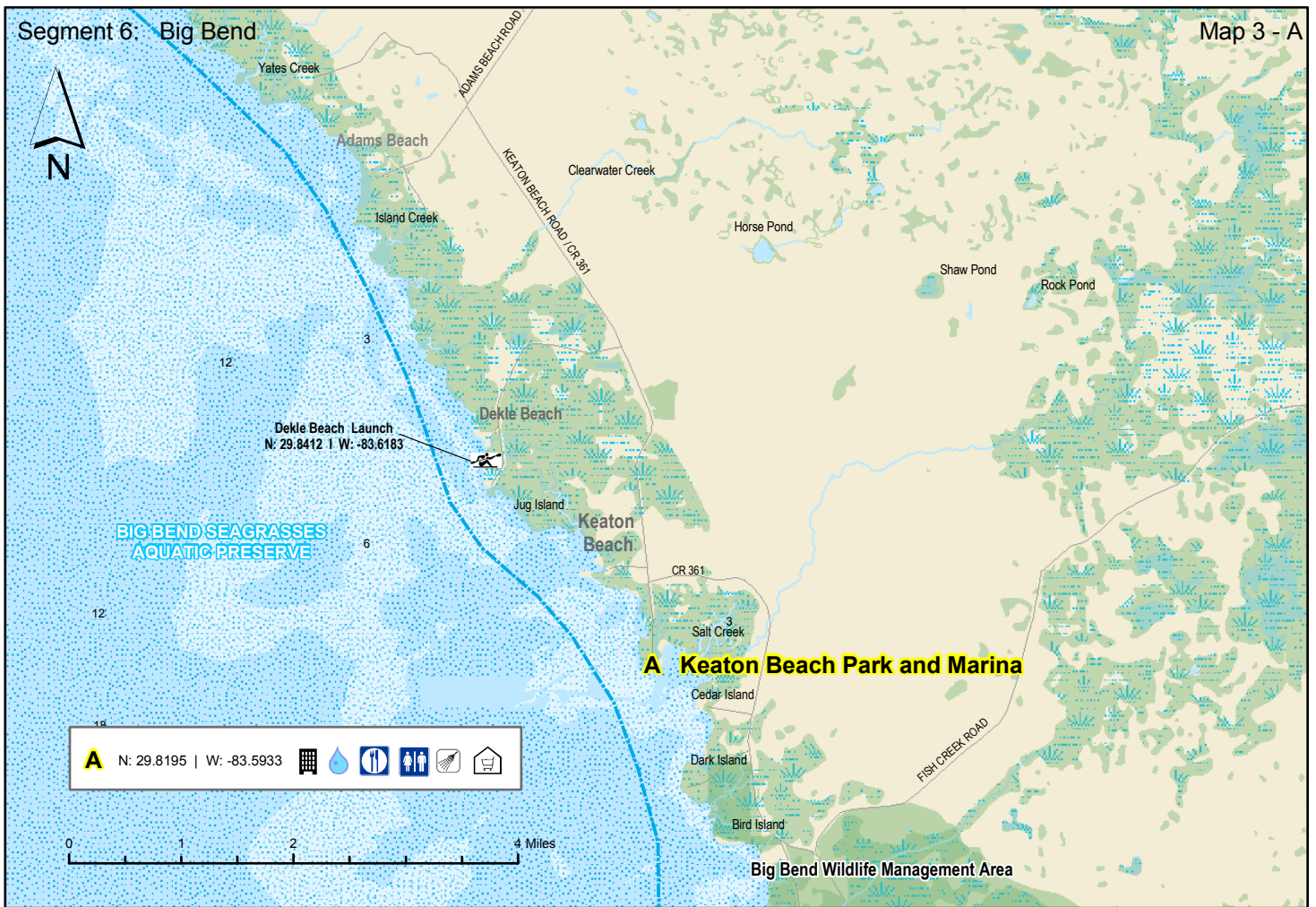








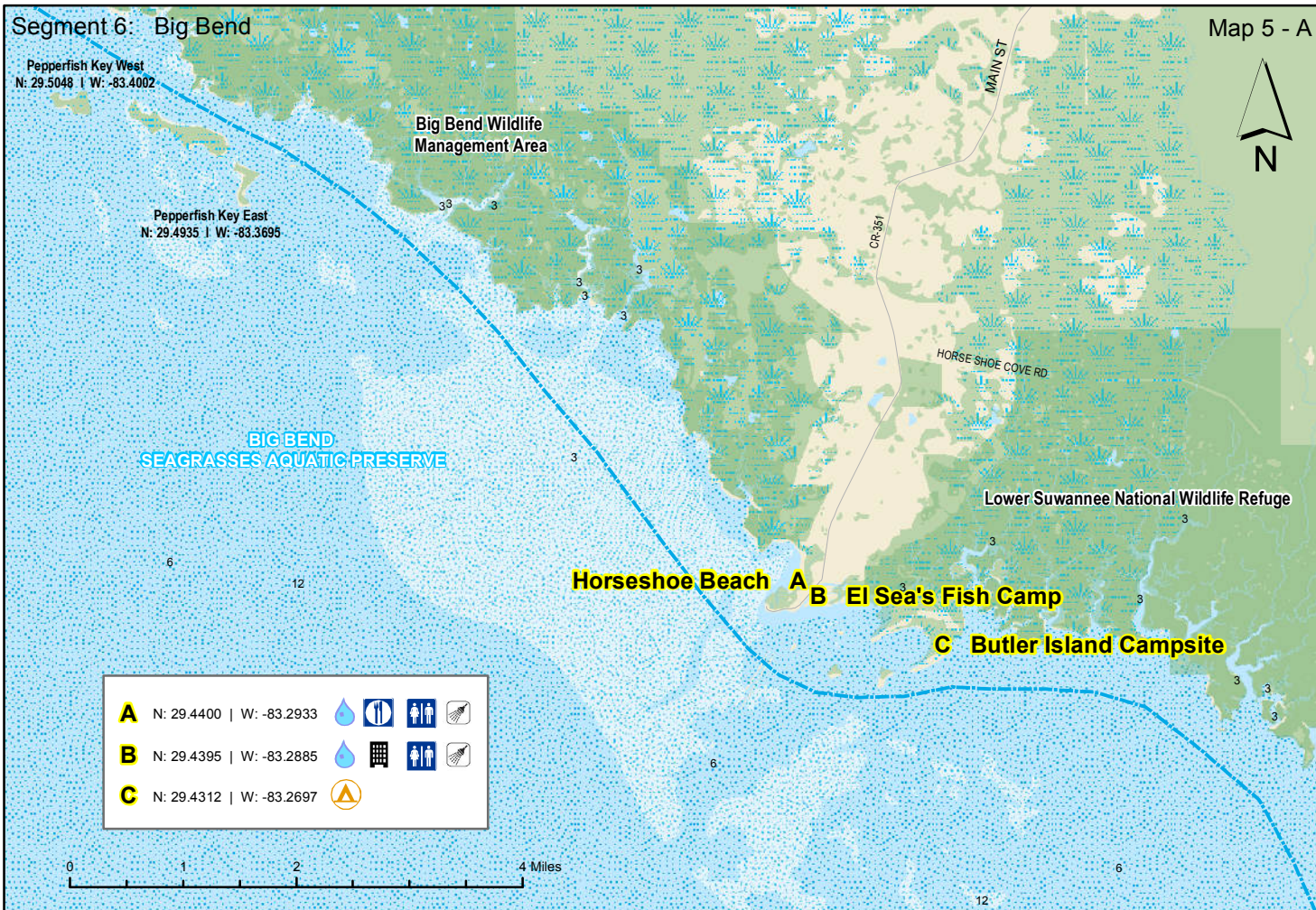








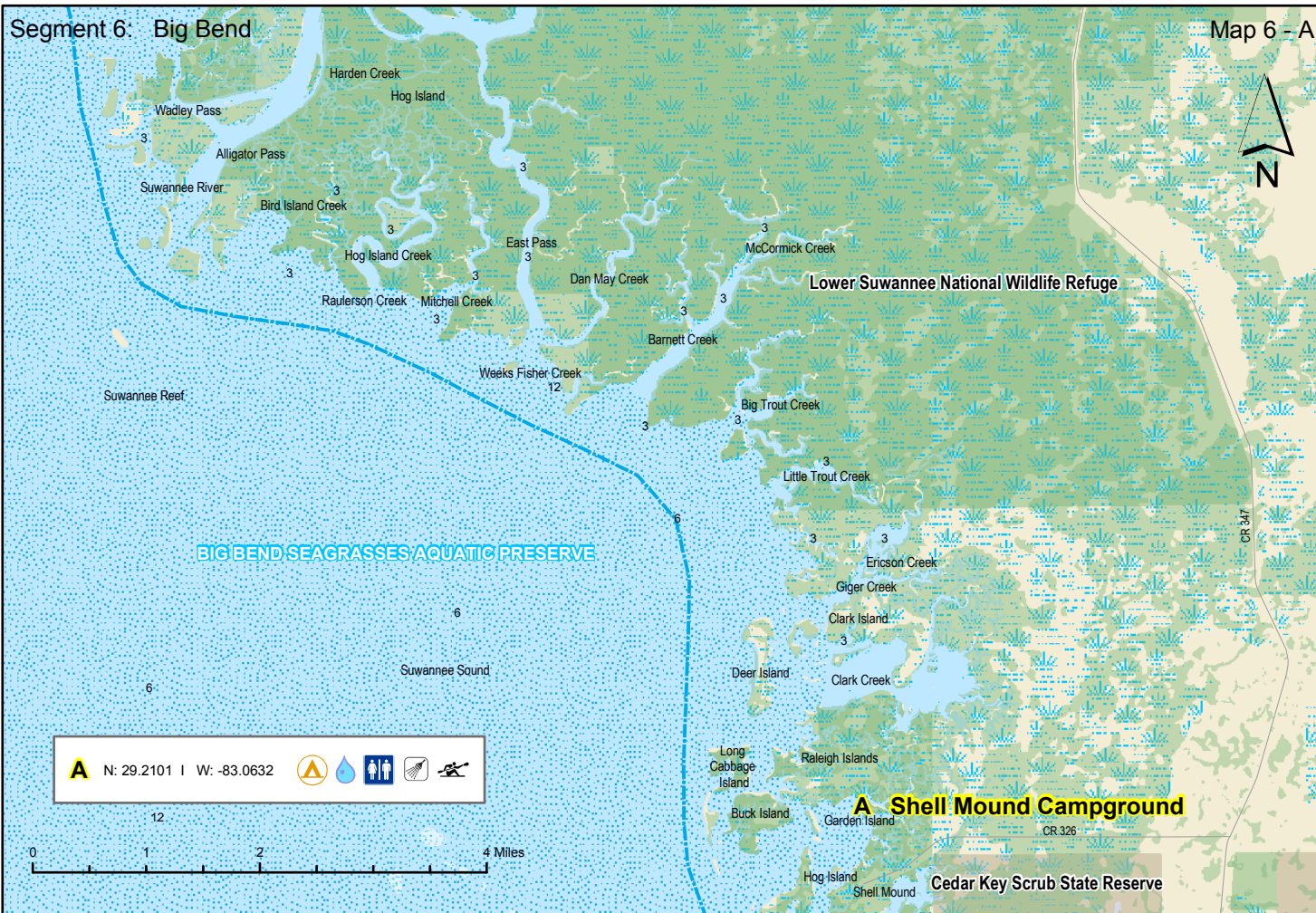






# Segment 6: Big Bend

Map 6 - A



# Segment 6: Big Bend

Map 6 - B





**Segment 6: Big Bend**

**Map 7 - A**

**A Hall Creek Campsite**

**B Kelly Creek Campsite**

**Hall Creek Entrance**  
N: 29.1728 | W: -82.9760

**Kelly Creek Entrance**  
N: 29.1633 | W: -82.8843

**Cedar Key Scrub State Reserve**

**NATC Gulf Hammock Conservation Easement**

**Waccasassa Bay Preserve State Park**

**Scale:** 0 1 2 12 4 Miles

**Legend:**

- A** N: 29.1863 | W: -82.9694
- B** N: 29.1759 | W: -82.8836

Segment 6: Big Bend

NATC Gulf Hammock Conservation Easement

Waccasassa River Launch  
N: 29.2136 | W: -82.7635

Map 7- B

Waccasassa River Campsite A

Cow Creek

Waccasassa River

Sheephead Creek

South Point

Williams Creek

Ramsey Creek

Ramsey Point

Beetree Slough

Waccasassa Bay Preserve State Park

Turtle Creek Bay

Trout Creek

Waccasassa Bay

Compass Point Creek

Salt Island Creek

East Pass

West Pass

Deep Creek

Kelly Creek

West Griffin Creek

Tarpon Creek

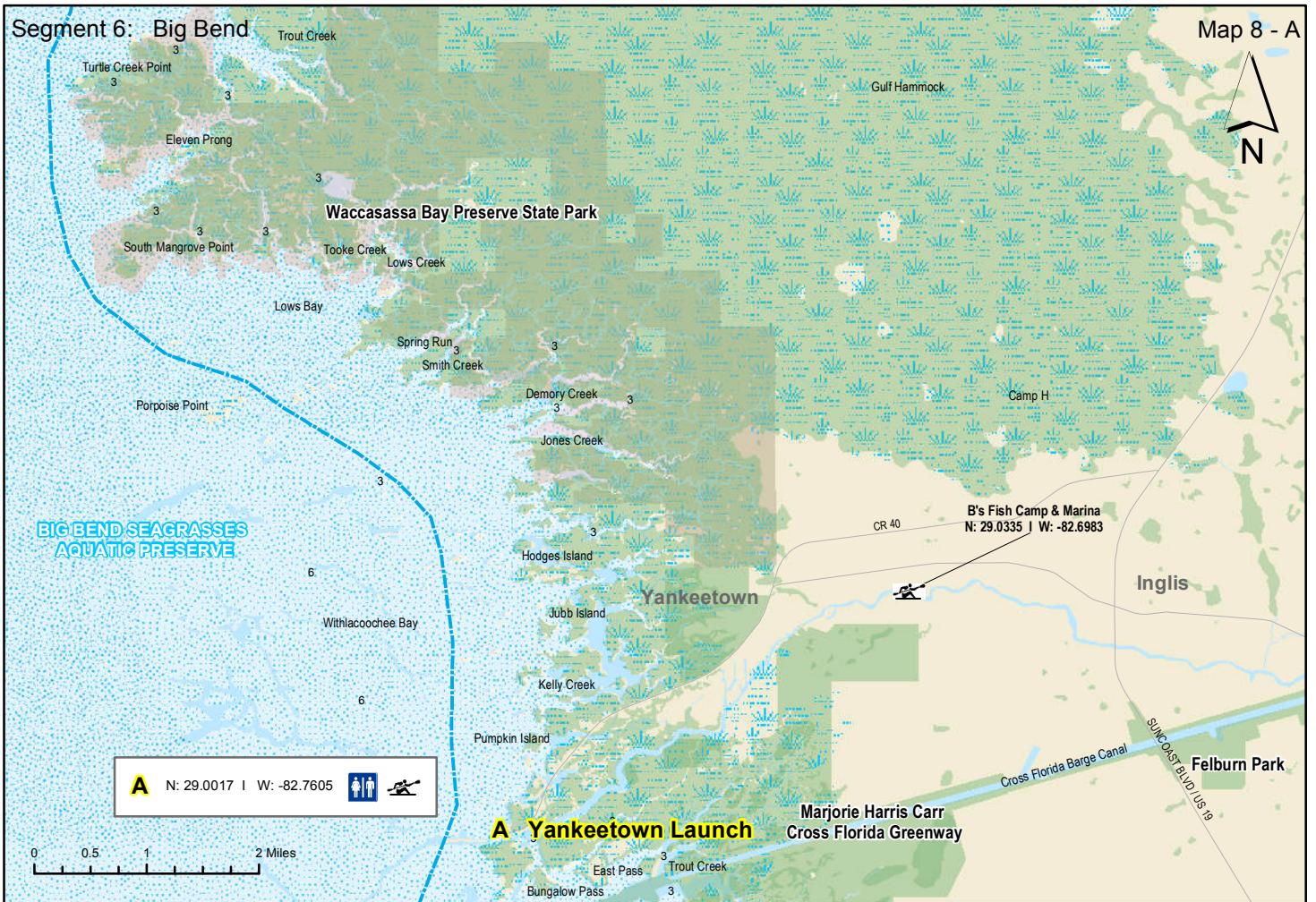
Dry Creek

0 1 2 4 Miles

A N: 29.1754 | W: -82.7999

44









## For the Long Distance Paddler...

Thinking of a long distance journey on the Florida Circumnavigational Saltwater Paddling Trail? Want to paddle the entire trail? You can choose to tackle the trail in segments over several years or attempt a thru paddle all at once. Either way, several factors and considerations should be part of your preparation and planning.

**Pre-Planning.** Besides this information sheet, items to download from the Office of Greenways and Trails website include all pertinent segment [trail guides and maps](#), [trail data book](#) and [summary sheet](#), "[Trip Tips and Safety Information](#)," and "[Recommended Gear and Safety Equipment](#)."

In addition, the Florida Paddling Trails Association offers valuable information about the trail, including links to blogs from past and sometimes current thru paddlers. Some of the information is only available to members. The website is: <http://www.floridapaddlingtrails.com/> The purchase of navigational charts, available at most marine supply stores, is also recommended.

**Reservations and Permits.** Maintaining the circumnavigational trail is a low-budget operation that largely depends upon volunteers, so there is no central permitting/reservation body for the trail. Where required, permits and reservations must be obtained from the many parks and private businesses along the trail. These may be found by perusing the segment trail guides. Many motels and state park and private campgrounds, especially in central and south Florida and in the Keys during peak seasons (holidays and early spring), require advance reservations in order to be assured a spot. Bring a cell phone and call ahead as soon as you have a good idea of your schedule. Regarding the Big Bend portion of the trail managed by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (Aucilla River to the town of Suwannee, part of segment 6), free permits are required and can be reserved online at

[http://www.myfwc.com/RECREATION/WMASites\\_BigBend\\_paddling\\_trail.htm](http://www.myfwc.com/RECREATION/WMASites_BigBend_paddling_trail.htm)

Be sure to leave a detailed float plan with a reliable friend or relative before you begin your journey.

**Experience.** Long distance paddlers should be competent in all types of environments and conditions, capable of dealing with strong winds and currents, and skilled at crossing open water stretches and boat channels. You should be able to navigate at night and in poor visibility, capable of using navigational maps and charts and a GPS system, and trained in advanced rescue techniques, wilderness first aid and primitive camping skills. The trail is marked by GPS points on a map, not by signs. Cell phone coverage can be spotty in some sections. A SPOT tracking device is recommended.

It is especially important to field test your equipment beforehand under various conditions, especially all electronic equipment and items such as dry bags, tents and rain gear. Some paddlers have learned the hard way that the "waterproof" label is not always accurate. Online and magazine reviews of equipment can also be helpful, along with consultation with outfitters and other paddlers.

**Distances.** In several stretches, one must paddle more than 20 miles to reach a legal campsite or motel. For this reason, proper conditioning and equipment, and awareness of weather forecasts and wind conditions, are all imperative. Stiff fines and possible arrest can result from illegally camping on private or public lands, especially military lands and national wildlife

refuges. Only emergency conditions such as injury or dangerous weather should dictate a decision to stop short of an authorized overnight stop.

**Weather.** As with any long distance paddling journey, weather may not always be ideal. Storms and high winds can prohibit travel for a day or more. Lightning can be especially dangerous. Occasional storm days should be factored into your planning. A weather radio is an important addition to your equipment list along with the ability to read changing weather conditions while in the field.

**Timing.** Generally, it is best to avoid the summer hurricane season for a long distance journey. Recommended paddling months are late October through April. Bugs and hot steamy weather, along with lightning storms, will be less prevalent as well. The entire trail is about 1,515 miles, but side trips and extreme low tides can add more miles. Allowing for some days off, plan to take about four months if planning to traverse the entire trail. Or, paddle the trail in segments over a longer period of time. Make your trip a journey of discovery, not a race.

**Budget.** Be realistic about costs. While every effort has been made to provide low cost or free campsites for paddlers, motel stays will occasionally be necessary. Waterfront motels, and some established campgrounds, can be expensive, depending on the season and locale.

**Supplies.** Plan on having 4 to 7 days worth of supplies at any given time, depending on the segment. The longest stretch without an opportunity to re-supply will be from Everglades City to the Keys in segments 14 and 15. While we list or describe a few supermarkets within easy walking distance of the trail, there are several more that may require a longer walking distance. Inquire locally for directions. Some small towns or fish camps may only have a convenience store for re-supply. In some places, care packages can be sent ahead to post offices in care of general delivery, but your arrival time needs to coincide with post office hours. Also, for those with special dietary restrictions and/or the need for certain prescription medications, post office drops may be essential in some areas. See data book summary for list of recommended post offices.

Regarding water, you'll be able to replenish water supplies almost daily in developed sections of the trail due to the many parks along the route. However, in the Big Bend and Ten Thousand Islands/Everglades in particular, fresh water re-supply opportunities can be spaced several days apart. See segment guides for specifics. The general rule is to figure on one gallon of water per person per day. Be mindful that animals such as raccoons on remote coastal islands may seek your fresh water as much as your food. Hang food and water or store in secure hatches.

**Trail Direction and Camping.** Note that the trail is designed to go north to south along the Gulf Coast, and south to north along the East Coast. This will help to prevent trail groups from overlapping at campsites. For many fragile coastal camping sites, the size limit is 8 persons and 4 small tents. Campsites are often on a first-come, first-serve basis and are not always limited to paddlers. Camping rules may differ according to the managing entity. Follow Leave No Trace guidelines when primitive camping, <http://www.lnt.org>

**Trail changes.** Hurricanes, business closings and other factors can alter trail conditions and overnight stays. Check the Circumnavigational Trail website for trail updates. Maps and segment guides on the website will occasionally be revised, so download or peruse the latest versions before beginning serious planning. Contact the trail manager if you encounter situations that differ from what is currently on the website.

## **Trip Tips and Safety**

Do not paddle alone

If inexperienced, join with experienced paddlers and/or outfitters and try short trips first. Peruse books and articles about sea kayaking in Florida and talk with experts.

File a float plan that contains departure location, time and date, and expected arrival date, time and location

Five short blasts on a whistle is the international signal for an emergency

Waving a brightly colored shirt or towel can attract the attention of a passing boater

Take careful note of weather conditions and forecasts. If in doubt, don't proceed into open water. Be especially vigilant during hurricane season, from June through November. Warm weather thunderstorms can also bring high winds and heavy rains, along with the risk of lightning strikes.

The prime paddling period in Florida is from October through April

Parts of the trail may require motel stays as there is no legal camping available. Budget accordingly, and bring a locking security cable for securing your craft to pilings, docks, fences, etc.

Stay well hydrated. Paddlers should carry at least one gallon of freshwater per person per day. In remote areas such as the Big Bend and Everglades, there can be two or more days between replenishment stops.

Carry a tide chart. Some areas can be very shallow at low tide. In certain tidal creeks, rivers and passes, changing tides can cause strong currents that might help or hinder.

When primitive camping, employ leave no trace principles ([www.lnt.org](http://www.lnt.org)). In high use areas, you may even be required to carry out human waste in bags designed for this purpose.

If fishing, a Florida fishing license is required for persons 16 years of age and older (free for Florida residents 65 or older). Visit <http://myfwc.com/license/> or call 1-888-347-4356

Sub-freezing winter temperatures can be experienced in almost all parts of Florida. Plan accordingly.

Snakes, including venomous ones, can be active in coastal environments, even in salt marshes. Proceed with caution when you can't see the ground. If encountering a snake, back away and admire these beautiful animals as they go about their lives.

Poison ivy, poisonwood trees and other plants that cause allergic reactions can be found along the trail. If in doubt, do not touch.

Don't walk on oysters or coral barefoot. Cactus, sandspurs, glass and other items can cause problems, too. Wear appropriate footwear.

Long-distance paddling can be rigorous. Adverse tides, currents and head winds can hinder progress and challenge physical endurance. Be physically fit before embarking.

By setting a relaxed pace for your trip, with plenty of time set aside for side trips and land explorations, you will likely have a richer experience.

## **Recommended Gear and Safety Equipment for Extended Trips**

A sea kayak with rudder suitable for open water  
Lightweight paddle and spare paddle  
Spray skirt/cockpit cover  
U.S. Coast Guard approved personal flotation device (readily accessible)  
Marine whistle, bell or horn within easy reach  
Flares and flare gun  
Marine radio  
Waterproof GPS and extra batteries  
Deck compass  
Pertinent maps, NOAA charts and tide charts  
Cell phone (although some areas may be out of range)  
SPOT Personal satellite tracking system (can give outgoing message where cell phones do not work)  
First aid kit (ace bandage, butterfly bandages, asst. bandaids, snake bite kit, moleskin, eyedrops, tweezer, scissors, cold/hot pads)  
Medication (bi-ox, Tylenol, anti-itch cream, antifungal cream, diarrhea tablets, sinus/cold, antacid, painkiller, antibiotic, vomiting medication, nasal spray, seasick pills, thermometer)  
Towline  
Bilge pump/sponge/paddle float  
Paddle Leash  
Dry bags, deck bag and chart case (for map and GPS)  
Sunscreen, sun hat, waterproof sunscreen, and long-sleeved, light-colored shirts  
Polarized sunglasses. Ski goggles may be optimal for those with sensitive eyes  
Insect repellent, head net, and net clothing  
Rain gear  
Appropriate clothing for anticipated weather  
Water containers and easily accessible water bottle  
Lightweight camp stove, fuel container and funnel  
Matches or lighter  
Mess kit  
Tent with fine mesh screen and rain fly  
Sleeping bag  
Flashlight and/or head lamp  
Several feet of cord  
Small trowel  
Toilet paper  
Garbage bags  
Pocket multi-tool  
Repair items (duct tape, nails/screws, epoxy putty, super glue, aquaseal)  
Biodegradable soap and scrubbie  
Dish towel  
Ziplock bags  
Sewing kit  
Dental supplies

Small can of lubricant to spray zippers and other metal parts to prevent corrosion  
Solid brass lock and stainless steel chain or cable (corrosion resistant) for securing kayak  
Small brass brush to clean off corrosion on metal objects

Optional items include binoculars, walkie-talkies, paddling gloves, folding stool, folding toilet seat, sleeping pad, inflatable pillow, battery operated tent fan, camera, small jungle hammock, wheels for transporting kayak, and a tarp for use as a camp rain fly or ground cover.



### **Paddlers Code of Ethics**

1. Respect all of Florida's waterways and their unique characteristics. This includes still, flat water, to Gulf/Ocean currents.
2. Learn and follow all State of Florida Boating Regulations, navigation rules, and vessel safety equipment requirements. Federal regulations may also apply to your paddling venue.
3. Practice with, and learn to use all of your safety equipment. Once capsized, is not the time to learn of your own, or your equipment's capabilities. Carry and use all required safety gear.
4. Paddle only at your experience level. Take lessons from a qualified instructor.
5. Respect all wildlife, and critical distances to minimize/reduce negative impacts. Practice passive, hands off observation.
6. Become educated to, and protect critical habitats, and environments. Practice the Leave No Trace principles.
7. Respect private property, do not alter existing paddle trails, and plan your outing accordingly.
8. Understand that the public will judge our paddle sport community by the actions of the individual, whether on the water or not. Advocate responsibly.

Note: Many thanks to Brack Barker of the Florida Paddling Trails Association and Wild Florida Adventures for putting this code together.



## Circumnavigational Trail Data Book

**PC = Primitive campsite**

**POI = Point of Interest/landmark**

**C = Campground**

**LA = Laundromat**

**W = Water**

**L = Lodging**

**I = Internet computer**

**PO = Post Office**

**R = Restaurant**

**S = Shower**

**G = medium/lg supermarkets**

**B = Bathroom**

**PI = Put-In**

**g = convenience/camp stores**

| <i>Mile #</i>                  | <i>Type of amenity</i>                                | <i>GPS # on trail<br/>(decimal-degrees)</i> | <i>OGT Segment and Map #</i> | <i>Directions</i>  |
|--------------------------------|---|---|------------------------------|--|
| <b>0</b>                       | PC/log-book<br><br>(Big Lagoon State Park, Pensacola) | N30.3100<br><br>W87.4029                    | 1/1-A                        | On trail   |
| <b>6</b>                       | PC<br><br>(Gulf Shores National Seashore)             | N30.3181<br>W87.3321                        | 1/1-A                        | On trail   |
| <b>8</b>                       | POI (Ft. Pickens)                                     | N30.3298<br>W87.3018                        | 1/1-A                        | On trail   |
| <b>14.4</b>                    | W, R<br><br>(Gulf Islands National Seashore Park)     | N30.3270<br>W87.1809                        | 1/1-B                        | On trail   |
| <b>17</b>                      | L, R, I<br><br>(Comfort Inn)                          | N30.3329<br>W87.1438                        | 1/1-B                        | Just before southern end of bridge                               |
| <b>18</b>                      | L, R<br><br>(Paradise Inn)                            | N30.3357<br>W87.1338                        | 1/1-B                        | Just past southern end of bridge                                 |
| <b>(1 mile north of route)</b> | R, W<br><br>(Gulf Shores Visitor's Center)            | N30.3637<br>W87.1296                        | 1/1-B                        | 2 miles past bridge on north side                                |
| <b>23</b>                      | PC (Big Sabine Point)                                 | N30.3533<br>W87.0524                        | 1/2A                         | On Santa Rosa Island; water, restrooms and showers .5 mile south |

|  |   |                      |      |  |
|--|---|----------------------|------|--|
| <b>(left on Ochlockonee River 2.8 miles)</b> | C, W, S, B (#FF)                                      | N30.0023<br>W84.5403 | 5/2A | Left side of Ochlockonee River going upstream  |
| <b>245</b>                                   | PI (McIntyre ramp)                                    | N29.9818<br>W84.5260 | 5/2A | On right at junction of Crooked and Ochlockonee rivers                                     |
| <b>249</b>                                   | PI, C, W, S, B (Ochlockonee River State Park)         | N29.9993<br>W84.4806 | 5/2A | Left side going downstream   |
| <b>250.1</b>                                 | PC, W, B (Ochlockonee River State Park Youth Camp)    | N30.0084<br>W84.4745 | 5/2B | Left side of Ochlockonee River going downstream, paddle up Dead River                      |
| <b>257.8</b>                                 | C, W, S, R, g (Holiday Campground)                    | N29.9779<br>W84.3847 | 5/2B | Left side of Ochlockonee just before bridge; restaurants & small store nearby.             |
| <b>261.5</b>                                 | PC (Bald Point State Park, Chaires Creek)             | N29.9410<br>W84.3544 | 5/2B | Enter creek on right side of Ochlockonee, campsite on left                                 |
| <b>(about a mile up creek, right fork)</b>   | PC (Bald Point State Park, Bridge Site)               | N29.9379<br>W84.3649 | 5/2B | Along narrow creek, tidally influenced   |
| <b>264.6</b>                                 | PI, W, B (Mashes Sands Park)                          | N29.9734<br>W84.3416 | 5/2B | Along northern point of Ochlockonee River mouth  |
| <b>(2.4 miles off route)</b>                 | POI, PI, W, B, R, G (Wakulla County Visitor's Center) | N30.0346<br>W84.3889 | 5/3A | Located in Panacea up tidal creek; low tide may be problematic; supermarket 4 blocks west. |
| <b>273.6</b>                                 | C, W, B, PI, R (Spring Creek RV Park)                 | N30.0790<br>W84.3296 | 5/3A | Up Spring Creek on right   |
| <b>276.6</b>                                 | W, B (Shell Point Park)                               | N30.0575<br>W84.2901 | 5/3B | Easy access, picnic pavillions   |
| <b>283.6</b>                                 | PC (St. Marks River spoil island, aka Fog Island)     | N30.1003<br>W84.1944 | 5/3B | Tall mound of rocks and trees makes it stand out   |
| <b>285.7</b>                                 | POI, PI (St. Marks Lighthouse access)                 | N30.0742<br>W84.1803 | 5/3B | An obvious landmark easily seen from miles away in clear weather                           |
| <b>289.8</b>                                 | Palmetto Island rest stop (privately owned)           | N30.0847<br>W84.1140 |      | Accessible at most tide levels, no facilities  |
| <b>291</b>                                   | Deep Creek mouth                                      | N30.0939<br>W84.0983 | 5/4A | The creek mouth can be shallow, but the creek itself is usually fine in low tide           |

|                               |  |                      |      |   |
|-------------------------------|--|----------------------|------|---|
| <b>292.1</b>                  | PC (Ring Dike)   | N30.1051<br>W84.1087 | 5/4A | Live oaks mark the campsite   |
| <b>298.6</b>                  | Pinhook River mouth  | N30.0996<br>W84.0157 | 5/4A |   |
| <b>300.6</b>                  | PC (Pinhook River)   | N30.1283<br>W84.0217 | 5/4A | 50 yards west of bridge   |
| <b>307.6</b>                  | PI, B (Lower Aucilla River)  | N30.1165<br>W83.9795 | 5/4A | Upriver on right  |
|                               | <b>Segment 6</b>   |                      |      |   |
| <b>318</b>                    | PI, C, W, S, g (Econfina River Resort)   | N30.0586<br>W83.9066 | 6/1A | Store and resort .2 mile north of ramp. Closed on Mondays.                                |
| <b>(1 mile north of ramp)</b> | PC (Econfina River)  | N30.0714<br>W83.8967 | 6/1A | West side of river; low tide may inhibit passage.   |
| <b>328</b>                    | PC (Rock Island)   | N29.9720<br>W83.8302 | 6/2A | Land on north side  |
| <b>329.5</b>                  | Spring Warrior Creek mouth   | N29.9220<br>W83.6867 | 6/2B |   |
| <b>330.5</b>                  | PC (Spring Warrior)  | N29.9188<br>W83.6642 | 6/2B | Campsite on right bank  |
| <b>340</b>                    | W, S, R, L, g (Keaton Beach Park)  | N29.8195<br>W83.5933 | 6/3A | Small convenience stores in town. Lodging at local marina.                                |
| <b>343</b>                    | PC (Sponge Point)  | N29.7793<br>W83.5870 | 6/3B | Campsite beneath live oaks  |
| <b>351</b>                    | PC (Dallus Creek)  | N29.7138<br>W83.4983 | 6/4A | Hike trail through marsh to reach campsite  |
| <b>356.9</b>                  | Steinhatchee River mouth   | N29.6627<br>W83.4337 | 6/4A |   |
| <b>359.4</b>                  | L, R, G, PO<br><br>Boat ramps on both sides of river. Good Times Marina, which rents rooms, considered kayak friendly) | N29.6730<br>W83.3944 | 6/4A | Numerous motels to choose from. Small supermarket is about a mile inland on First Avenue. |
| <b>369</b>                    | Mouth of Sink Creek  | N29.5565<br>W83.4007 | 6/4B |   |
| <b>369.4</b>                  | PC (Sink Creek)  | N29.5563<br>W83.3950 | 6/4B |   |
| <b>381.4</b>                  | W, S, R, g (Horseshoe Beach Park)  | N29.4400<br>W83.2933 | 6/5A | Near restaurant, convenience store and small marina                                       |
| <b>382</b>                    | L (El Sea's Fish Camp in Horseshoe Beach)  | N29.4395<br>W83.2885 | 6/5A | .25 north along main canal thru town on right (floating dock)                             |
| <b>383.4</b>                  | PC (Butler Island)   | N29.4312<br>W83.2697 | 6/5A |   |

|                              |   |                      |      |  |
|------------------------------|---|----------------------|------|--|
| <b>388.4</b>                 | C, W (Shired Island)                                  | N29.3933<br>W83.2020 | 6/5B | County park with non-potable water, showers, restroom  |
| <b>393.5</b>                 | Cat Island rest stop (privately owned, no facilities) | N29.3283<br>W83.1769 | 6/5B |  |
| <b>395</b>                   | East side canal entrance                              | N29.3255<br>W83.1528 | 6/5B | Follow canal along east side of town to campground.  |
| <b>396</b>                   | C, W, S, R, L, PO (Anderson Landing)                  | N29.3304<br>W83.1433 | 6/5B | In town of Suwannee; restaurants nearby. Small motel adjacent.   |
| <b>399.8</b>                 | Mouth of Suwannee River                               | N29.2868<br>W83.1670 | 6/6A |  |
| <b>408.3</b>                 | C, W, S (Shell Mound Campground)                      | N29.2101<br>W83.0632 | 6/6A |  |
| <b>413.3</b>                 | PI (#4 Bridge ramp)                                   | N29.1644<br>W83.0268 | 6/6B |  |
| <b>(2.2 miles off route)</b> | L, G, R, PO, W (Cedar Key)                            | N29.1369<br>W83.0295 | 6/6B | Medium-sized grocery store; post office at 518 2 <sup>nd</sup> St.   |
| <b>416.7</b>                 | Mouth of Hall Creek                                   | N29.1728<br>W82.9760 | 6/7A |  |
| <b>418</b>                   | PC (Hall Creek)                                       | N29.1863<br>W82.9694 | 6/7A |  |
| <b>425.1</b>                 | Mouth of Kelly Creek                                  | N29.1633<br>W82.8843 | 6/7A |  |
| <b>426.3</b>                 | PC (Kelly Creek)                                      | N29.1759<br>W82.8836 | 6/7A |  |
| <b>433.3</b>                 | PC (Waccasassa River)                                 | N29.1754<br>W82.7999 | 6/7B |  |
| <b>451.8</b>                 | PI, B (Withlacoochee River entrance to Yankeetown)    | N29.0017<br>W82.7605 | 6/8A |  |
| <b>(3.5 miles upriver )</b>  | C, W, B, R (Yankeetown)                               | N29.0335<br>W82.6983 | 6/8A | Camping at B's Fish Camp and Marina  |
| <b>453.6</b>                 | PC (Cross Florida Greenway spoil island)              | N28.9764<br>W82.7808 | 6/8B |  |
|                              | <b>Segment 7</b>                                      |                      |      | Note: The Salt River and Chassahowitzka areas can be difficult to navigate. Closely follow gps coordinates and maps. |
| <b>455</b>                   | Jetty Crossover                                       | N28.9435<br>W82.7762 | 6/8B | Closest spot to get around Crystal River nuclear plant   |
| <b>460.5</b>                 | Shell Island/Crystal River entrance                   | N28.9250<br>W82.6924 | 7/1A | Island to right of channel. Private; often used for camping by boaters   |
| <b>464.3</b>                 | PI (Crystal River Preserve State Park)                | N28.9092<br>W82.6371 | 7/1B | Left side of river going upstream  |

## **Circumnavigational Trail Data Book Summary Sheet**

(Amenities listed in trail mile numbers for main route only; to be used in conjunction with data book, trail guides and maps.)

### **Medium/Large Supermarkets**

**Carrabelle**, mile 217.4, 4 blocks west on U.S. 98

**Panacea**, 2.4 miles off route after mile 264.6 (Wakulla Co. Visitor's Center); 4 blocks west on U.S. 98

**Steinhatchee**, mile 359.4; east on Riverside Drive, 5 blocks on 1st Ave to 815 1st Ave. SE (0.8 mile total). Medium-sized store.

**Cedar Key city park**, 2.2 miles off route, near mile 413.3; 4 blocks west on 2nd Street, corner of D Street on right. Medium-sized store.

**Crystal River** U.S. 19 ramp near mile 464.3; 14 blocks south on U.S. 19





## **Circumnavigational Paddling Trail Glossary (Some terms found in the guide)**

**Bank** – The slope of land adjoining a body of water or a large elevated area of the sea floor.

**Bay** – A body of water partly enclosed by land but with a wide outlet to the sea.

**Buoys and channel markers** – Floating objects of defined shape and color, which are anchored at given positions and serve as an aid to navigation. The meanings of the colors and numbers of navigation markers can be found by logging onto [http://www.boat-ed.com/fl/course/p3-7\\_navaidsbuoys.htm](http://www.boat-ed.com/fl/course/p3-7_navaidsbuoys.htm).

**Channel** – The deeper part of a river or harbor; a deep navigable passage sometimes marked by buoys.

**Cove** – A small, sheltered bay in the shoreline of a sea, river, or lake.

**Flag warnings on beaches** – Means to alert swimmers and boaters of potential dangers in the water. Flag warnings and colors for Florida beaches are:

|                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Green:                           | Low hazard, calm conditions, exercise caution.    |
| Yellow:                          | Medium hazard, moderate surf and/or currents.     |
| Red:                             | High hazard, high surf and/or strong currents.    |
| Red over Red (two flags flying): | Water closed to the public.                       |
| Purple:                          | Dangerous marine life such as stinging jellyfish. |

**Global Positioning System** – (GPS) A satellite based radionavigation system providing continuous worldwide coverage. It provides navigation, position, and timing information to air, marine, and land users.

**Knot** – A unit of speed: one nautical mile (1.852 kilometers) per hour. Originally speed was measured by paying out a line from the stern of a moving boat. The line had a knot every 47 feet 3 inches (14.4 m), and the number of knots passed out in 30 seconds gave the speed through the water in nautical miles per hour.

**Lagoon** – A shallow body of water, especially one separated from the sea by sandbars or coral reefs. Example: Indian River Lagoon.

**Midden** – A refuse pile made by early native inhabitants, consisting primarily of shells.

**Nautical Mile** – A distance of 1,852 meters = 2000 yards = 6080 feet. A speed of one nautical mile per hour is called a knot. By contrast, a statute mile, normally used to measure objects on land in the United States, is 1609 meters = 1,760 yards = 5,280 feet. The Circumnavigational guide uses statute miles.

**Nero Day (near zero)** – usually a reference to a relaxing half day of paddling or backpacking.

**Pass** – A way through a barrier island or body of land that is generally navigable by boat.

**Portage** – To carry goods or boat between two navigable points.

**Primitive Campsite** – A campsite with no amenities or with minimal amenities such as a fire ring and composting toilet.

**Put-In** – The starting point of a paddling trip; where the boats are launched into the water.  
Reef - Rock or coral, possibly only revealed at low tide, shallow enough that the vessel will at least touch if not go aground.

**Salt Flat** – Barren areas with highly saline and usually alkaline soils formed by the evaporation of sea water. In Florida, they are more similar to tidal flats and not the dry salt flats of Utah.

**Sandbar** – An offshore shoal of sand built up by the action of waves or currents.

**Shoal** – Shallow water that is a hazard to navigation.

**Take-Out** – The ending point of a paddling trip; where the boats are finally taken from the water. See Put-In.

**Tidal Flat** – Nearly flat coastal area alternately covered and exposed by tides, usually muddy.

**Waypoint** – A location defined by navigational coordinates, especially as part of a planned route.

**Zero Day** – A day in which a paddler or group of paddlers on a journey does not paddle; rest day.