

St. Johns River Paddling Trail Directory

Note: Be sure to open the "See this trail" link for interactive maps of the blueway

Feature and Amenity Key

PC	Primitive Campsite	POI	Point of Interest - Landmark	W	Water
DUA	Designated Use Area	LA	Laundromat	PO	Post Office
C	Campground	I	Internet/Wi-fi	G	Medium/lg supermarket
L	Lodging	S	Shower	g	Convenience/camp stores
R	Restaurant	SS	Storm Shelter	O	Outfitter
B	Bathroom	PI	Put-in	K	Key navigation feature

Map #	River Basin	River Mile (RM)	Location Description	Type of Feature or Amenity	GPS Coord (Degree decimal minutes)	Directions	Notes & Contacts
1 7.5 mi	Upper	294	Blue Cypress Lake Park	B, PI, W, g, C	27° 43.589'N 80° 46.575'W	Center of Lake, west shoreline	Middletonsfishcamp.com 772-778-0150
	Upper	291.25	Entrance to ZigZag Canal	K	27° 45.222'N 80° 44.622'W	North end of Blue Cypress Lake	
	Upper	291	St. Johns Water Management Area - The Stick Marsh	K	27° 47.439'N 80° 43.457'W	East side of canal C40 across dike	
	Upper	286.5	S96 C Water Control Structure (portage)	K	27° 49.279'N 80° 44.571'W	Portage north and follow canal C40 NW to continue down river or portage east into the Stick Marsh towards the St. Johns Marsh PBR	

	Upper	286.5	St. Johns Marsh – Barney Green PBR*	B, PI, W	27° 49.393'N 80° 42.537'W	East side of canal C40 across dike	
2 22 mi *2 day trip	Upper	286.5	St. Johns Marsh – Barney Green PBR*	B, PI, W	27° 49.393'N 80° 42.537'W	East side of canal C40 across dike	
	Upper	279.5	Great Egret Campsite	PC	27° 54.627'N 80° 46.177'W	East shore of canal C40	
	Upper	277	Canal Plug in C40	K	27° 55.451'N 80° 46.209'W	In canal C40	
	Upper	275.2	Three Forks Run at Canal C40	K	27° 58.183'N 80° 46.211'W	West side of canal	
	Upper	271.5	Lake Hell'n Blazes	K	28° 1.174'N 80° 47.699'W	In SJR	
	Upper	270.6	Spade Island Camp	PC	NA	West shore of Lake Hell'n Blazes	
	Upper	267.5	Little Lake Sawgrass	K	28° 3.909'N 80° 47.296'W	In SJR	
	Upper	267	Lake Sawgrass	K	28° 4.434'N 80° 46.770'W	In SJR	
	Upper	264.5	US 192 - Camp Holly Fish camp	g, B, W, R, PI	28° 5.091'N 80° 45.148'W	Crossing of US 192 west shoreline	(321) 723-2179 Campholly.net
3 25.5 mi *2 day trip	Upper	264.5	US 192 - Camp Holly Fish camp	g, B, W, R, PI	28° 5.091'N 80° 45.148'W	Crossing of US 192 west shoreline	(321) 723-2179 Campholly.net
	Upper	264.5	Enter River Lakes Conservation District	DUA	NA	In SJR	
	Upper	262	Lake Washington	K	28° 8.617'N 80° 44.628'W	In SJR	
	Upper	260	Lake Washington County Park	PI, B	28° 8.849'N 80° 44.054'W	Center of Lake Washington, east shoreline	

	Upper	257	Lake Washington Dam	K	28° 9.946'N 80° 46.080'W	Cross using the airboat ramp on the south end of the weir	
	Upper	251.7	Oak Trees Campsite	PC	28° 12.445'N 80° 49.949'W	East shore of SJR	
	Upper	250.5	Persimmon Mound Camp	PC	NA	East shore of SJR	
	Upper	248.8	Lake Winder	K	NA	In SJR	
	Upper	248	Lake Poinsett Camp	PC	NA	West shore of SJR	
	Upper	247.8	Highwater Camp	PC	NA	West shore of SJR	
	Upper	247.2	Palms Camp	PC	NA	West shore of SJR	
	Upper	246.5	Mallow Point Camp	PC	NA	West shore of SJR	
	Upper	245.5	Pontoon Camp	PC	NA	West shore of SJR	
	Upper	244.2	Buzzards Roost Camp	PC	NA	West shore of SJR	
	Upper	242.2	Inclement Weather Shelter	SS	28° 17.685'N 80° 48.744'W	West shoreline of SJR	
	Upper	240.1	Inclement Weather Shelter	SS	28° 18.600'N 80° 48.418'W	East shoreline of SJR	
	Upper	241	Lake Poinsett	K	28° 20.128'N 80° 49.621'W	In SJR	
	Upper	239	Lake Poinsett Fish Camp	PI, g, W, B	28° 21.049'N 80° 48.918'W	East side of Lake Poinsett up short canal	
4 4 mi	Upper	239	Lake Poinsett Fish Camp	PI, g, W, B	28° 21.049'N 80° 48.918'W	East side of Lake Poinsett up short canal	
	Upper	237	Leave River Lakes Conservation Area	POI	NA		
	Upper	236.5	Enter Tosohatchee Wildlife Mgt Area (WMA)	POI	NA	West shoreline of SJR	
	Upper	235	Lone Cabbage Fish Camp	R, B, PI	28° 22.138'N 80° 52.326'W	East shore of SJR	Twisterairboatrides.com ph 321-632-4199

	Upper	235	SR 520 Bridge	K	28° 22.171'N 80° 52.360'W	Across SJR	
	Upper	235	Enter Canaveral Marshes Conservation Area	POI	NA	East shoreline of SJR	
	Upper	234.9	Leroy Wright Recreation Area PBR	PI	28° 22.303'N 80° 52.265'W	.25 miles north of SR 520 .25 miles east off main channel	
5 15.3 miles	Upper	234.9	Leroy Wright Recreation Area PBR	PI	28° 22.303'N 80° 52.265'W	.25 miles north of SR 520 .25 miles east off main channel	
	Upper	226.3	Possum Bluff	PC	28° 26.732'N 80° 53.389'W	East shore of SJR	
	Upper	226.2	SR 528 Crossing (Beachline)	K	28° 27.169'N 80° 53.846'W	No river access	
	Upper	220.5	Isle of Palms	K	28° 29.002'N 80° 52.479'W	East shoreline of SJR	
	Upper	219.6	Powerline crossing/Florida Trail Road	PI, K	28° 29.519'N 80° 52.974'W	Florida Trail Road is within the Toso- hatchee WMA on the west shoreline of the SJR	
	Upper	219.6	Powerline crossing/Florida Trail Road	PI, K	28° 29.519'N 80° 52.974'W	Florida Trail Road is within the Toso- hatchee WMA on the west shoreline of the SJR	
6 6.5 mi	Upper	219.6	Powerline crossing/Florida Trail Road	PI, K	28° 29.519'N 80° 52.974'W	Florida Trail Road is within the Toso- hatchee WMA on the west shoreline of the SJR	
	Upper	213.5	Highway 50 and SJR PBR	PI	28° 32.585'N 80° 56.142'W	West shore of SJR, south side of SR 50	Airboat Rides at Midway, Christmas 407-568-6790
	Upper	213.5	SR 50 Bridge	K	28° 32.585'N	Across SJR	

					80° 56.142'W		
	Upper	213.5	Leave Canaveral Marshes Conservation Area	DUA	NA		
	Upper	213.5	Leave Tosohatchee WMA	DUA	NA		
	Upper	213.5	Enter the Seminole Ranch Conservation Area	DUA	NA		
	Upper	213.25	Highway 50 and SJR PBR	PI	28° 32.627'N 80° 56.543'W	West shore of SJR, north side of SR 50	
7 8 mi	Upper	213.25	Highway 50 and SJR PBR	PI	28° 32.627'N 80° 56.543'W	West shore of SJR, north side of SR 50	
	Upper	205.5	Hatbill Park	PI	28° 36.343'N 80° 57.728'W	East shore of SJR	
8 13 mi	Upper	205.5	Hatbill Park	PI	28° 36.343'N 80° 57.728'W	East shore of SJR	
	Upper	204	Heifer Mound	K	28° 37.895'N 81° 0.344'W	West shore of SJR	
	Upper	193.8	Leave the Seminole Ranch Conservation Area	DUA	NA		
	Upper	193.8	Confluence of SJR and Econlockhatchee River	K	28° 42.276'N 81° 1.666'W	West side of SJR in Puzzle Lake area	
	Upper	192.7	SR 46 Bridge	K	NA	Across SJR	
	Middle	192.6	C.S. Lee Park SR 46 at SJR	B, PI, W	28° 42.869'N 81° 2.151'W	West shore of SJR north of SR46 Bridge	
9 15.5 miles	Middle	192.6	C.S. Lee Park SR 46 at SJR	B, PI, W	28° 42.869'N 81° 2.151'W	West shore of SJR north of SR46 Bridge	
	Middle	191	Lake Harney	K	28° 44.952'N 81° 3.468'W	In SJR	
	Middle	179.6	Lemon Bluff Public Boat Ramp	PI	28° 48.494'N 81° 7.884'W	East shoreline of SJR 0.1 miles north of channel	

						up small trib.	
	Middle	176.5	Lemon Bluff Camp Ground	CG	28° 48.413'N 81° 7.918'W	949 Lemon Bluff Rd, Osteen, FL 32764	
	Middle	177.1	Mullet Lake Park	B, PI, W,	28° 47.405'N 81° 8.323'W	West shore of SJR	
10 10 mi	Middle	177.1	Mullet Lake Park	B, PI, W,	28° 47.405'N 81° 8.323'W	West shore of SJR	
	Middle	176	Enter the Lake Monroe Conservation Area	DUA	NA		
	Middle	173.8	Cameron Wright Public Boat Ramp	PI	28° 47.170'N 81° 10.842'W	West shore of SJR at bridge crossing	
	Middle	172.8	Lake Monroe Conservation Area Campsite	PC	28° 48.015'N 81° 11.245'W	In Brickyard Slough 0.3 miles north from SJR channel on east shore of the SJR.	
	Middle	172.5	Inclement Weather Shelter	SS	28° 48.008'N 81° 11.482'W	In Brickyard Slough .1 mile north of SJR channel on east shore of the SRJ	
	Middle	169	Leave Lake Monroe Conservation Area	DUA	NA		
	Middle	167	Monroe Harbour Marina PBR	PI, B, L, W, g, R	28° 48.937'N 81° 15.913'W	South shore of Lake Monroe - SJR west bank.	
11 16 mi	Middle	167	Monroe Harbour Marina PBR	PI, B, L, W, g, R	28° 48.937'N 81° 15.913'W	South shore of Lake Monroe - SJR west bank.	
	Middle	163	Lake Monroe Park at US 17 Sanford	B, PI, W	28° 50.408'N 81° 19.295'W	North end of Lake Monroe at US I4	

						Bridge crossing. SJR east bank.	
	Middle	157.3	Wekiva River	K	28° 52.667'N 81° 22.021'W	West side of SJR	
	Middle	?	Highbanks Marina	PI, R, B, C(?)	?	East side of SJR	
	Middle	151	Blue Spring Run	C, R, B, PI	28° 56.579'N 81° 20.526'W	East side of SJR	
	Springs	150.8	Blue Springs State Park (boat ramp N of run)	POI, PI, C	28° 56.798'N 81° 20.640'W	East shore of SJR	
12 7 mi	Springs	150.8	Blue Springs State Park (boat ramp N of run)	POI, PI, C	28° 56.798'N 81° 20.640'W	East shore of SJR	
	Springs	147.8	Hontoon Island State Park	POI, K	28° 58.486'N 81° 21.447'W	West shore of SJR	
	Springs	144.1	Ed Stone Park @ SR 44	B, PI, W	29° 0.610'N 81° 22.937'W	East shore of SJR north of SR44	
13 14 mi	Springs	144.1	Ed Stone Park @ SR 44	B, PI, W	29° 0.610'N 81° 22.937'W	East shore of SJR north of SR44	
	Springs	133.8	Alexander Springs Run	POI, K	29° 5.593'N 81° 28.749'W	West side of SJR	
	Springs	132	Lake Dexter	K	29° 6.264'N 81° 29.534'W	In SJR	
	Springs	132.6	Creek to Lake Woodruff and Ponce DeLeon Spring	POI	29° 8.058'N 81° 21.781'W	West side of Lake Dexter	
	Springs	130	Lake George State Forest Bluffton Rec. Area Canoe Launch	PI, PC, B	29° 7.499'N 81° 30.200'W	North end of Lake Dexter at SJR on east side of small island 100 yards east of river channel	

15	Springs	130	Lake George State Forest Bluffton Rec. Area Canoe Launch	PI, PC, B	29° 7.499'N 81° 30.200'W	North end of Lake Dexter at SJR on east side of small island 100 yards east of river channel	
	Springs	127.2	SR 40 - Astor Boat ramp	B,PI	29° 10.001'N 81° 31.423'W	West shore of SJR	Blackwater Inn 352-759-2802 (west side). Astor Bridge marina, lodging and Castaways restaurant 866-237-6887 (east side).
	Springs	125.5	Parramore's Campground and Fish Camp	PI, CG, W, B	29° 11.024'N 81° 31.919'W	East side of SJR east of Morrison Island 0.5 miles east of river channel	www.Parramores.com Ph 386-749-2721
	Springs	122.2	Lake George	K	29° 16.674'N 81° 35.509'W	In SJR	
	Springs	121.8	Juniper Springs Run mouth		29° 12.230'N 81° 36.741'W	West shoreline of Lake George	
	Springs	118.5	Silver Glen Springs	B, PI, W	29° 14.735'N 81° 38.593'W	West shoreline of Lake George	
15 9.5 miles	Springs	118.5	Silver Glen Springs	B, PI, W	29° 14.735'N 81° 38.593'W	West shoreline of Lake George	
	Springs	118.2	Lake George Forrest - Nine Mile Point	PC	29° 16.336'N 81° 32.618'W	East shoreline of Lake George at Nine Mile Point	SJRWMD Bureau of Land Management at (386) 329-4404
	Springs	118	Lake George Forrest - Pine Island Resort	PI	29° 18.689'N 81° 32.755'W	East shoreline of Lake George north side of Willow Cove and Nine Mile Point.	

						1600 Lake George Rd, Seville, FL 32190	
	Springs	115	Lake George Conservation Area	PC, PI	29° 20.235'N 81° 33.923'W		SJRWMD Bureau of Land Management at (386) 329-4404
	Springs	112.7	Upstream extent of Putnam County Bartram Paddling Trail	POI	29° 19.466'N 81° 40.828'W	Extends thru Putnam Co fr RM 61 – RM 112.7	
	Springs	112.7	Salt Springs Run	K	29° 19.470'N 81° 40.854'W	West shoreline of Lake George in Salt Cove	
	Springs	112.7	Salt Springs Park	CG, g, B, PI, W	29° 21.131'N 81° 43.911'W	Head of Salt Spring Run at Spring 6 miles west of Lake George	
	Springs	112	Rocky Point	POI	29° 20.227'N 81° 39.459'W	North end of Lake George on the west shore of the west channel of the SJR across from the southwest tip of Drayton Island	
	Springs	109	Drayton Island Ferry PBR	PI	29° 23.144'N 81° 38.280'W	East shoreline of the SJR across from the northeast tip of Drayton Island	
16 9 mi	Springs	109	Drayton Island Ferry PBR	PI	29° 23.144'N 81° 38.280'W	East shoreline of the SJR across from the northeast tip of	

						Drayton Island	
	Springs	105.5	Beecher Springs Run	POI	29° 25.811'N 81° 38.945'W	East shoreline of SJR	
	Springs	105.5	Mount Royal	POI	29° 25.974'N 81° 39.264'W	East bank of the SJR - requires short hike	
	Springs	104.7	Ft. Gates Ferry & Gateway Fish Camp	PI, R, g, R	29° 25.939'N 81° 39.896'W	East shore of SJR	
	Springs	103.8	Little Lake George	K	29° 27.102'N 81° 40.867'W	In SJR	
	Springs	102	Mud Spring Run	POI	29° 27.465'N 81° 39.909'W	Mud Spring Run on east shore of SJR in Little Lake George. Spring is 0.4 miles from the lake - stay in the north channel of the run	
	Springs	101.2	Confluence of Ocklawaha River and the SJR	K	29° 28.207'N 81° 41.450'W	East side of SJR. Two channels.	
	Springs	100.5	Caravelle Ranch Campsite Landing	K	29° 28.454'N 81° 40.930'W	On west shore of SJR. Landing is difficult to see and is neither marked nor improved. Look for an opening in the trees and a solid shoreline	
	Springs	100.5	Caravelle Ranch Campsite	PC	29° 28.481'N 81° 40.972'W	West shore of SJR. Campsite is on a small hill in a clearing 100 yards	FWC: (352) 732-1225

						west, northwest of the landing	
	Lower	100.25	Welaka City PBR	B, PI, W,	29° 28.757'N 81° 40.494'W	East shore of SJR	
17 12 mi	Lower	100.25	Welaka City PBR	B, PI, W,	29° 28.757'N 81° 40.494'W	East shore of SJR	
	Lower	98.8	Welaka Springs	POI	29° 29.665'N 81° 40.408'W	East side of SJR. Spring run is east of Turkey Isl. Springhead is sub- merged at end of 0.2 mile run	
	Lower	97.5	Nashua Spring Run	POI	29° 30.560'N 81° 40.634'W	East side of SJR	
	Lower	97.3	Satsuma Spring Run	POI	29° 30.716'N 81° 40.598'W	East side of SJR	
	Lower	97	Shell Harbor PBR	PI	29° 31.206'N 81° 40.646'W	East side of SJR	
	Lower	93.2	Cross Florida Barge Canal	K, POI	29° 33.551'N 81° 42.152'W	On west shore of SJR	
	Lower	91.4	Hermits Cove Marina	PI, B, W, R	29° 34.533'N 81° 40.742'W	East shore of SJR east of Seven Sisters Islands	
18 9 mi	Lower	90	Buffalo Bluff Railroad Bridge	K	29° 35.709'N 81° 40.918'W	Across SJR	
	Lower	88.3	Murphy Island Campground/Brow ns Landing PBR	PC, B, PI	29° 35.751'N 81° 39.293'W	On east shore of SJR. Improved landing and dock	SJRWMD, (386) 329- 4500

	Lower	88.3	Murphy Island Campground/Browns Landing PBR	PC, B, PI	29° 35.751'N 81° 39.293'W	On east shore of SJR. Improved landing and dock	SJRWMD, (386) 329- 4500
	Lower	87.3	Browns Landing PBR	PI	29° 35.845'N 81° 38.373'W	West shore SJR	
	Lower	86.7	Dunns Creek	K	29° 35.305'N 81° 37.836'W	East shore of SJR	
	Lower	86.7	Dunns Creek PBR	PI	29° 34.646'N 81° 37.614'W	South shore of Dunns Creek at US 17 bridge. Ramp is 0.8 miles from SJR	
	Lower	81.7	East Palatka PBR	PI	29° 38.397'N 81° 35.650'W	East shore of SJR in East Palatka	
	Lower	81.2	Corky Bells Restaurant	R, B, W	29° 38.682'N 81° 36.190'W	East shore of SJR - boat dock	Corkybellsseafood. com ph 386-325- 1094
	Lower	79.6	Palatka City Dock	PI, B, W, R	29° 38.627'N 81° 37.855'W	West shore of SJR south of US 17 bridge	
	Lower	79.5	Palatka Riverfront Park	B, PI, W	29° 38.779'N 81° 37.679'W	West shore of SJR in Palatka - South of US 17 bridge	
19 13 mi	Lower	79.5	Palatka Riverfront Park	B, PI, W	29° 38.779'N 81° 37.679'W	West shore of SJR in Palatka – South of US 17 bridge	
	Lower	79.4	Palatka Veterans Memorial Bridge	K	29° 38.774'N 81° 37.449'W	East shore of SJR – boat dock	
	Lower	79.3	Quality Inn and Suites Riverfront & Beef O’Brady’s restaurant	R, B, W, L	29° 38.890'N 81° 37.632'W	West shore of SJR north of US 17 Bridge.	201 N. 1 st St, Palatka Ph 386-328-3481

	Lower	76.3	Crystal Cove Marina	L, PI, R, B, W	29° 40.659'N 81° 39.113'W	West shore of SJR	cc-resort.com ph 386-325-1055
	Lower	75.7	Elgin Gove PBR	PI	29° 41.423'N 81° 37.831'W	East shore of SJR at Forrester Point	
	Lower	75.7	Rice Creek	K	29° 41.884'N 81° 39.153'W	West shore of SJR across from Forrester Point	
	Lower	70.8	Deep Creek	K	29° 45.553'N 81° 31.487'W	East shore of SJR 0.1 mile up small creek. Ramp is on south side of creek	
	Lower	66.6	Palmetto Bluff PBR	PI	29° 45.948'N 81° 33.802'W	West side of SJR	
20 10.5 miles	Lower	66.6	Palmetto Bluff PBR	PI	29° 45.948'N 81° 33.802'W	West side of SJR	
	Lower	62.2	Riverdale Park and PBR	PI	29° 49.419'N 81° 33.203'W	East shore at Riverdale	
	Lower	61	Downstream extent of Putnam County Bartram Paddling Trail	POI	29° 50.334'N 81° 34.842'W	Extends thru Putnam Co fr RM 61 – RM 112.7	
	Lower	56.2	Williams Park (Putnam County side)	PI, B	29° 54.335'N 81° 37.092'W	West shore of SJR north of Clarks Creek	
21 7 mi	Lower	56.2	Williams Park (Putnam County side)	PI, B	29° 54.335'N 81° 37.092'W	West shore of SJR north of Clarks Creek	
	Lower	52	Bayard Conservation Area Davis Landing Campsite	PC, PI,	29° 57.497'N 81° 36.587'W	West shoreline of SJR at Bayard Point	SJRWMD, (386) 329-4500

	Lower	52	Palmo Cove PBR	PI	29° 58.032'N 81° 34.0476'W	East side of SJR south shore of Palmo Cove	
	Lower	51.8	Six Mile Creek	K	29° 58.109'N 81° 33.527'W	East side of SJR at south end of Palmo Cove	
	Lower	51.8	Six Mile Creek Marina and Outback Crab Shack Restaurant	PI, B, R, W	29° 57.593'N 81° 32.634'W	SR 13 crossing of Six Mile Creek	Outbackcrabshack.co m Ph# 904-522-0500
	Lower	51.6	Trout Creek	K	29° 58.679'N 81° 34.097'W	East side of SJR north shore of Palmo Cove	
	Lower	51.6	Trout Creek Park PBR	PI, B	29° 59.076'N 81° 33.807'W	East side of SJR in Trout Creek at SR 13 bridge.	
	Lower	50	Bayard Conservation Area Hand Launch	PI	29° 58.681'N 81° 37.751'W	South side of Shands Bridge	SJRWMD, (386) 329- 4500
	Lower	50	Shands Bridge	K	29° 58.969'N 81° 37.297'W	Across SJR	
	Lower	49.4	Old Shands Bridge PBR	PI, B	29° 58.814'N 81° 38.100'W	West shore of SJR at Shands Pier (Clay County)	
22 11 mi							
	Lower	49.4	Old Shands Bridge Hand Launch	PI	30° 0.389'N 81° 36.874'W	East shore of SJR at Shands Pier (St. Johns County)	
	Lower	47.8	Green Cove Springs Spring Park	POI	29° 59.648'N 81° 40.576'W	West shore of SJR at dock in Green Cove Springs	
	Lower	46.8	Governors Creek – Green Cove Springs	PI, R, G, g	30° 0.420'N 81° 41.475'W	West shore of SJR at Governors	

						Creek and US 17	
	Lower	44.5	Knights Marina	PI, g, B, W	30° 2.342'N 81° 42.472'W	West shore of SJR at Black Creek and US 17 Bridge	
	Lower	44.4	Black Creek	K	30° 2.465'N 81° 42.500'W	West shore of SJR	
	Lower	41.8	Alpine Groves Park	B, PI, W	30° 4.851'N 81° 39.313'W	East shore of SJR	
	Lower	38.6	Julington Creek	K	30° 7.511'N 81° 38.332'W	East side of SJR	
	Lower	38.4	Julington Creek Park PBR	B, PI, W	30° 8.022'N 81° 38.056'W	East side of SJR on north shore of Julington Creek 0.2 miles west of SR 13 bridge	
23 6.5 miles	Lower	38.4	Julington Creek Park PBR	B, PI, W	30° 8.022'N 81° 38.056'W	East side of SJR on north shore of Julington Creek 0.2 miles west of SR 13 bridge	
	Lower	36.9	Doctors Lake	K	30° 8.831'N 81° 41.967'W	West side of SJR	
	Lower	35	County Dock Hand Launch - Mandarin	PI	30° 10.059'N 81° 38.858'W	East shore of SJR	
	Lower	33.8	Buckman Bridge I-295	K	30° 11.393'N 81° 40.037'W	Across SJR	
24 8 mi	Lower	31.8	Goodbys Creek PBR	PI, B	30° 12.93'N 81° 37.029'W	East side of SJR on south	
	Lower	31.8	Goodbys Creek PBR	PI, B	30° 12.93'N 81° 37.029'W	East side of SJR on south shore of Goodbys Creek east of SR 13 bridge.	

	Lower	31	NAS Jacksonville Runway	POI	30° 13.880'N 81° 39.546'W	West shore of SJR	
	Lower	26.5	Ortega River	K	30° 17.030'N 81° 42.200'W	West side of SJR	
	Lower	24.6	I-95 Crossing of SJR Fuller Warren Bridge	K	30° 18.887'N 81° 40.161'W	Across SJR	
	Lower	24	Acosta Bridge	K	30° 19.368'N 81° 39.894'W	Across SJR	
	Lower	23.8	St. Johns Marina	B, PI, W, R	30° 19.156'N 81° 39.690'W	East shore of SJR between the Acosta and Main Street bridges	River City Brewing Company restaurant (next to St. Johns Marina) Rivercitybrew.com Ph 904-398-2299
25 12.5+ miles	Lower	23.8	St. Johns Marina	B, PI, W, R	30° 19.156'N 81° 39.690'W	East shore of SJR between the Acosta and Main Street bridges	River City Brewing Company restaurant (next to St. Johns Marina) Rivercitybrew.com Ph 904-398-2299
	Lower	23.8	Jacksonville Landing	POI, R, W, g, B	30° 19.461'N 81° 39.598'W	West shore of SJR	
	Lower	23.7	Jacksonville Friendship Park	POI	30° 19.223'N 81° 39.592'W	East shore of SJR	
	Lower	23.6	Main Street Bridge	K	30° 19.357'N 81° 39.512'W	Across SJR	
	Lower	23.5	Crowne Plaza Jacksonville Riverfront	R, L	30° 19.218'N 81° 39.468'W	East shore of SJR - boat dock	
	Lower	22.4	Jacksonville Metropolitan Park	POI	30° 19.142'N 81° 38.317'W	West shore of SJR	
	Lower	?	Hart Bridge - US1	K	30° 18.932'N 81° 37.655'W	Across SJR	
	Lower	21.2	Arlington River	K	30° 19.177'N	East shore of SJR	

					81° 36.870'W		
	Lower	21	Exchange Club Park	K, POI	30° 19.546'N 81° 36.977'W	Across SJR	
	Lower	20.8	Matthews Bridge	K	30° 19.626'N 81° 37.194'W	Across SJR	
	Lower	20	Arlington Road PBR	PI	30° 20.028'N 81° 36.715'W	East shore of SJR	
	Lower	?	Jacksonville University	K	?	East shore of SJR	
	Lower	17.8	Arlington Lions Club Park and PBR	PI, B	30° 22.677'N 81° 37.254'W	East shore of SJR	
	Lower	16.3	Trout River	K	30° 23.431'N 81° 37.905'W	West shore of SJR	
	Lower	16.2	Jacksonville Zoo	POI	30° 23.906'N 81° 38.712'W	Paddle west 1 mile up the Trout River. Dock is on the north shoreline 0.2miles east of the bridge crossing the Trout River	Jacksonvillezoo.org Ph 904-757-4463
	Lower	16	Mill Cove West entrance	K	30° 23.920'N 81° 36.239'W	East side of SJR. Mill Cove is separated from the SJR by several spoil islands	
	Lower	13.7	Broward River	K	30° 24.716'N 81° 35.845'W	West shore of SJR	
	Lower	13	Dunn Creek	K	30° 24.661'N 81° 35.017'W	West shore of SJR	

	Lower	14.1	Bartram Island	K	30° 23.372'N 81° 34.404'W	East side of SJR between the main channel and Mill Cove	
	Lower	11.5	Lonnie Wurn boat ramp - Mill Cove	B, PI, W	30° 22.542'N 81° 35.115'W	Located on south side of Mill Cove 3.6 miles fr SJR Channel thru east navigation cut & 2.4 miles fr SJR Channel thru west entrance to cove	Refer to map
26 11.5+ miles	Lower	11.5	Lonnie Wurn boat ramp - Mill Cove	B, PI, W	30° 22.542'N 81° 35.115'W	Located on south side of Mill Cove 3.6 miles fr SJR Channel thru east navigation cut & 2.4 miles fr SJR Channel thru west entrance to cove	
	Lower	10.7	Napoleon Bonaparte Broward Bridge (aka Dames Point Bridge)	K	30° 23.070'N 81° 33.420'W	Across SJR	
	Lower	10.6	Old SJR Channel	K	30° 23.220'N 81° 33.252'W	Old channel of SJR is on west shore of SJR; flows around Blount Isl	
	Lower	9.6	Mill Cove Navigation Cut East Entrance	K	30° 22.966'N 81° 32.312'W	East shore of SJR	
	Lower	7.5	Old SJR Channel	K	30° 23.609'N 81° 30.400'W	Old channel of SJR is on west shore of SJR , flows around Blount Isl	
	Lower	6.8	Fort Caroline National Monument	POI	30° 23.222'N 81° 29.937'W	East shore of SJR	

	Lower		Clapboard Creek Fish Camp Marine	PI, B, O, W	30 24' 22" 81 30' 33	West shore @ Clapboard Creek	Clapboardcreek.com Ph 904-751-0094
	Lower	4.65	Joe Carlucci Sisters Creek Park	PI, B	30° 23.515'N 81° 27.807'W	West shore of SJR and Sisters Creek	
	Lower	4.66	Sisters Creek	K	30° 23.316'N 81° 27.775'W	East shore of SJR	
	Lower	4.66	Sisters Creek PBR	PI, B	30° 23.733'N 81° 27.550'W	Just north of bridge, west side of Sisters Creek 0.5 miles fr SJR main channel	
	Lower	4.5	Pablo Creek	K	30° 22.671'N 81° 27.396'W	West shore of SJR	
	Lower	2.1	Fort George Island - Mayport Ferry Crossing A1A	K	30° 23.734'N 81° 25.956'W	Across SJR	
	Lower	2	Mayport PBR	PI, B, g, W	30° 23.813'N 81° 25.701'W	West shore of SJR	
	Lower	0.2	Mayport Naval Station Turning Basin	POI	30° 23.764'N 81° 24.125'W	East shore of SJR	
	Lower	0	Huguenot Park	B, PI, W, CG	30° 24.357'N 81° 24.499'W	West shore of SJR	

*PBR = Public Boat Ramp

St. Johns River Blueway

by Dean Campbell

River Overview

Florida's St. Johns River has always been a key feature in the state especially after its first published description by John Bartram in 1765. It is clear from his writings that the river then served as a demarcation between the land of the European newcomers and that of the Native Americans who still inhabited its western or "Indian" shore. His journey up the St. Johns with his son William (who would repeat it as his more-famous solo journey some 9 years later) was spent cataloging the rich natural resources lining its banks. The Bartrams, like most of the state's visitors for the next 150 years, used the river as the primary transportation corridor into the interior and what would become Florida's first tourist attraction – its springs.

At just over 300 miles from its headwaters in the Upper Basin marsh to its mouth northeast of Jacksonville, the St. Johns is Florida's longest river entirely within its borders. It is an amazing river that literally defies description; for depending on where one encounters this serpentine waterway, it may be accurately characterized as an elongated estuary, a vast inland sea, an intimate blackwater creek, a braided puzzle-like marsh or an engineered drainage canal. Of all of its myriad characteristics, it is this diversity that makes the St. Johns a paddling destination that, in a more reasonable world, would certainly eclipse Orlando's Walt Disney World as a Florida attraction.

There are several other characteristics that every kayaker should know before paddling this unique river. First, it flows south-to-north so paddling up-stream means heading south; a simple concept, but confusing to any river discussion, especially those between locals and lost paddlers. Secondly, though it flows north, it takes its own sweet time. Its lazy flow is not just because everything Southern is relaxed, but rather because it falls only 26 feet during its 300-mile trip to the Atlantic. Consequently, in most sections, flow is not an important consideration and paddling upstream requires no more energy than the reverse. Finally, Florida is flat and tropical – weather is the major factor for any paddling trip, and wind, heat, thunderstorms and insects should all be taken into consideration, especially when planning extended trips.

Where one begins exploring this majestic river depends on one's preferences because it truly does offer a smorgasbord of paddling experiences. In order to experience and gain a full appreciation of the St. Johns River, paddlers should plan, at a minimum, at least one outing in each of the River's four distinct basins. The River's basins are, for the most part, named for their location relative to the river's flow. This would be intuitively helpful were it not for the River's northerly flow direction. This unfortunate direction in flow means that Upper St. Johns River Basin (which forms its headwaters) is the southernmost while the Lower St. Johns River Basin (nearest the mouth) is northernmost. Each of these basins cover 100 miles of riverbed and the 100 mile reach between is divided between the remaining two, the Middle St. Johns River Basin and the Springs Basin.

The Upper St. Johns River Basin

The St. Johns River originates in the Upper Basin Marsh in Indian River County. Within the marsh in Indian River County, is Blue Cypress Lake. Blue Cypress is a convenient embarkation point for paddlers

as it offers the first open water within the St. Johns and relatively easy access to the Upper Basin marsh, canals and reservoirs from which the river's flow originates. The marsh drains northward via sheet flow and through numerous man-made channels constructed for flood control purposes and maintained by the St. Johns River Water Management District. These channels provide easy conveyance through the marsh for small paddle craft; however, short portages across levees are required in a number of locations. Throughout the marsh are a number of water management reservoirs, and these provide opportunities for paddlers to leave the confines of the drainage canals should they prefer to paddle in open water. It should be noted that the St. Johns River is inhabited by a large and healthy alligator population. The population density is greatest in the Upper Basin and gradually diminishes downstream with the only exception being at Lake George where populations increase again before tapering off. Alligators do not, under normal circumstances, present a problem to paddlers though they can be intimidating until one becomes accustomed to their size and profusion. The same can be said of mosquitos which present a much greater challenge and should be taken (and planned for) more if not equally seriously by anyone intending to paddle the River, especially during the warmer months.

The first defined natural channel of the St. Johns begins in Brevard County at Three Forks Run, which intersects the major north-south drainage canal approximately 15.5 miles north of Blue Cypress Lake. From here, the river follows a meandering course roughly parallel to Florida's east coast. For its first 100 miles, the River flows through the vast marshlands of the Upper Basin. River crossings, and thus access points, are limited this reach and unless paddlers are capable of covering long distances during the course of a day, overnight stops are required. Fortunately, there are a number of campsites established and maintained by the St. Johns River Water Management District conveniently spaced throughout the Upper Basin. Boat traffic is limited in the Upper Basin and is predominantly comprised of airboats. While these craft can be heard from a long distance, their ability to leave the channel and cross dry or damp ground means that they can approach from an unexpected direction. To increase visibility and safety, paddlers should equip their vessels with brightly colored flags that extend at least 6 feet above the water surface.

The river flows through a number of lakes along its entire course, and the Upper Basin reach is no exception. Once the river forms a channel, the lakes are connected by this well-defined riverbed. The river channel is typically shallow and meandering, and the banks are heavily vegetated with marsh grasses, often too high to see over from the seat of a paddle craft. North of Lake Poinsett, where the river forms the boundary between Brevard County to the east and Orange County to the west, the river divides into a braided channel that changes with stage and flow, and while it can be navigationally challenging, this portion of the River provides paddlers with some of the most interesting and rewarding paddling available on the St. Johns. The floodplain in this area is used for grazing cattle and horses, and it is not unusual to paddle through herds of both standing knee deep in the river channel or grazing the low shoreline vegetation. The pasture-like floodplain vegetation and low elevation provide the paddler with open uninterrupted vistas with outstanding viewing of wildlife and seasonal wildflowers. The low floodplain soil provides solid footing and paddlers can often save time and distance, or remedy a wrong turn by portaging a short distance across the open marsh from one channel to another before continuing to navigate the winding river.



Approaching storm south of Puzzle Lake in the Upper Basin

The Middle St. Johns River Basin

The St. Johns enters its Middle Basin at its crossing of State Road 46 where the River forms the boundary between Seminole and Volusia counties and extends from Lake Harney in the south, to north of Lake Monroe at the boundary of Seminole and Lake counties. Here, the River forms a more recognizable and well-defined channel that continues to connect numerous flow-through lakes that provide the paddler with both river channel and open water paddling experiences. Navigation aids begin just north of Lake Harney and continue to the mouth of the River at Mayport. The River passes near and through some large urban areas in this basin; however, its banks remain predominantly natural and undeveloped. River access throughout the Middle Basin is good, and there are numerous launch and take-out locations fairly evenly distributed along the course of the River. Along with increased access and urbanization, River use also increases in this reach of the river, and because of the narrow winding channel, boat traffic and resulting wakes can be challenging for paddlers. This potential incompatibility can be minimized by avoiding paddling during holidays and weekends and by paddling during the off season when temperatures are low.

The Springs Basin

The Springs Basin of the St. Johns extends from its confluence of the Wekiva River north of Lake Monroe to its confluence with the Ocklawaha River at Welaka (River Mile 100). This reach is so named because of the large concentration of springs that discharge into the river in this reach. The character of the River in this reach is similar to that of the Middle Basin with its narrow winding channel intermittently widening into large flow-through lakes. The last and largest of the River's flow-through lakes is Lake George. The rewards and challenges of navigating Lake George in a paddle craft cannot be overstated. Although the lake averages only 11 feet in depth, it is nearly 12 miles long and 7 miles wide. Consequently the north shore cannot be seen from the south shore, and strong winds from any direction can create waves more than half as tall as the lake is deep. Thunderstorms can develop unexpectedly, especially during the summer months, and shelter is extremely limited over the entire circumference of the lake. For safety purposes, paddlers should hug either shoreline of the lake during

its crossing and thankfully, doing so will provide unexpected rewards. The majority of the shoreline of the lake remains undeveloped, and fish, wildlife and waterfowl abound in and around the lake. Along much of the shoreline, thick swamp vegetation extends into the lake and no visible shoreline exists. The lake however has a fairly uniform shallow littoral shelf which, though vegetated with eel grass, is comprised of well packed sand, and while paddlers may not be able to go on shore to stretch their legs, they can easily exit their craft and stand in or walk along the shallows. Care should be taken however as Lake George is home to a large population of stingrays which, if stepped on, can deliver a painful puncture from a barb located on the back at the base of the tail. Walk with a shuffle, and you're OK.

Three springs discharge into Lake George along its western shore. From upstream to down, these are Juniper Springs, Silver Glen Springs, and Salt Springs. Paddlers can leave the River and follow these runs to their sources. The distance and difficulty in doing so varies considerably. The Silver Glen Springs run is the easiest to navigate, and the spring is only a few minutes' paddle from the lake. Thanks to its easy access, the spring can be crowded with boats and people during the summer weekends. However, the run is heavily policed, and the no wake zone is rigidly enforced making it less of a safety risk to paddlers than the density of boat traffic might suggest. The second most accessible, Salt Springs, is at the north end of Lake George. Its run is across a shallow bar that precluded large boat traffic and is approximately 6 miles long. It is a favorite paddle destination for local paddlers and is well worth exploring. The least accessible is Juniper Springs. Its run enters Lake George from the west shoreline at the south end of the lake. It is long and meandering and in many locations obstructed with snags and downfalls. Most paddlers put in at the springhead and paddle downstream for a short distance before returning to the spring. From the lake, the run is accessible and paddlers can navigate upstream though the effort increases the farther upstream one follows the run.

North of Lake George the River returns to a channel, though not so narrow as that found upstream. As along the western shoreline of Lake George, there are numerous springs which discharge into the river and all are easily accessed but are either submerged within the river or enter from the east shoreline. These springs, Croaker Hole, Mud, Beecher, Welaka, Nashua and Satsuma are smaller and less impressive than the aforementioned, however they are well worth visiting.

The Lower St. Johns River Basin

The Lower St. Johns River Basin extends 100 miles from Welaka to the River's mouth at Mayport, northeast of Jacksonville. The fall in elevation over this final 100 miles is only 6 inches and as a consequence the River is tidally influenced over the entire distance. Within this reach, the River bed slowly begins to widen until it reaches Palatka, where it expands to near lake-like dimensions. Over the next 50 miles, the river reaches widths that vary between 1.5 and 3 miles. Consequently, paddling in this reach is much like paddling a large lake. Flow changes with tides, but due to the low relief and breadth of the river, the current is only barely detectable under normal flow conditions. Wind however, can be a major factor and can create waves in excess of 3 feet, especially when out of the north. Under windy conditions, paddlers can still safely paddle in this reach by hugging the windward shoreline.

The paddling is best along the shorelines within the Lower Basin. The river in this reach typically has a broad littoral shelf which extends several hundred yards from the shoreline and teems with aquatic fauna. Although the River water is darkly stained by dissolved organic matter, it is typically clear, and by staying close to shore in 2 to 3 feet of water, paddlers can observe a diverse population of fish, wading birds, shellfish, turtles and the wildlife that inhabit the adjacent shoreline. Though less plentiful than within the upstream basins, alligators are still present and can often be seen near the shoreline basking on partially submerged logs. It is not unusual for paddlers to encounter manatees in this reach and should be careful not to disturb them napping just below the surface. A manatee suddenly awakened by a collision with a silent paddle craft is likely to become extremely excited. Though not aggressive, these large mammals can create an impressive disturbance in the water when unexpectedly awakened from a slumber.

The shoreline of the River between Palatka and the greater Jacksonville area remains, for the most part, relatively undeveloped and in a natural state. There are sections where swamplands line the River, and in these areas there is no visible shoreline. These are interspersed with areas where high riverbanks overlook the River as well as low riverbanks which are periodically submerged during high water conditions. Paddlers in this reach should have no problem finding places to land or to wade in the sandy shallows along the shoreline. County parks are plentiful in the Lower Basin affording easy access to the River as well as convenient stopping places for long distance paddlers.

Just south and upstream of Jacksonville, development along the river increases and urbanization extends to the water's edge. Primarily lined with single family residences, the shoreline in this reach is often hardened with seawalls or riprap, and docks often extend out the hundreds of feet required to reach navigable depths. The profusion of docks in this reach is difficult to overstate, and paddlers preferring to stay above the littoral shelf will find themselves having to duck under these uncomfortably low structures every couple of hundred feet.

From Jacksonville to the mouth, the River again changes character and for the first time since leaving the Upper Basin, flow becomes a major factor for paddlers. This final 25 miles of the river is quite narrow compared to the 50 miles further upstream, and with its proximity to the sea and virtual lack of slope the tidal influence on current is significant. Consequently, when paddling in this reach, the direction paddled should always take tidal flow into account. When paddling through downtown Jacksonville, both shorelines are hardened and lined with urban development. The Jacksonville Landing, Friendship Park, Metropolitan Park and Exchange Island, to name a few, offer paddlers the opportunity to land and in some cases access to restrooms and restaurants. Boat traffic can be plentiful in this area of the River; however, slow speed zones and the width of the river make paddle and power craft usage quite compatible. Jacksonville is a thriving and active seaport, and it is not unusual to encounter oceangoing vessels moving in and out of the port. Again, the slow speeds and the width of the River make it easy to safely share the waterway and to avoid these large ships. Though it may seem otherwise, paddling alongside these docked ships can be quite an interesting experience and afford the paddler with a photo opportunity unique to this reach of the River.

While the entire Lower Basin is estuarine, the final 25 miles of the river is where the transition from freshwater to marine is most dramatic. Dolphin can be seen even in downtown Jacksonville, but as one leaves the urban area sightings of marine life becomes more frequent. Mill Cove provides paddlers with the opportunity to leave the main navigation channel of the St. Johns and enter an area ideally suited to paddle craft. The cove is uniformly shallow and fairly well protected from wind and wave action, and paddlers in this area should be able to see plenty of birds and wildlife while enjoying an easy paddle without regard to powerboat traffic.

Paddlers in this reach also have river access to a number of recreational opportunities beyond the river itself. The Jacksonville Zoo, the Fort Caroline National Memorial, Huguenot Park, the Timucuan Ecological Preserve, and the Kingsley Plantation can all be reached by water. Although the Mayport Naval Station cannot, the magnificent warships docked here can be easily viewed from the River. River access points are plentiful in this reach of the River and include numerous public boat ramps as well as local riverfront parks.

Through Paddling

Through paddling of the St. Johns River presents some special challenges, but is quite possible given sufficient planning and pre-trip conditioning. Some paddlers, whose primary goal was to traverse the entire River in the least amount of time, have been able to kayak the entire river in 10 or 11 days. However, those who are less interested in setting records than enjoying the River at a more leisurely pace, should set aside several weeks to paddle the entire river from source to mouth. While paddling the Upper Basin segment of the River presents the greatest challenge logistically, it also has the most camping options of any reach. The road crossings are few and far between, and commercial enterprises where paddlers can renew their stores are similarly sparse in the Upper Basin reach. Paddlers able to pack a week's worth of provisions should have no difficulty in this reach and indeed for the remainder of the River. Alligators and mosquitos are also plentiful in the Upper Basin and should be taken into consideration when planning a through paddle. Paddling in the winter months, when alligators are less active and mosquitos nonexistent will dramatically improve the comfort and enjoyment of both paddling and camping in this reach. As mentioned above, river stage is an important consideration in this reach and should also be considered in any trip planning. Locating campsites or any landmark after dark especially in remote locations can be nearly impossible, so any planning should take available daylight into consideration.

Downstream of the Upper Basin the logistical challenges of through paddling are minimal. River crossings and river access points increase significantly as do the opportunities to obtain provisions along the way. Camp sites in the Middle, Springs and Lower basins are primarily available along the River at State Parks and commercial campgrounds where improved campsites and restroom facilities make camping more comfortable during any season. Some planning ahead of time and setting one's pace in consideration of the distances between camping opportunities is necessary.

An Alternative to Through Paddling the St. Johns River

Paddlers interested in paddling the entire St. Johns River but lacking the time or equipment for a through paddle should consider covering the River in a series of day or weekend paddling trips. Done in this way, the entire River can be comfortably paddled in 26 days. In some reaches, particularly within the Upper Basin, some camping is necessary unless one is prepared to cover some of the long distances between the limited river access points in a single day of paddling. Camping is also possible downstream (north) of the Upper Basin, but not mandatory.

Paddling the entire River in a series of day and weekend paddles not only makes planning and logistics much easier, but also increases the likelihood that paddlers will be able to experience the River under various stage and flow conditions and in each season. Weather conditions can also be taken into consideration and the danger of unexpected thunderstorms or high winds can be more easily avoided. A huge advantage of paddling the River in this way is that daily wind patterns can be taken into consideration and the direction paddled can be adjusted to either avoid or take advantage of strong winds. This option is especially advantageous when large bodies of open water will be crossed. A plan for paddling the entire St. Johns in a series of day and weekend paddles is presented below. While the plan includes opportunities for camping whenever convenient, river access points at or near the recommended campsite locations make these optional rather than mandatory. While the legs (paddles) are described and numbered from south to north (downstream), each leg or combination of legs where camping is mandatory, can be paddled in either direction, and the direction chosen should take into account wind conditions and other logistical considerations.

While the logistics of paddling the entire River in short legs is less complicated, it requires the use of shuttles between the launch and take out. Third-party shuttling services are not generally available along the River so paddlers will need to plan for ground transportation which typically means having two vehicles. The distances by road between sites can be much farther than the generally more direct paddling route so sufficient time for shuttling vehicles should be allotted when planning. Navigation at night during a full moon can be quite pleasant but presents a whole new set of safety considerations. Locating campsites or any landmark after dark especially in remote locations can be nearly impossible, so any planning should take available daylight into consideration.

Recommended Day Paddles

Here are four day trips that will provide a nice appetizer for what the River has to offer.

The Lower St. Johns River Basin - Paddling the outgoing tide from Jacksonville's St. Johns Marina the 24 miles to Huguenot Park at the mouth is, despite the distance, an easy day-paddle. This leg passes the city's river-side sports complex (Super Bowl XXXIX), ocean-going vessels moored at the Port of Jacksonville, Fort Caroline (North America's first permanent European settlement) and the fishing village and Naval station at Mayport before you reach the sand dunes and beach at the City's ocean-side park. Stop on one of the dredge spoil islands at Mill Cove to explore and have lunch while watching the dolphins and wading birds that inhabit this estuarine reach of the St. Johns. The operative word for this trip is "tide" which should determine the both the duration and direction of this paddle.

The Springs and Middle Basins – Paddlers who prefer navigating an inland sea and watching deer graze the shallow aquatic grass beds while gators patrol the perimeter, drive to Georgetown on the shore of Lake George and put in at the Drayton Island Ferry public boat ramp. Paddle along the north and west sides of Drayton Island and cross the west channel of the St. Johns to the northwest shoreline of Lake George at Rocky Point. Salt Springs run enters the lake at the center of this cove and is a pleasant but long day-paddle from Georgetown and back. For a shorter paddle, cross the cove to the south shoreline and eat lunch lounging on the white sand beach in the shade of the tall palms and watching the wading birds fish. Paddle or wade the atypically clear shallows of the cove and look for sting rays and manatees. Paddle back along the south shoreline of Drayton Island to the launch site. Avoid this paddle on a windy day – Lake George is Florida’s second largest lake and becomes quite angry in a blow.



Lake George shoreline

The Upper Basin Marsh and Puzzle Lake Region - The most unique reach of the St. Johns is found in its Upper Basin in Brevard County. In this reach you can literally paddle through herds of cattle or horses while navigating a maze of slow-flowing channels through open marsh and meadows that offer miles of open vistas. Lone cypress sentinels along the shoreline host eagles hunting on the open range which is a bird watcher’s paradise. Large alligators are plentiful in this reach but are wary of people, rather than aggressive, thanks to licensed hunters. Put in at the park on SR 50 west of Titusville and paddle upstream and back for a small taste of this beautiful reach. Overnight trips in this reach are great but best done in the winter. A flag atop a 6’ pole will improve your visibility to airboaters who have little regard for the channel in this reach of the River.



Horses crossing the St. Johns in the Upper Basin

Paddle Putnam County

Putnam County is located in the Lower and the Springs basins of the St. Johns River between River Miles 65 and 118. Long noted as the Bass Fishing Capital of the World, Putnam County is working to establish an equally lofty reputation as a paddling destination. The County has established and designated 8 paddling trails totaling over 100 miles on the St. Johns River and three of its major tributaries within the County. Efforts are currently underway to develop a Bartram Paddling Trail within the County. This trail will link all of the sites visited by John and William Bartram and mentioned or described in their 18th Century writings. Maps of the trail will be available in printed form, and on-line and signage will be developed identifying and marking the location of the Bartram's various campsites and stops on the shores of the St. Johns River throughout the County. Informational kiosks are planned for several locations that will inform paddlers of the trail and how to take advantage of the informational resources while using it.

Another easy 6-mile paddle in this stretch of the River combines the St. Johns River, Ocklawaha River, and Bear Creek in the Welaka area. Put in at the city boat ramp in "downtown" Welaka and paddle southeast across the St. Johns River. About 300 yards south of the entrance to the Ocklawaha River enter the smaller Bear Creek, the upper reaches of which have a closed canopy. Because of its geometry, current flow in Bear Creek is often upstream. At the confluence with the Ocklawaha River, ride the clear waters of the spring-fed Ocklawaha downstream back to the St. Johns River and back to Welaka. Three rivers in just a couple hours! And a good meal and refreshments are available only 100 feet north of the Welaka boat ramp.

Paddling Resources

Putnam County Blueways – <http://putnambluewaysandtrails.org/page-1847609>

Bartram Trails Putnam County - <http://bartram.putnam-fl.com/>

FFWCC Florida Public Boat Ramp Finder -

<https://public.myfwc.com/LE/boatramp/public/CountySearch.aspx>

St. Johns River Water Management District Recreation Guide to District Lands –

<https://www.sjrwmd.com/lands/recreation/>

St. Johns River Water Management District River Stage Data -

<http://webapub.sjrwmd.com/agws10/hdsnew/map.html>

St. Johns River Water Management District – Paddle Guide Blue Cypress Conservation Area -

<https://www.sjrwmd.com/lands/recreation/blue-cypress/>

USGS Water Watch Streamflow Map - <http://waterwatch.usgs.gov/index.php?m=real&r=fl&w=map>

FDEP Recommended gear and safety equipment:

https://floridadep.gov/sites/default/files/Recommended%20Gear%20and%20Safety%20Equipment%20for%20Extended%20Trips_1.pdf

FDEP Long Distance Paddling Recommendations:

https://floridadep.gov/sites/default/files/Long%20Distance%20Paddling%20Recommendations_1.pdf

FDEP Day Trip Paddling Tips and Safety Recommendations:

<https://floridadep.gov/sites/default/files/Day%20Trip%20Paddling%20Tips%20and%20Safety%20recommendations.pdf>