

# Florida Designated Paddling Trails

## Loxahatchee River



N

Stuart

Palm City

Port Salerno

Fox Grove

Gomez

Jupiter Island

Hobe Sound

Harmony Ranch

Loxahatchee River Paddling Trail Map 1

MARTIN  
PALM BEACH

Tequesta

Limestone Creek

Jupiter Inlet Colony

Jupiter

Juno Beach

Palm Beach Gardens

North Palm Beach

Lake Park

Palm Beach Shores

Riviera Beach

Mangonia Park

Lakeside Green

Florida's Turnpike

Atlantic Ocean

# Loxahatchee River Paddling Trail

Hobe Sound  
Jupiter Island

Atlantic Ocean

NORTH ENTRANCE

1

MAIN PARK ENTRANCE

Jonathan Dickinson State Park

**Access Point 2: Jonathan Dickinson State Park**  
N: 26.9880 W: -80.1428



**Trapper Nelson Interpretive Site**  
N: 26.9761 W: -80.1633

Cypress Creek/  
Loxahatchee

Tequesta

Loxahatchee River

MARTIN  
PALM BEACH

North Jupiter Flatwoods  
Natural Area

ISLAND WAY

Central Blvd

Limestone Creek  
Natural Area

Center St

Cypress Creek  
Natural Area

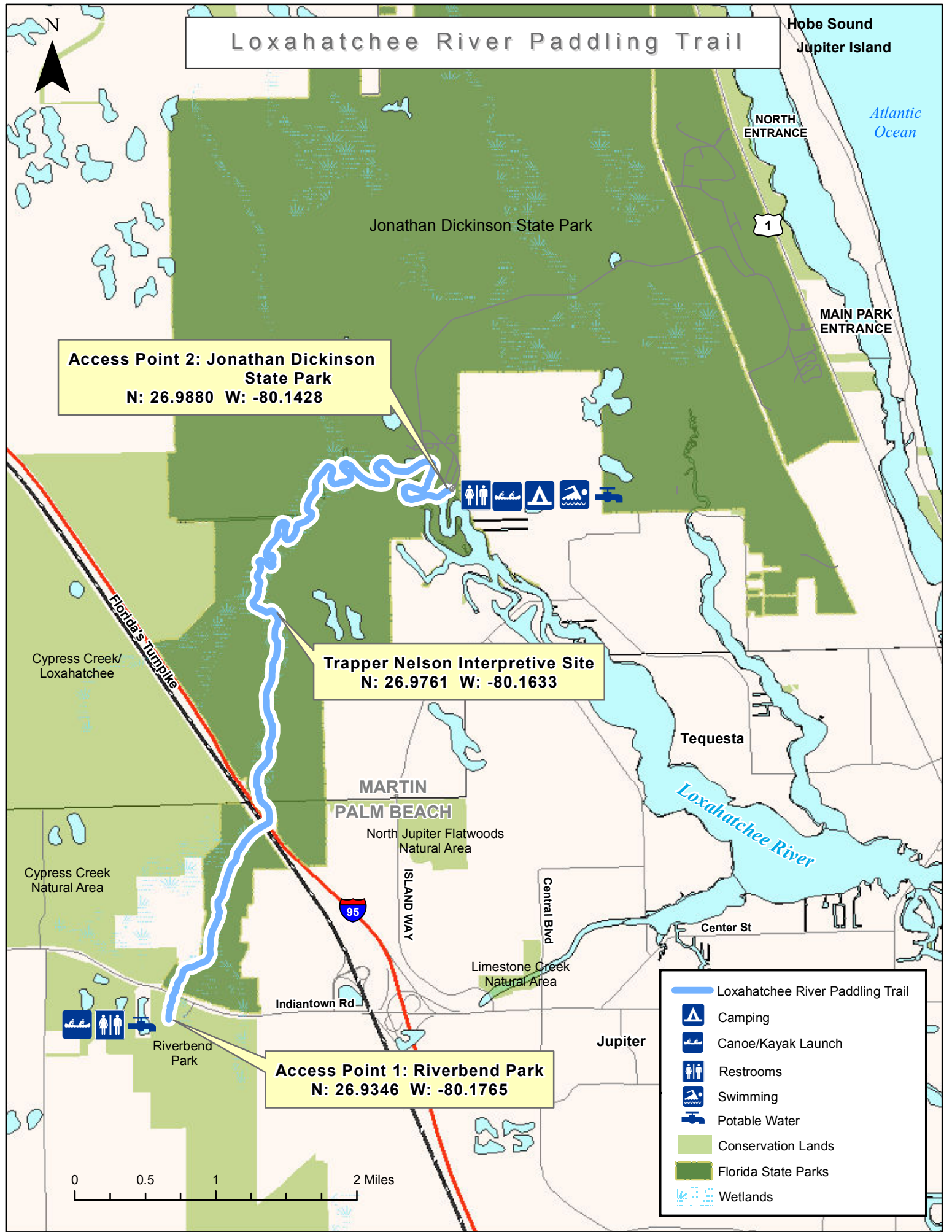
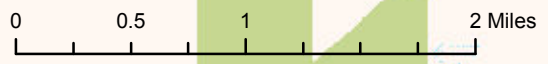
Indiantown Rd

Riverbend  
Park

**Access Point 1: Riverbend Park**  
N: 26.9346 W: -80.1765

Jupiter

- Loxahatchee River Paddling Trail
- Camping
- Canoe/Kayak Launch
- Restrooms
- Swimming
- Potable Water
- Conservation Lands
- Florida State Parks
- Wetlands



# Loxahatchee River Paddling Trail Trip Planning

**Overview:** This swift and twisting river is worthy of its status as Florida's first National Wild and Scenic River. The coffee-colored stream meanders through an unspoiled subtropical river swamp where bald cypress, pond apple, orchids, and ferns line the shores. Trapper Nelson's cabin is a point of interest near the trail's terminus in Jonathan Dickinson State Park. Nelson was an intriguing and colorful fur trapper who came to the area in the 1930s and lived along the banks of the Loxahatchee. He made a living trapping and selling animals and built a rustic Florida homestead. He quickly became famous as the "Wildman of the Loxahatchee" and eventually ran a small wild animal exhibit for tourists. After his death in 1968, the state acquired his land, preserving his home and grounds for future generations to enjoy.

**Counties:** Martin, Palm Beach

**Nearest towns:** Palm Beach, Jupiter

**Trip length:** 8.5 miles

**Mileage:**       **Mile 0—Riverbend Park**  
                      **Mile 8—Jonathan Dickinson State Park**

\*The provided mileage data is approximate (rounded to the nearest 0.5 mi).

**Difficulty:** Moderate – Strenuous (depending on amount of obstructions in upper section)

**Skill level:** Intermediate - Expert

**Access Point 1 Put-in:** Palm Beach County Riverbend Park

**Nearest town to put-in:** Jupiter

**Miles from put-in:** 4

**Directions to put-in:** Palm Beach County Riverbend Park – On SR 706, 1.5 miles west of the Florida Turnpike

**Access Point 2 Take-out:** Jonathan Dickinson State Park

**Nearest town to take-out:** Hobe Sound

**Miles from take-out:** 5

**Directions to take-out:** Jonathan Dickinson State Park is located 12 miles south of Stuart on U.S. 1. Just follow the signs from I-95 (Exit 87A) or the Florida Turnpike (Exit 116). Or, take SR 706 east to U.S. 1, north to park entrance (8 miles).

**Distance between put-in and take-out:** Approximately 10 miles. Local traffic may be heavy

**Topo maps (USGS quads):** Rood

**Gazeteer page:** 103 & 109

**Outfitters within 20 miles of trail:**

Canoe Outfitters  
9060 W. Indiantown Rd., Jupiter, FL 33478  
888-272-1257

<http://www.canoes-kayaks-florida.com>

(closed Tuesdays and Wednesdays)

Jonathan Dickinson State Park (Canoe Concessions)

16450 S.E. Federal Highway Hobe Sound, Florida 33455  
(561) 746-1466  
<http://www.floridastateparks.org/jonathandickinson/default.cfm>

Loxhatchee River Adventures: Jonathan Dickinson State Park  
<http://www.floridaparktours.com/canoeskayaks.html>

Jupiter Outdoor Center  
960 A1A (at Guanabanas), Jupiter, FL 33477  
(561) 316-6203  
<http://www.jupiteroutdoorcenter.com>

**Shuttle service offered:** Canoe Outfitters (see above)

**USGS link (water level info):**  
<http://waterdata.usgs.gov/fl/nwis/uv?265906080093500>

**Other water level info:**  
<http://www.mobilegeographics.com:81/locations/697.html>

**Break / Lunch areas:** The second dam is a popular break area with simple restroom facilities located down a short path.

Trapper Nelson's cabin is another great break area. Covered picnic tables, restrooms, water and a soda vending machine are available on site.

**Camping options:** Jonathan Dickinson State Park  
<http://www.floridastateparks.org/jonathandickinson/Activities.cfm>

**Other lodging:** Many hotels are located along nearby interstates. Rooms can be difficult to find without early reservations due to seasonal tourism.

**Food/Beverage restrictions:** No alcoholic beverages or glass containers on the upper section of the river.

**Expect on the River:**

**Tidal influence:** Tidal influence begins below Trapper Nelson's cabin.

**Pull-overs:** Possible. Conditions are variable in the upper portion due to storms, hurricane activity, and maintenance of the river channel. Check with local outfitters.

**Low branches:** There are many low branches and overhangs.

**Narrow water:** The river is particularly narrow for most of the area above Trapper Nelson's cabin.

**Shallow water:** Most of the river is relatively shallow (< 10'). From the put-in to Trapper Nelson's cabin the river can be extremely low.

**Strong currents:** The currents can be strong depending on water levels.

**Rocks:** None.

**Houses:** None

**Shoals:** Two log dams have pullover structures for kayaks and canoes that may be paddled over in high water. At the time of the survey the water was low and these were not passable.

**Tight turns:** Yes, in the upper stretch of the river

**Open water:** Below Trapper Nelson's cabin the river widens considerably. Contact with motor boats is possible and high winds are more likely closer to the state park boat ramp.

**Springs:** None.

**Potable water sources:**

- River Bend Park has a hose with fresh water behind the outfitter.
- Trapper Nelson's cabin has a water fountain and a soda machine.
- Jonathan Dickinson State Park has water available at the picnic area but not at the boat ramp.

**Wildlife:** American alligator, osprey, white-tailed deer, great blue heron, mullet, brown water snake, cottonmouth snake, yellow-bellied slider

**Natural communities:** Hydric hammock, scrub, tidal swamp

**Portages:** Two log dams cross the river and may require getting out and using the kayak and canoe pull-overs to continue downriver (especially during low water). Scout these structures before attempting to cross the log dams; portage is likely.

**Swimming:** Not allowed along river due to Wild and Scenic River designation and large alligators. A designated swimming area is available at Jonathan Dickinson State Park.

**Motorboats:** Allowed downriver of Trapper Nelson's Cabin. Large commercial pontoon boats are regularly seen transporting tourists upriver to Trapper Nelson's cabin and back to the state park.

**Note:** As you approach the state park boat ramp from upriver, the park canoe concessionaire and swimming area will be on the left about half a mile before you get to the public boat ramp. Please do not use the concessionaire's boat landing or the swimming area unless renting boats from them.

**Expect at parking:** Palm Beach County River Bend Park

(<http://pbcgov.com/parks/locations/riverbend.htm>)

- **Parking fee:** No
- **Bathrooms:** Two portable toilets. One is handicap accessible.
- **Hours of operation (gates close):** sunrise to sunset
- **Camping:** None
- **Camping fees:** N/A
- **Crowds:** Possible on weekends.
- **Boat ramp:** Dirt. No power boats.
- **Potable water source:** Hose behind the Canoe Outfitter.
- **Canoe/kayak launch:** yes
- Small gear shop with snacks and canoe rental available on site from concessionaire.

**Expect at parking:** Jonathan Dickinson State Park

(<http://www.floridastateparks.org/jonathandickinson/>)

- **Parking fee:** Entrance Fee
- **Bathrooms:** Yes
- **Hours of operation (gates close):** 8am - Sundown
- **Camping:** Yes
- **Camping fees:** Yes
- **Crowds:** Possible on weekends.

- **Boat ramp:** Public paved boat ramp with dock and kayak / canoe step-down launch on the inside of the dock.
- **Potable water source:** Not immediately at boat ramp, but available at the park picnic area.
- **Canoe/kayak launch:** Use public boat ramp or boat dock.

### **Cultural and historical features along the trail:**

Trapper Nelson's cabin. Nelson was an intriguing and colorful fur trapper who came to the area in the 1930s and lived along the banks of the Loxahatchee River. He made a living trapping and selling animals and built a rustic Florida homestead. He quickly became famous as the "Wildman of the Loxahatchee" and eventually ran a small wild animal exhibit for tourists. After his death in 1968, the state acquired his land, preserving his home and grounds for future generations to enjoy. Visitors can tour this interesting old homestead and early Florida tourist attraction where a Park Ranger is available during operating hours to answer any interpretive questions. <http://www.floridaparktours.com/trappernelsons.html>

### **Notes:**

Short canoes or kayaks are recommended in the upper section (9-14 feet long) due to its narrow channel and sharp turns. Centuries-old cypress trees and an abundance of palm trees give this section a wild scenic quality. One paddler commented that "we got the feeling of being in Jurassic Park." Check with local outfitters about current river conditions and water levels.