



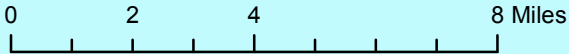


Florida Designated Paddling Trails
Wakulla River

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Wakulla River Paddling Trail Trip Planning

Overview: Wildlife is abundant along this clear, spring-fed river. Manatees, once seen only in summer, are now spotted year-round. Paddlers can choose between a four- or six-mile trip below Wakulla Springs State Park. The current is usually gentle enough to paddle up and back for any distance desired.

County: Wakulla

Nearest towns: Crawfordville, St. Marks

Trip length: 4 miles

Mileage: Mile 0—CR 365 Bridge
Mile 4—US 98 Bridge

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

Difficulty: Easy

Skill level: Beginner

Note: The current is generally mild enough to be able to paddle from either bridge going upstream or downstream. The total round trip is 7.6 miles. You may also extend your trip by paddling to the St. Marks City Park, (2.6 miles from the US 98 Bridge) or further downstream to the Fort San Marcos de Apalache Historic State Park (3.2 miles from the US 98 Bridge). It is possible to continue further upstream from the fort on the St. Marks River to the US 98 Bridge at Newport (about 5 miles from the launch at Fort San Marcos de Apalachee Historic State Park).

Access Points

Access Point 1 Put-in: CR 365 Bridge (“Upper Bridge”)

Nearest town to put-in: Crawfordville

Miles from put-in: 7 miles

Directions to put-in: From Crawfordville, turn east on CR 61. When 61 turns sharply north after about 6 miles, continue straight on CR 267 to the bridge. The unpaved launch is on the southwest side of the bridge.

Access Point 2 Directions to take-out: US 98 Bridge (“Lower Bridge”)

Nearest town to take-out: St. Marks

Miles from take-out: 4.5 miles

Directions to take-out: From St. Marks, drive north on Highway 363 for 2.5 miles and turn left onto US 98. Drive 2 miles to bridge. Launch is on the southeast side of the bridge.

From the Upper Bridge, drive east on CR 267 2.3 miles and turn right onto Highway 363. Head south 3 miles and turn right onto US 98. Drive 2 miles to bridge.

Driving distance from Upper Bridge to Lower Bridge: 7.3 miles

Directions to St. Marks City Park (optional take-out): Travel west on US 98, turn south on CR 363, turn right (west) in the town of St. Marks on Shell Island Rd, then left (south) on City Park Rd. Look for the park on the right side of the road.

Directions to San Marcos de Apalache Historic State Park (optional take-out): Travel west on US 98, turn south on CR 363, turn right (west) into the town of St. Marks and continue until the road ends in a 'T', turn right and follow the round around to a four-way stop. Turn left (south) at the stop sign and follow to the park.

Topo maps: Crawfordville East Quad

Gazetteer page: 50

Outfitters within 20 miles of trail:

TNT Hideaway (850-925-6412) Located next to the public launch at the Lower Bridge, US 98. <http://tnthideaway.com/>.

The Wilderness Way (850) 877-7200 (Wakulla Station)
<http://www.thewildernessway.net/>.

St. Marks Outfitters (850) 510-7919 (St. Marks)
<http://stmarksoutfitters.com/>. Offers small group guided trips and shuttle service.

Blue Water Sports (850)656-3483 (Tallahassee)
<http://www.bluewatersports.net/>.

Shuttle Service Offered: Check with outfitters

USGS link for water level info:
<http://waterdata.usgs.gov/fl/nwis/uv?02327000>

Break / Lunch areas: The City of St Marks Wakulla River Park has a dock, canoe launch, parking, restrooms, a picnic shelter and water fountains. The boat launch at San Marcos de Apalache State Park has a museum, parking, dock, picnic areas and restrooms.

Camping options: Full service county campground at Newport Park along Highway 98 and the St. Marks River: (850) 925-4530.

Other lodging: A bed and breakfast and fish camp are located in St. Marks. Lodging is available at the Wakulla Springs State Park and along Highway 98 near Medart. For information about local accommodations, log onto:
<http://wakullacountychamber.com/visiting-wakulla/accommodations/>.

Food/Beverage restrictions: None

Expect on River:

Pull-overs: None

Low branches: None

Narrow water: None

Shallow water: None

Strong currents: None

Rocks: None

Houses: Some

Shoals: None

Springs (GPS): One unnamed sulfur spring located just north of the Highway 98 Bridge on the east side of the river (N30.1816 W84.2486).

Tight turns: None

Open water: The river widens considerably as it nears the confluence with the St. Marks; expect winds and tidal influence.

Wildlife: Alligator, yellow-bellied slider, white ibis, anhinga, kingfisher, pileated woodpecker, osprey, and manatee are common in the warmer months. Look carefully for manatee at the US 98 Bridge and around an island mid-way on the river, just before the power lines.

Manatees: The West Indian manatee is an endangered species and is protected by state and federal law. Please avoid harassing or disturbing manatees. Harassment is defined as any activity which alters the animal's natural behavior. By altering the manatee's natural behavior, you may create the likelihood of danger that is bad for the animal and against the law.

BEING NEAR MANATEES

- Look, but don't touch manatees. Also, don't feed manatees or give them water. If manatees become accustomed to being around people, they can alter their behavior in the wild, perhaps causing them to lose their natural fear of boats and humans, and this may make them more susceptible to harm.
- *Passive observation* is the best way to interact with manatees and all wildlife.
- Do not pursue or chase a manatee while you are swimming, snorkeling, diving or operating a boat.
- Never poke, prod or stab a manatee with your hands, feet or any object.
- If a manatee avoids you, you should avoid it.
- Don't isolate or single out an individual manatee from its group, and don't separate a cow and her calf.
- Don't attempt to snag, hook, hold, grab, pinch or ride a manatee.
- Do not swim while manatees present
- For more information visit this website: <http://myfwc.com/manatee>.

Natural communities: Spring-run streams, floodplain swamps, freshwater tidal marshes

Portages: None

Swimming: Be aware there are alligators in this river and take proper precautions. It is illegal to swim with the manatee.

Motorboats: This is a popular river year-round with lots of canoes and motorboats. The motorboats are required to observe a no-wake speed for most of the upper river during the warmer months due to the likely presence of manatees.

Expect at parking: (Upper Bridge Launch CR 365)

- Parking fee: None
- Bathrooms: None
- Camping: None
- Camping fees: N/A
- Crowds: Weekends and holidays
- Boat Ramp: Small, narrow and dirt
- Canoe/kayak launch: Easy

Expect at parking: (Lower Bridge Launch US 98)

- Parking fee: None
- Bathrooms: None
- Camping: None
- Camping fees: N/A
- Crowds: Weekends and holidays
- Boat Ramp: Paved
- Canoe/kayak launch: Easy

Expect at parking: (Optional take-out at City of St. Marks Wakulla River Park)

- Parking fee: None
- Bathrooms: Yes, also has water fountains
- Camping: None
- Camping Fees: N/A
- Crowds: No
- Boat Ramp: Canoe launch and dock
- Canoe/kayak launch: Easy
- Note: The dock for launching can be inaccessible during an extreme low tide.

Expect at parking: (Optional take-out at San Marco de Apalache State Park)

- Parking fee: None
- Bathrooms: Yes, also has water fountains
- Camping: None
- Camping Fees: N/A
- Crowds: Weekends and holidays
- Boat Ramp: Canoe launch and dock
- Canoe/kayak launch: Easy

Expect at parking: (Optional take-out at Newport on the St. Marks River)

- Parking fee: None
- Bathrooms: Yes

- Camping: Yes
- Camping Fees: Yes
- Crowds: Weekends and holidays
- Boat Ramp: Canoe launch and dock
- Canoe/kayak launch: Easy

Cultural and historical features along the trail:

- Wakulla Springs State Park and Lodge is located upriver of the designated trail and is home of one of the largest and deepest freshwater springs in the world. This park plays host to an abundance of wildlife, including alligators, turtles, deer, and birds. Daily guided riverboat tours provide a closer view of wildlife, and glass bottom boat tours are offered when the water is clear. Swimming is a popular activity during the hot summer months. A nature trail offers a leisurely walk along the upland wooded areas of the park. The Wakulla Springs Lodge was built in 1937 by financier Edward Ball and is open year-round. A full-service dining room overlooks the spring; lodge meeting facilities offer an excellent place for retreats. Wakulla Springs State Park and Lodge is listed on the Natural Register of Historic Places and is designated as a National Natural Landmark, <http://www.floridastateparks.org/wakullasprings/default.cfm>.
- San Marcos de Apalache Historic State Park has a museum and several interpretive trails. The many different flags welcoming visitors to the park demonstrate the colorful history of this site, from the first Spanish explorers to the present day. The history of this National Landmark began in 1528 when Panfilo de Narvaez arrived in the area with 300 men; however, the first fort was not built until 1679. Andrew Jackson occupied the fort for a brief time in the early 1800s. The museum at the park displays pottery and tools unearthed near the original fort and explains the history of the San Marcos site, <http://www.floridastateparks.org/sanmarcos/>.