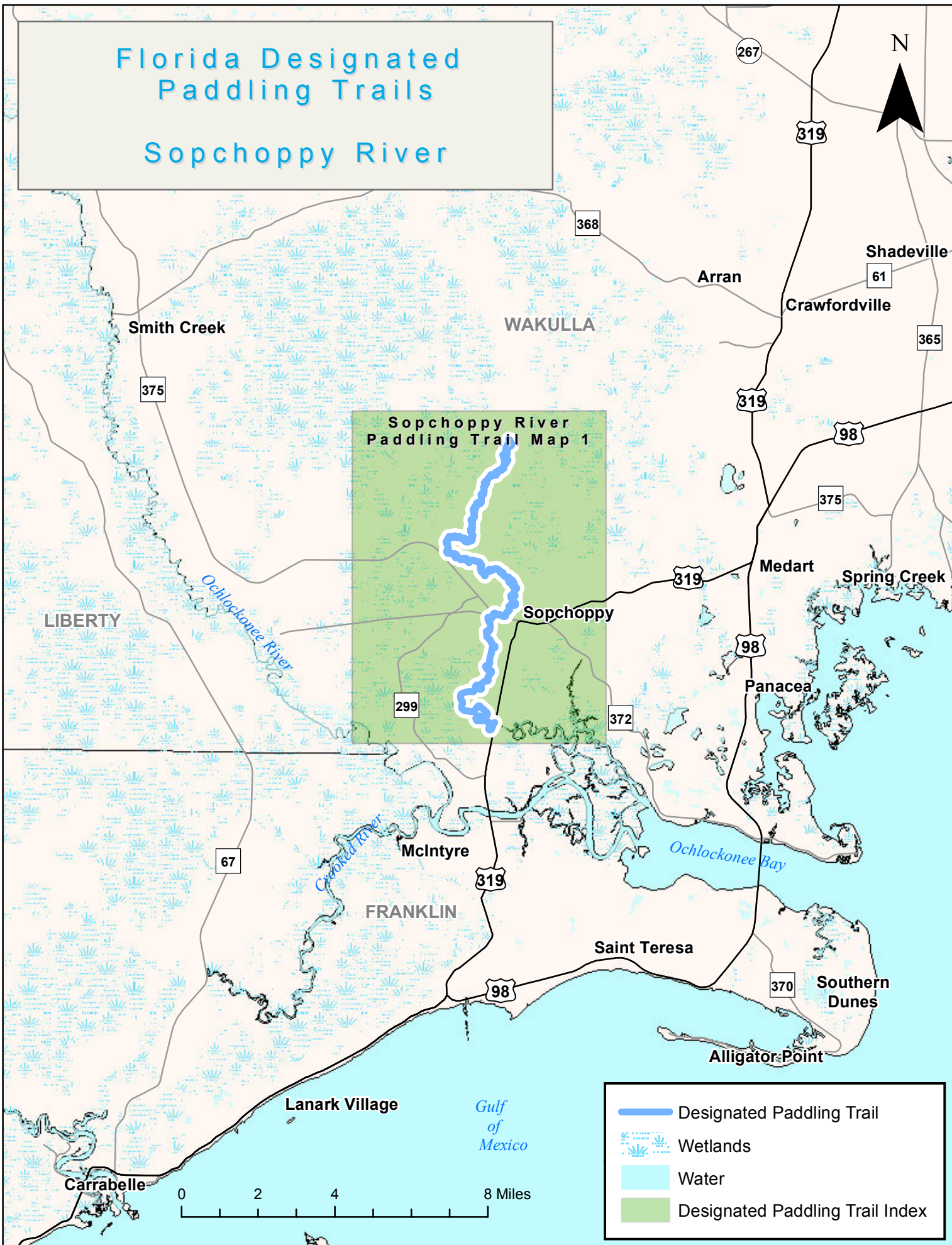


# Florida Designated Paddling Trails

## Sopchoppy River



# Sopchoppy River Paddling Trail Map 1



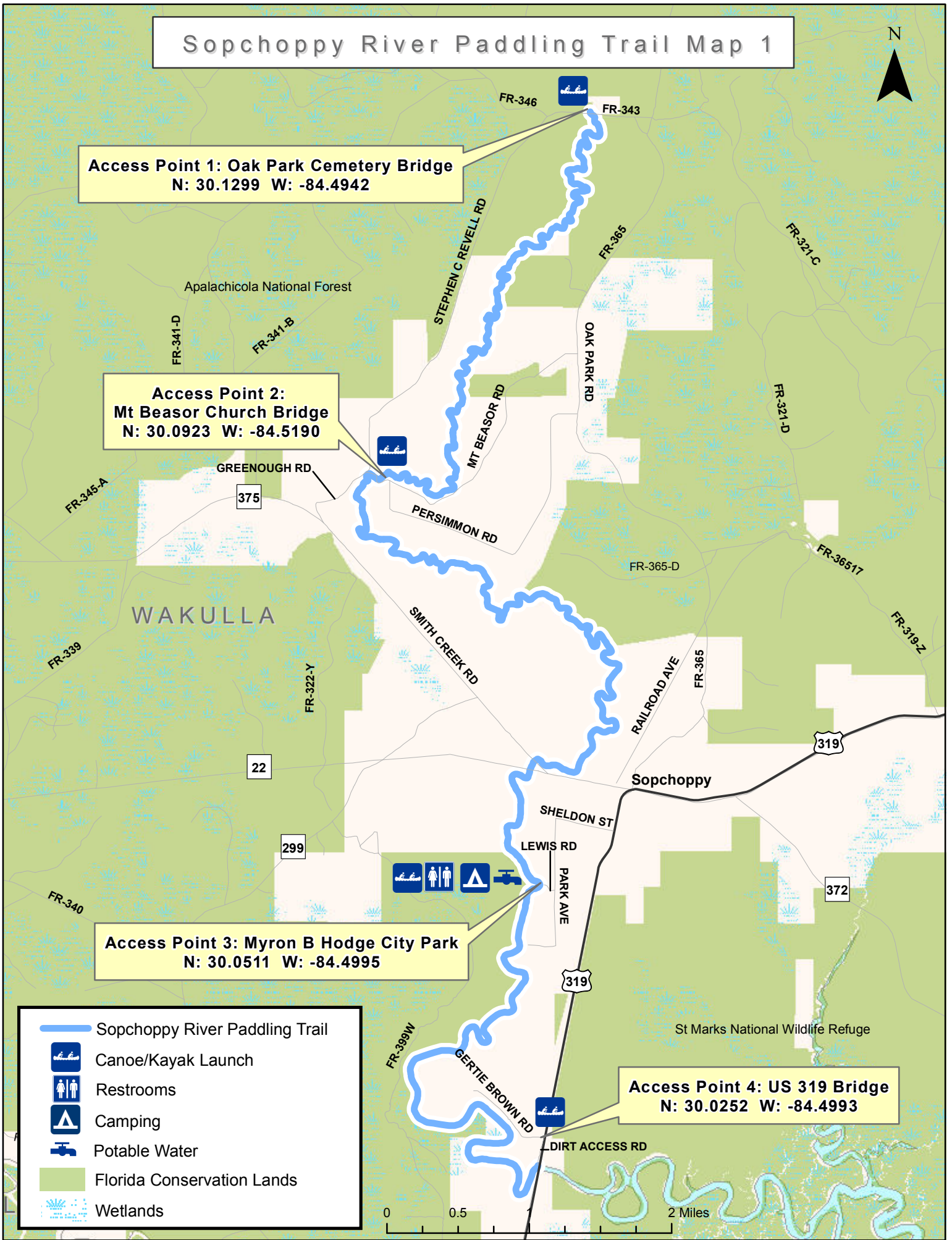
**Access Point 1: Oak Park Cemetery Bridge**  
N: 30.1299 W: -84.4942

**Access Point 2: Mt Beasor Church Bridge**  
N: 30.0923 W: -84.5190

**Access Point 3: Myron B Hodge City Park**  
N: 30.0511 W: -84.4995

**Access Point 4: US 319 Bridge**  
N: 30.0252 W: -84.4993

- Sopchoppy River Paddling Trail
- Canoe/Kayak Launch
- Restrooms
- Camping
- Potable Water
- Florida Conservation Lands
- Wetlands



# Sopchoppy River Paddling Trail Trip Planning

**Overview:** This reddish-brown river—fed by wild swamps—twists around cypress knees and impressive exposed roots through the Apalachicola National Forest and beyond. Numerous sandbars make for scenic rest stops. Deer can often be seen along the shore or swimming across the river. In spring, wild azalea and other flowering plants add color to the shorelines. During low water levels, some pullovers and wading may be required.

**County:** Wakulla

**Nearest town:** Sopchoppy

**Trip length:** 15 miles

**Mileage:**

1. Mile 0—Oak Park Cemetery Bridge
2. Mile 5—Mount Beasor Church Bridge
3. Mile 10—Myron B. Hodge City Park (Sopchoppy City Park).
4. Mile 15—US 319 Bridge

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

**Difficulty:** Easy/Moderate (depending on water levels)

**Skill level:** Beginner/Intermediate (depending on water levels)

**Access Point 1 Put-in:** Oak Park Bridge (FR 346)

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

**Miles from put-in:** 6

**Directions to put-in:** Take FR 365 (River Rd.) north from Sopchoppy 5.6 miles to FR 343. Turn left (west) to bridge. Access is southwest of the bridge with a steep climb down the bank to the river. Parking area is northwest of the bridge.

**Access Point 2 put-in:** Mt. Beasor Church Bridge

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

**Miles from put-in:** 3

**Directions to put-in:** Take SR 375 north from Sopchoppy, turn right (east) on Greenough Rd., bear right when the road forks. Park along shoulder near bridge but be careful of soft sand. For launching, it is a steep drop down to the river.

**Access Point 3 put-in:** Sopchoppy City Park (Myron B. Hodge Park)

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

**Miles from put-in:** in town

**Directions to take-out:** Heading south on 319, look for sign to the park and turn west on Sheldon Street. Continue to intersection of Park Avenue and turn left (south). The park is several blocks down on the right

**Access Point 4 Take-out:** US 319 Bridge

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

**Miles from put-in:** 3

**Directions to take-out:** Take US 319 south out of Sopchoppy and turn right (west) on Gertie Brown Rd, just before the bridge crosses the Sopchoppy river. Turn left immediately on a rough dirt track to access the take-out below the bridge.

**Driving distance from put-in to take-out:** About 8.6 miles

**Topo maps (USGS quads):** Sopchoppy, Sanborn, Crawfordville West

**Gazeteer page:** 49 & 50

**Outfitters within 20 miles of trail:**

The Wilderness Way  
3152 Shadeville Road  
Wakulla Station, FL 32327  
(850) 877-7200  
<http://www.thewildernessway.net/>

**Shuttle service offered:** Check with outfitters

**USGS link (water level info):**

[http://waterdata.usgs.gov/fl/nwis/uv/?site\\_no=02327100&PARAMeter\\_cd=00065,00060](http://waterdata.usgs.gov/fl/nwis/uv/?site_no=02327100&PARAMeter_cd=00065,00060). Recommended level: between 9-11 feet.

**Break/Lunch areas:** Numerous sandbars along the river make pleasant break areas. There are also picnic tables, restrooms, and camping at the Sopchoppy City Park.

**Camping options:**

It is permissible to camp on national forest land along the Sopchoppy River except during the general gun hunting season. Check online for current dates for the Apalachicola Wildlife Management Area.

Sopchoppy City Park has campsites and RV hookups. Call (850) 962-3873 for hours and fees.

Camping is also available in the nearby Ochlockonee River State Park  
<http://www.floridastateparks.org/ochlockoneeriver/default.cfm>

**Other lodging:**

<http://wakullacountychamber.com/businessdirectory/categories/sub/?id=3&cat=Accommodations>

**Food/Beverage restrictions:** No alcohol in the city park

**What to expect on the river:**

**Tidal influence:** Minor tidal influence downstream from the City Park

**Pull-overs:** Possible with low water levels

**Low branches:** None

**Narrow water:** None

**Shallow water:** Possible on upper segment of the river with low water levels

**Strong currents:** None

**Rocks:** None

**Houses:** A few residences are scattered along the river after the Oak Park Bridge near the town of Sopchoppy, and the last 2 miles before the 319 Bridge.

**Shoals:** None

**Tight turns:** None

**Open water:** None

**Springs:** None

**Potable water sources:** Sopchoppy City Park

**Wildlife:** Turtles, alligators, snakes, variety of birds, black bear, deer,

**Natural communities:** Pine flatwoods, blackwater stream, floodplain swamp,

**Portages:** Possible deadfall after storm events

**Swimming:** At your own risk

**Motorboats:** Small johnboats may be seen upstream from the City Park and downstream to US 319

**Expect at parking Oak Park Bridge:**

- There are no amenities at this site. An unpaved parking area is near the northwest side of the bridge. Access the river on the southwest end of the bridge. The slope to the river is steep; exercise caution.

**Expect at parking Mt. Beasor Church Bridge:**

- There are no amenities at this site and parking is limited. Park and access the river on the northeast end of the bridge, although be careful of loose sand. The slope to the river is steep; exercise caution.

**Expect at parking Myron B. Hodges Park (Sopchoppy City Park):**

- **Parking fee:** None
- **Bathrooms:** Yes
- **Hours of operation:** Gates open at 6 a.m. and close at 9 p.m.
- **Camping:** Yes, and RV hookups
- **Camping fees:** Call 850-962-3873 for info.
- **Crowds:** Holidays and weekends may have heavy use
- **Boat Ramp:** Concrete ramp
- **Potable water source:** Yes

- **Canoe/kayak launch:** None, along launching is possible along the shore adjacent to the ramp.

**Expect at Parking US 319:**

- There are no amenities at this site and parking is allowed only on the northeast side of the bridge on the dirt road that parallels US 319. Just before the bridge crosses the Sopchoppy River, turn right (west) on Gertie Brown Road. Turn immediately on your left following a rough dirt track to the take-out below the bridge.

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

One of the oldest dated maps of Wakulla County (1683) names the Sopchoppy River the Rio Chachave. In one of the local Indian languages the word 'sokhe' meant convulsing or twisting and the word 'chapke' meant long. The name Chachave may be a Spanish rendition of the local name "Long Twisting River" for the Sopchoppy is certainly that. Another interpretation is that the name has been corrupted from "Lockchoppee" since this name appeared on an 1856 map. Lockchoppee or *lokchapi* signifies the "red oak" in the Muskogee language.

**Notes:**

Some 50 miles in length, the Sopchoppy is a beautiful river with high, narrow limestone banks and unique cypress tree formations. The river is under federal consideration for designation as a Wild and Scenic River, although the process is on hold.

The rugged Bradwell Bay area borders the upper Sopchoppy River and features undisturbed swamp containing trees up to 400 years old. The bay also provides the river with the large source of tannins needed to give the river its characteristic dark tea color.

A portion of the Florida National Scenic Trail follows along the banks of the upper Sopchoppy River and into the Bradwell Bay area mentioned above. More information can be found at: <http://florida-trail.org/maps/map10.htm> .

Be sure to access the USGS website information listed above to determine the water levels as this river is difficult to paddle when water is low. The gauge should be between 9 and 11 feet. If the level is above 11 feet, the flow can be swift and suitable only for intermediate or advanced paddlers. The Sopchoppy experiences rapid fluctuations in water level following a storm and quickly drops in dry spells.