



Day Trip Paddling Tips and Safety Recommendations

- Wear a properly fitted life jacket at all times with an accessible whistle.
- Other recommended gear includes a first-aid kit, bilge pump, paddle float, spray skirt, sponge, water bottle, paddle, sunscreen, sun hat, polarized sunglasses, cell phone in waterproof container, waterproof GPS, insect repellent, and appropriate clothing for anticipated weather.
- Bring a headlamp and bow light if out after dark.
- Five short blasts on a whistle is the international signal for an emergency.
- If inexperienced, join with experienced paddlers and/or outfitters and try short trips first. Do not paddle alone. Seek qualified instruction to learn proper paddling and rescue techniques and basic first aid.
- Do not exceed the weight capacity of your boat and avoid weight shifts that may cause capsizing.
- Inform others of your trip plans with anticipated return time.
- Waving a paddle or brightly-colored shirt or towel can attract the attention of a passing boater.

- Brightly-colored clothes and gear enables boaters to see you from a distance.
- Do not paddle while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Take careful note of weather conditions and forecasts. If in doubt, don't proceed into open water. Warm weather thunderstorms can bring high winds and heavy rains, along with the risk of lightning strikes.
- Stay well hydrated.
- Carry a trail map and guide in a waterproof bag or sleeve.
- 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
- Snakes and alligators can be active in freshwater streams and lakes. If encountering a snake or alligator, back away and admire these beautiful animals as they go about their lives. Please do not feed.
- Plants that cause allergic reactions can be found along the shore. If in doubt, do not touch.
- Wear appropriate footwear along shore.
- By setting a relaxed pace for your trip, you will likely have a richer experience.