



## **Kissimmee River Blueway**

Now that a multi-year restoration effort of the Kissimmee River has been completed, this historic waterway is being discovered by paddlers. On June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2024, the Florida Greenways and Trails Council approved state designation of the Kissimmee River Blueway from the S-65 Lock at the bottom of Lake Kissimmee to C. Scott Driver Park just before Lake Okeechobee, a total of 76.5 miles. This waterway is considered part of the Everglades headwaters and was used historically by Seminole Native Americans. With a marshy floodplain up to two miles wide in places, it is a haven for bird life, alligators and other wildlife.

If paddling the entire blueway, you will pass through four locks. This process is easy and takes about 15 minutes each. There is no cost. Just before the lock, you pull on a cord to notify the lock keeper. Then, once directed into the lock, you hold onto a rope along either wall as the second gate slowly opens and water levels are lowered. Wait until the lock keeper instructs you to exit. Weekday Hours for all locks are Monday – Friday, all year, 7:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. Weekend Hours for all locks are March 1 – October 31, 5:30 a.m. – 7:30 p.m. November 1 – February 28, 5:30 a.m. – 6:30 p.m. The locks are labeled S-65, S-65A, S-65D, and S-65E. Locks S-65B and S-65C were removed as part of the restoration. For the beginning and latter part of the trip, you will be on the C-38 Canal.

Note: This is airboat country, so a tall flag on your canoe or kayak is recommended so you are visible over the marsh grass.

### **Campsites**

Nine primitive campsites are situated along the river and are currently available for reservations on a first-come, first-served basis free of charge. More campsites

are available 1.3 miles west of the river along the Istokpoga Canal near the boat ramp. You must first follow the steps to obtain a [Special Use License](#) in order to make reservations. Each campsite is limited to 6 persons and leave no trace guidelines must be followed. The campsites have a picnic table and fire ring. In addition, you can make arrangements to stay at the Riverwoods Field Lab for a fee: 863-801-5145.

## **Water Levels**

<https://w3.saj.usace.army.mil/h2o/reports/r-kss.html>. Ideal paddling is when water levels are below 1,400 cubic feet per second (cfs) at the S-65A gauge. The river begins to overflow its banks when above 1,400 cfs. Generally, the dry season is November through March.

**For more information about the river and paddling, explore the following websites:**

**[The Florida Paddling Trails Association](#)**

**[Paddle Florida Kissimmee River Restoration Paddle](#)**

**Recommended gear and safety equipment:** Information for an overnight or multi-day trip on the river.

**Trip tips and safety information:** Applicable for day and overnight trips.

**[Wildlife viewing tips](#)**

**Note:** use the following overnight data in conjunction with the [Kissimmee River Blueway Story Map](#). Check out this article about paddling the river on the [Living Wildly website](#).

## Kissimmee River Blueway Data Book

Directions such as “river right” or “river left” are for paddling downstream. All GPS points are in decimal-degrees.

PC = Primitive Campsite

L = Lodging

PI = Put-in

<i>River Mile #</i>	<i>Type of amenity</i>	<i>GPS # (decimal-degrees)</i>	<i>Directions</i>
<b>0</b>	PI: S-65 Lock. You can also launch about 2 miles north along Lake Kissimmee at <a href="#">Coleman Landing at Shady Oaks Campground</a> .	27.8035, -81.1984	On river right. Launches are just above and below the lock.
<b>2.25</b>	PI, L: Entrance to short canal to <a href="#">Westgate River Ranch Resort</a> and restaurant. Fee for landing or launching. Lodging available.	27.7735, -81.1862	On river right along old channel.
<b>2.4</b>	PC: <a href="#">Blanket Bay Marsh Campsite</a>	27.7725, -81.1835	On river left. High bank depending on water levels. Water access only.
<b>10</b>	PC: <a href="#">Town of Kicco Campsites</a> . Five sites to choose from.	27.6690, -81.1442	On river right along original river channel. Large primitive camping area. Some sites may be used by Florida Trail hikers and those arriving by vehicle.
<b>11.2</b>	S-65A Lock	27.6593, -81.1354	On river right
<b>16.6</b>	PI: Fort Kissimmee Boat Ramp, Avon Park Air Force Range	-27.5844, -81.1578	On river right. Must have <a href="#">permit from Avon Park Air Force Range</a> to use.
<b>16.7</b>	Restored section of Kissimmee River begins!	27.5828, -81.1577	
<b>25.6</b>	PC: <a href="#">Boney Marsh River Run Campsite</a>	27.5287, -81.2113	On river right. Water access only.
<b>28.7</b>	PI: Boney Marsh/Bluff Hammock unimproved remote launch for non-motorized watercraft. May not work	27.4992, -81.2112	On river right .35 mile down narrow airboat channel at high water.

	in low water.		
<b>33.9</b>	PI: Starvation Slough Airboat Launch for high water use.	27.4664, -81.1532	On river left 1 mile down narrow airboat channel.
<b>36.5</b>	PC: Oak Creek North Campsite	27.4464, -81.1438	On river left in live oak hammock up short canal. Spacious. The mammoth live oaks should be seen!
<b>36.8</b>	PC, PI: Oak Creek South Campsite	27.4439, -81.1431	On river left. Unimproved non-motorized launch.
<b>39.6</b>	PI, PC: Istokpoga Canal leading 1.3 miles to the <a href="#">Istokpoga Boat Ramp Area Campsites</a>	27.4119, -81.1422	On river right
<b>44.4</b>	L: <a href="#">Riverwoods Field Lab</a> . Reservations and fee required: 863-801-5145	27.3838, -81.1107	On river right. Easy access. Vehicle access off US 98. Low ground. Secure boats if river is high.
<b>45.4</b>	PI, PC: 4Es Campsite and Launch	27.3793, -81.0964	On river right. Vehicle access off US 98.
<b>52.2</b>	PC: Chandler Slough Campsite	27.3565, -81.0339	Water access only. On river right.
<b>55.6</b>	PC: Seaboard Marsh Campsite	27.3300, -81.0400	On river right. Water access only.
<b>56.9</b>	End of restored section of river	27.3019, -81.0300	
<b>57.6</b>	PI: S-65D Lock	27.3148, 81.0221	On river left. Launch just to the west along Kissimmee Island Drive above the lock. Another launch is along the same road on old river channel above lock.
<b>60.5</b>	PI: Platt Bluff	27.2957, -80.9946	Optional route on river left along original river channel. Scenic area. Little or no current.
<b>65.6</b>	PI: Kissimmee River Fishing Resort & Store	27.2393, -80.9836	On river right up short canal. No tent camping or overnight parking allowed. Some supplies can be obtained at store.

<b>66.3</b>	PC: S-65E Impoundment Campsite	27.2318, -80.9848	On river left along original river channel. Water access only.
<b>68.2</b>	S-65E Lock	27.2264, -80.9620	On river left
<b>76.5</b>	PI: C. Scott Driver Park and Marina. Must obtain permit for overnight parking. Contact Okeechobee County Parks & Recreation: 863-763-6950.	27.1510, -80.8701	On left off C-38 Canal just before bridge and Lake Okeechobee.

Report wildlife violations: Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) Hotline: 1-888-404-3922 or dial #FWC or \*FWC on cell phone.

Police, Fire and Medical Emergencies: 911

Polk County Sheriff: [863-298-6200](tel:863-298-6200)

Osceola County Sheriff: [407-348-1100](tel:407-348-1100)

Highlands County Sherriff: [863 402-7200](tel:863-402-7200)

Okeechobee County Sherriff: [863-763-3117](tel:863-763-3117)