



# BETTER TOGETHER: Florida Paddling Clubs



Fostering exploration, learning,  
and connection

# Florida is a paddling paradise

- ▶ Year-round paddling
- ▶ Different kinds of water appeals to wide range of skills
  - ▶ Inland: ICWs, rivers, creeks, lakes, springs
  - ▶ Coastal: Atlantic, Gulf, islands, mangrove tunnels
- ▶ Lots of guiding businesses and groups



# My Paddling Journey

- ▶ Lived in Gainesville for over 30 years
  - ▶ Rivers & springs
  - ▶ Occasional trips out to the coast
  - ▶ First kayak purchase in 2000: 13.5' Dagger Callisto
- ▶ Moved to the Tampa Bay area in 2017
  - ▶ New bigger water!
  - ▶ Sought training (current L3 instructor cert thru ACA)
  - ▶ Upgraded to sea kayaks: 16-17.5' NDK Pilgrims
  - ▶ **Tampa Bay Sea Kayakers**



# Before I go paddling with a group...

- ▶ Who else is going and what are their skills?
- ▶ Is anyone in charge? What's their experience and training?
- ▶ What's the float plan? Are they familiar with the area?
- ▶ How are they communicating with the group leading up to the paddle? (...and, eventually, on the water.)
- ▶ Is anyone equipped to deal with an emergency?
- ▶ What's the wind/weather/water forecast? Are leaders paying attention to it?
  
- ▶ Assuming I survived the first trip, do I want to hang out with this bunch again?



**Good trip planning & preparation  
=  
HAPPIER PADDLERS!**





**Adventure  
Skill Building  
Friendship**



# Our Mission

## ▶ Adventure

- ▶ Exploring Tampa Bay's inland and coastal waterways

## ▶ Skill Building

- ▶ Let's get better, together!

## ▶ Friendship

- ▶ Making connections on and off the water



# TBSK turns 30 this year

- ▶ Started as a district within the Florida Sea Kayaking Association in 1993
- ▶ Became its own club in 1996 with ~20 members from mostly Pinellas & Hillsborough Counties
- ▶ 160 members from 10 Florida counties today



# Paddling Adventures

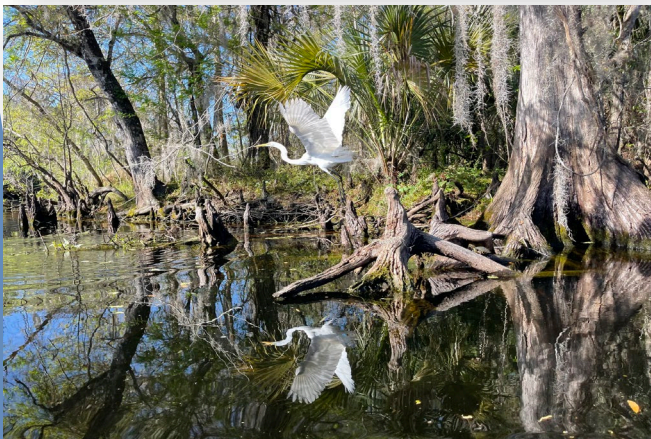
- ▶ West Central Florida: Hernando to Sarasota County
- ▶ Coastal waters, rivers, springs, lakes
- ▶ Online calendar of events
- ▶ Mostly day trips with some “weekender” options



# Recent Paddling Trips



# Wildlife!



# Safety

- ▶ Trained and vetted trip leaders
- ▶ Trip ratings: Rec, 1, 2, 3
- ▶ Manageable leader-to-paddler ratios
- ▶ All paddlers must wear a PFD
- ▶ Ongoing training opportunities within club and externally



# Skills Assessment Chart & Float Plans

Rev. 231126

Skills Self Assessment Chart		Paddle Trips			
		Level Recreational	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<b>Essential Requirements</b>					
Be Able To Swim		•	•	•	•
Physically fit to paddle		•	•	•	•
<b>Entry/ Exit Boat</b>					
Surf Launches & Landings < 2 ft				•	•
Surf Launches & Landings > 2 ft				•	•
<b>Paddling Skills</b>					
Forward Stroke		•	•	•	•
Sweep Strokes For Turning			•	•	•
Reverse Stroke			•	•	•
Moving Kayak Sideways				•	•
Brace Strokes				•	•
<b>Rescues</b>					
Ability to Wet Exit When Wearing Sprayskirt		•	•	•	•
Assisted Rescue				•	•
Self Rescue After Wet Exit				•	•
Towing				•	•
<b>Typical Distance</b>		<b>Cruising</b>			
2-5 Miles		1- 2 mph	•	•	•
Under 5 Miles		2-3 mph		•	•
5-10 Miles		2-3 mph			•
Over 10 Miles		> 3 mph			•
<b>Wave</b>		<b>Wind</b>			
Calm		< 4 mph	•	•	•
< 1 foot		< 6 mph		•	•
< 2 feet		< 12 mph			•
< 3 feet		< 15 mph			•

Float Plan Details		
Area Planning to Kayak		
Put in Location		
Take out Location		
Planned Route		
Launch Date		
Expected Arrival Date		
When to Contact Authorities		
Plan if you don't show up within the specified time - who to contact		
Important Contact Info		
Group Member Name	Phone Number	Emergency Number

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# Skill Building

- ▶ Safety & Training Coordinator
- ▶ Monthly practice sessions
  - ▶ Strokes & maneuvers
  - ▶ Self & Assisted Rescues
  - ▶ Rolling
  - ▶ Towing
  - ▶ Navigation
  - ▶ VHF Radios
  - ▶ Greenland skills



# Training Sessions



# Friendship

- ▶ Group paddles & practice sessions
- ▶ Picnic gatherings
- ▶ Meetings & guest speakers
- ▶ Community events
- ▶ Newsletter
- ▶ Weekender trips
- ▶ Active board



# Members Talk



- ▶ *I love TBSK because it's given me new friends and has improved my skills, which helps me enjoy wonderful outdoor experiences. —Pat Yadon*

# Members Talk



- ▶ *Tampa Bay is a paddling paradise, and TBSK has allowed me to enjoy paddling with friends who are serious about staying safe, learning new skills, and helping introduce new paddlers to our sport.*

—Phil Sheesley

# Members Talk



- ▶ *TBSK provided me with the skills to progress from a recreational paddler with few skills to being a trip leader with the expertise to lead people in challenging wind and water conditions. —Tom Sobocinski*

# Join us!

- ▶ We welcome new kayakers of all skill levels and experience!
- ▶ Annual Membership Fee
  - ▶ Individual: \$25
  - ▶ Family: \$35
- ▶ Liability Waiver
- ▶ [TBSK.club/JoinUs](https://TBSK.club/JoinUs)



# TBSK resources

- ▶ Trip planning - float plans, paddle places
- ▶ Trip leader training info
- ▶ Helpful links to wind, weather, tide, and regional water quality information
- ▶ Buy/sell forum for kayaks and paddle gear
- ▶ Newsletters
- ▶ Videos of guest speakers
- ▶ Learn about skills training and kayak trip opportunities around the state, nation, and world

# More Information

- ▶ Visit our website: [TBSK.club](http://TBSK.club)
- ▶ Email us at: [tbsk@tbsk.club](mailto:tbsk@tbsk.club)
- ▶ Follow us on Facebook: [facebook.com/TampaBaySeaKayakers](https://facebook.com/TampaBaySeaKayakers)



**A couple more great examples...**



# Paradise Coast Paddling Club

- ▶ Founded in Naples in 2006
- ▶ Trips for first-timers to long-distance/fast-paced paddlers, some camping trips
- ▶ Safety emphasis
  - ▶ PFDs mandatory
  - ▶ Rescue practice sessions
- ▶ Monthly meetings 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesdays
- ▶ [Paradise Coast Paddlers Club - Paddlesports of Naples](#)
- ▶ Jay Rose, Owner



# South Florida Paddlers

- ▶ Founded in Miami in 2017 (Broward/Miami-Dade/Monroe)
- ▶ Grown to >10K Facebook members (~ 45 active core members)
- ▶ Hosts monthly meetups open to the public
- ▶ Hosts many invite-only meetups each month—these folks travel!
- ▶ Promotes safety through education and training
- ▶ Core members are also volunteers in other orgs like FPTA, Team River Runner, & Palm Beach Pack & Paddle Club.
- ▶ [South Florida Paddlers | Facebook](#)
- ▶ David Chen, founder and current president of FPTA



# Other Paddling Resources & Orgs

- ▶ [Office of Greenways & Trails](#)
- ▶ [Florida Paddling Trails Association](#)
- ▶ [Paddle Florida](#)
- ▶ [Florida SpringsWatch Program](#)
- ▶ [Apalachicola RiverTrek](#)
- ▶ [TRAQSFest](#)



# QUESTIONS?



**Jill Lingard, happy paddler**  
[jill.lingard@gmail.com](mailto:jill.lingard@gmail.com)  
352-665-1776