



Florida Designated Paddling Trails
Wakulla River

Map 1

Wakulla Springs

Wakulla

Newport Station

Saint Marks

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0 2 4 8 Miles



Wakulla River Paddling Trail Guide

The Waterway

Wildlife is abundant along this clear, spring-fed river lined with majestic, moss-draped cypress trees. Manatees, once seen only in summer, are now spotted year-round. Look carefully for manatee at the US 98 Bridge and around an island mid-way on the river, just before the power lines. Paddlers can choose between two bridges south of [Wakulla Springs State Park](#) to access the river. The current is usually gentle enough to paddle up and back for any distance desired.

The Paddling Experience

The Wakulla River is a popular paddling destination and suitable for beginners. On weekends and during the summer months the river may be crowded with powerboats and people floating in tubes. Enjoy a more serene experience by visiting on weekdays or during north Florida's pleasant winter months. The current is generally mild enough and water levels sufficient to be able to paddle from either the CR 365 bridge or the US 98 bridge and make a round trip going upstream or downstream. It is about 4 miles distance between the two bridges, the designated trail endpoints. You may also extend your trip by paddling further downstream to the St. Marks City Park, (2.6 miles downstream from the US 98 Bridge) or further downstream to the historic fort site at [San Marcos de Apalachee Historic State Park](#) (3.2 miles from the US 98 Bridge). At this site the Wacissa River joins the St Marks River and both form an ever-widening channel to the Gulf of Mexico, bordering the unspoiled [St Marks National Wildlife Refuge](#). From the San Marcos de Apalachee Historic State Park it is also possible to continue further upstream about 5 miles on the St Marks River to the US 98 Bridge and [Newport County Campground](#).

Access Points

Choose between two launch sites next to bridges over the Wakulla River and paddle round-trip up or downstream.

CR 365 (Upper Bridge Rd)

There is an unimproved launch on the southwest side of the bridge. There is limited parking and no facilities. *From Crawfordville, turn east on CR 61 and continue about ___ miles to the unpaved launch on the southwest side of the bridge.*

US 98 Bridge

There is an improved launch and outfitters next to the southeast side of the bridge. Fee to launch. *From Tallahassee: Take Hwy 363 (Woodville Hwy.) 18 miles south to State Rd. 98 (Coastal Hwy.) turn right and drive west 2 miles.*



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Outfitters and Shuttle Service

[Ray's Kayaks & Excursions](#) (850) 508-7593

[St. Marks Outfitters](#) (850) 510-7919

[The Wilderness Way](#) (850) 877-7200

[TNT Hideaway](#) (850) 925-6412)

Base Camp

Make historic [Wakulla Springs State Park Lodge](#) a comfortable home base for exploring the rich history and natural wonders of the area. Home of one of the largest and deepest freshwater springs in the world, this park plays host to an abundance of wildlife which includes alligators, turtles, manatees, deer, and birds. Daily guided riverboat tours provide a closer view of wildlife and are perfect for the wildlife photographer. Swimming is a popular activity during the hot summer months. Fall, winter and spring are the best times to enjoy the nature trails where visitors walk beside remarkable karst features and among rare and unusual plants in its old-growth forests. 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. Wakulla Springs State Park and Lodge is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is designated as a National Natural Landmark.

Manatees

Enjoy manatees from a safe distance for your safety and theirs. If you get too close it is possible they may flip your canoe or kayak as they dive to get away from you! The West Indian manatee is an endangered species and is protected by state and federal law. Please avoid harassing or disturbing them as your behavior can negatively impact them as well as earn you a citation from law enforcement.

- 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.
- 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 the [Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission website](#).