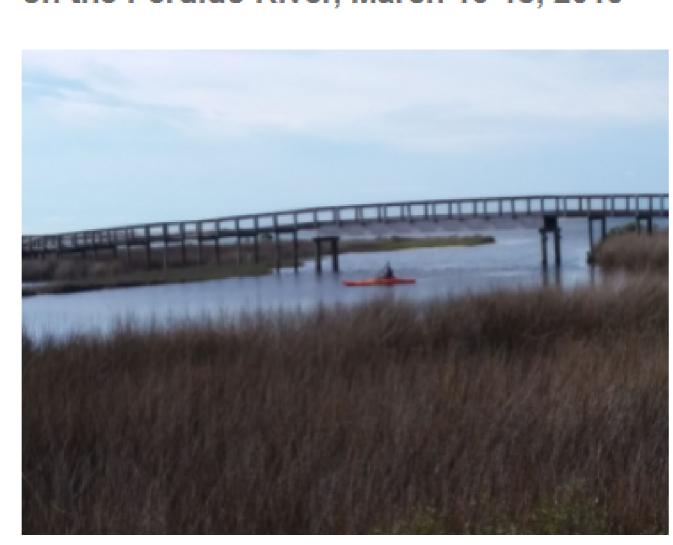
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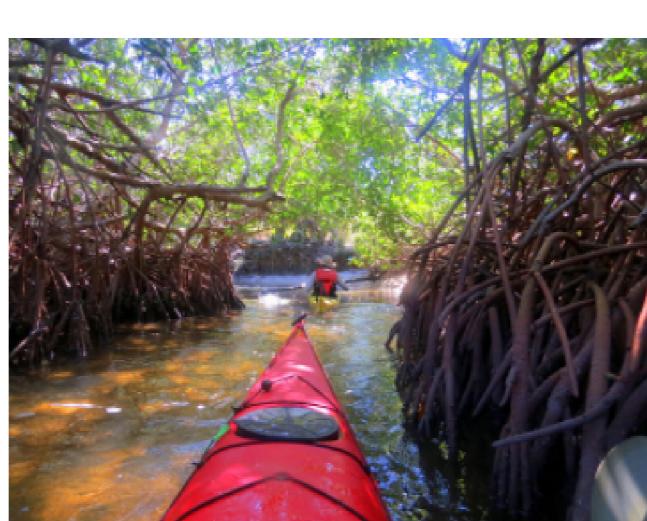


Trip Spotlight: The Flori-Bama Expedition on the Perdido River, March 10-15, 2019



The Perdido river serves as the border between Florida and Alabama. Through a partnership with the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and Florida's Nature Conservancy, we are excited to be staging this new event. From beach camping through a cozy meandering river to paddling in Perdido Bay, this event might contain the most diverse group of ecosystems we attempt this season. Evening programs include presentations from the Northwest Florida Water Management District, The Nature Conservancy, the Escambia County IFAS Extension Office, Blue Angel campground and a terrific, surprise musical performance at Big Lagoon State Park on our final night. This event has been sold out for two months!

Top 11 Kayaking Tips from 2018 By Kayak Hipster, Paddling.com



We're closing out the year, so here's my top 11 tips of 2018.

A couple of these tips are new things I picked up this year, that I'm going to be working on moving forward, and then a couple are oldies but goodies. They actually came up this year, so I wanted to bring them up again.

DRESS FOR IMMERSION

The first one, and I don't think I'm going to get tired of saying this one, is dressing for immersion. Making sure people around you that are going to be paddling with you also dress for immersion. Also, if you're going to be out in colder conditions, always bring a dry change of clothes - hopefully in a size slightly larger so that other people can use it in the case of an emergency. We actually had a couple of cases this year of paddlers that were not dressed appropriately, it was a great thing that others in the group had not only extra clothes to share but also tying this into the second tip, which is also extremely important in cold weather, to have hot liquids with you. [Read more...]

Florida's State Parks Still Dealing with Damage By Craig Pittman, Tampa Bay Times

More Than Three Months After Michael,



Photo: Aerial of St. Joseph Peninsula State Park (U.S. Geological Survey)

Hurricane Michael was so powerful that when it hit the Florida Panhandle last fall, it tore a state park in two.

The storm surge that pushed through T.H. Stone Memorial St. Joseph Peninsula State Park in Cape San Blas sliced open two inlets, cutting through the park and connecting St. Joseph Bay and the Gulf of Mexico. The largest inlet, now 20 feet deep, separated the main park area on the peninsula from the campground and nature trails on the other side. Instead of a peninsula, there's now an island.

More than three months later, state park officials are still trying to figure out what to do about that as they work to reopen all of St. Joseph Peninsula and three other state parks that remain closed because of all the damage caused by the hurricane. [Read more...]



Florida's Springs Don't Have to Fail By Dr. Robert Knight

Executive Director, Howard T. Odum Florida Springs Institute

Florida Springs Conservation Plan which summarizes historical and recent data for 32 "sentinel" springs from among Florida's 1,000+ artesian springs. This springs' short list includes most of Florida's publicly-owned, large, and economically-important springs that serve as the "canaries-in-the-coal-mine" in terms of overall springs condition. The Florida Springs Conservation Plan describes a springs ecological health assessment protocol based on the Florida Springs Institute's ongoing synthesis of springs research data.

The H.T. Odum Florida Springs Institute recently published the first

Springs health was assessed based on measured changes that closely relate to springs ecology – flow, salinity, and nitrate concentrations. Each indicator was rated as Very Good (A), Good (B), Fair (C), Poor (D), or Failed (F). Half of Florida's most important springs received grades of D+ or lower, indicating degraded conditions with significant loss of ecological health and a high priority for restoration. Seventy five percent of these sentinel springs were below a B-, indicating an unacceptable level of harm to at least one of the three health indicators. Some of Florida's springs regions are in worse shape than others, such as springs in East-central Florida, Southwest Florida, and along the Suwannee/Santa Fe Rivers, and are most imperiled due to human activities. [Read more...

Flora & Fauna Spotlight Record Number of Manatees Killed by Florida Boaters By Amanda Castro



Photo: Florida Springs Institute

state reported a near-record of manatee deaths overall.

Florida boaters killed a record number of manatees in 2018, and the

TCPalm.com reported that the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission recorded 119 manatees killed by boat strikes last year, breaking the record of 106 set in 2016 and tied in 2017. Overall, 804 manatees died in Florida waters, just shy of the record 830 recorded in 2013.

Patrick Rose, the executive director of Save the Manatee Club, said on average, there are up to 500 manatee deaths a year.

"That is nearly the high record of 2013, which we believed would



Upcoming Trips

Florida Keys Challenge February 9-15, 2019

Paddle the azure coastal waters of the Middle Florida Keys, including the length of the famed 7-Mile Bridge, explore mangrove tunnels, and watch sea turtle surface beside your kayak, and enjoy a snorkeling trip out to Looe Registration for this trip is closed.

Flori-Bama Expedition on the Perdido River

March 10-15, 2019 Paddling the Florida/Alabama border, enjoy beach camping along a cozy meandering river to the more open waters of Perdido Bay as we explore the most diverse set of ecosystems of the season.

Suwannee River Paddling

Register by: February 24

<u>Festival</u> April 5-7, 2019

With camping atop the bluff overlooking two beautiful rivers, our season-capping festival takes place at Suwannee River State Park near Live Oak. The weekend will offer supported 8-12 mile paddling options on both the Suwannee and Withlacoochee Rivers, a concert featuring Paddle Florida's favorite musicians, and educational presentations from regional

We are currently entertaining proposals and ideas about where to host paddling events next season. Contact us with your suggestions!

waterway experts.

Register by: March 22

How To: Plan for a Kayaking Trip



explained by World

Champion kayaker,

Ken Whiting.

Click e to view an update from state officials on the parks affected by

Hurricane Michael.



Tallahassee, FL: March 13 Join your tourism colleagues

on March 13, 2019 in Tallahassee to educate the legislature, media and all Floridians about the importance of Florida's tourism industry. Together, let's share the positive economic impact of tourism to Florida and to its residents as well as how crucial it is to support Florida's No. 1 industry. For more information or to register now, click here.

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As a 501(c)(3) non-profit

organization, Paddle Florida is dedicated to promoting water conservation, wildlife preservation, springs restoration, and waterways protection across Florida. You can help us meet our water conservation missions by (1) joining us on one or more paddling adventures scheduled annually on Florida's wild and scenic rivers and coastlines, or (2) donating to Paddle Florida via our secure PayPal connection

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never be broken, so it's really a tragic year for the manatees," Rose said. [Read more...]

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