



# The Wild, Wonderful Withlacoochee

February 13-18, 2020



**Start:** Marsh Bend Outlet Park in Lake Panasoffkee  
**End:** Bird Creek Park on the Gulf of Mexico, just west of Yankeetown  
**Total Distance:** 57-71 miles

**Full Trip Fees:** Includes camping, meals, and shuttle.  
 • \$499 adults, \$475 seniors (65+) and college students

**Evening Programs:** TBD

**Paddle Florida Lite** (4 or fewer days): \$115/day (includes camping and meals, but not shuttle)

**Registration Deadline:** February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020 or when trip capacity of 60 paddlers is reached

**Official Outfitters:** [Rainbow River Canoe & Kayak](#) or [Aardvark's Florida Kayak Company](#)

**Shuttle Details:** Paddlers will park their vehicles at the launch point, Marsh Bend Outlet Park in Lake Panasoffkee, for the duration of the trip. At trip's end, paddlers and their boats will be shuttled back to vehicles at Marsh Bend Outlet Park. There is no week-long parking option at the trip's ending point at Bird Creek Park.

## Trip Itinerary:

Day	Lunch Stop	Lunch Miles	Camp Site	Daily Miles
1	N/A	N/A	Marsh Bend Outlet Park	0
2	Rutland Boat Ramp	5.5	Potts Preserve	12
3	In camp	Variable	Rainbow Springs State Park	0-5
4	Grey Eagle Boat Ramp	10	Rainbow Springs State Park	19
5	Goldendale Boat Ramp	9	Inglis Lock & Dam	17
6	N/A	N/A	END: Bird Creek Park	9
				57-62

- **Day 1/Thursday, February 13: Marsh Bend Outlet Park, Lake Panasoffkee**  
***Paddling Miles: 0***



Our trip begins at Sumter County's Marsh Bend Outlet Park in Lake Panasoffkee, where we'll camp the first night. Paddlers can check in between 1-5PM and set up tents prior to the kick-off dinner and orientation for the paddling adventure to come.

Throughout the week, dinner will be served at 6PM each night, followed by an evening program at 7PM. Nightly entertainment ranges from musicians to educational speakers who will provide insights regarding the flora, fauna, history, and ecology of the region we're paddling through. We'll eat breakfast at 7:30 each morning and launch boats from 8:30-9:00AM.

Be sure to bring a camera to capture and preserve beautiful river scenes, wildlife sightings, and campfire memories.

- **Day 2/Friday, February 14: Marsh Bend Outlet Park to Potts Preserve**  
***Paddling Miles: 12***

After breakfast at 7:30 and breaking down camp, paddlers will launch their boats onto the Withlacoochee River from 8:30-9:00AM. We'll follow that schedule each morning. One of the more interesting man-made features paddlers will experience on the river today is going through a lock together at Wysong Dam, which comes about two miles into the day's journey. Our lunch stop will be about 5.5 miles downriver at Rutland Boat Ramp, another Sumter County Park. Along the way, we should see abundant wildlife, including turtles, fish, and many species of birdlife. Osprey, bald eagles, swallow-tail kites, woods storks, ibises, limpkins, and cormorants abound.



Today's destination is Potts Preserve, a facility maintained by the Southwest Florida Water Management District. A section of the Florida Trail runs through the property, offering paddlers a chance to exercise their legs if they wish to after several hours of sitting in a canoe or kayak.



- **Day 3/Saturday, February 15: Potts Preserve to Rainbow Springs State Park**  
***Paddling Miles: 19***

Break's over! Today is our longest mileage paddle of the trip, but as always we "go with the flow"...so no worries! Our lunch stop will be set up at Grey Eagle Boat Ramp about halfway into the day's journey. The day's paddling destination is Rainbow River Canoe & Kayak, which sits on the right bank of the Withlacoochee just past the mouth of the Rainbow River. From there, paddlers and boats will be shuttled to Rainbow River State Park Campground. In keeping with our tradition, a visit to a Florida State Park is included in all our trips.

During our scouting trip for this river, after paddling four miles up the spring run *against* the current, it was decided this is something that we didn't want to subject our paddlers to at the end of a 19-mile day. You're welcome!

Rainbow Spring is Florida's fourth largest spring and, from the 1930s through the 1970s, was the site of a popular, privately-owned attraction. Archaeological evidence indicates that people have been using this spring for nearly 10,000 years. The spring feeds the beautiful Rainbow River, and you'll notice quite a difference in clarity and vibrant colors from the darker, tea-colored waters of the Withlacoochee.



- **Day 4/Sunday, February 16: Layover day at Rainbow Springs State Park with optional paddle of Rainbow Springs. *Paddling Miles: 0-5***

We've scheduled a layover day at Rainbow Springs so that folks can explore the paddling gen of the head springs.

Since we have no campsite to reach downriver today, paddlers are also welcome to take it easy, maybe paddle just a portion of the Rainbow River, enjoy a hike, read a book, take a nap, and rest up for tomorrow's big miles.

- **Day 5/Monday, February 17: Rainbow Springs State Park to Inglis Lock & Dam**  
***Paddling Miles: 17***



Today we'll experience two rivers, a lake, and a dam. We'll start the morning with a paddle from the park down the colorful Rainbow River, with the current carrying us back to the Withlacoochee and through the town of Dunnellon. Our lunch stop will be about 9 miles downriver at Citrus County's Goldendale Ramp.

We'll continue across the long Lake Rousseau, a birder's paradise. One of the few man-made reservoirs in the state, it was formed in the 1920's by the construction of a dam on the Withlacoochee River near the town of Inglis. Later, it was selected to be a significant part of the ill-fated Cross-Florida Barge Canal. Rousseau is approximately 12 miles long, one mile wide, and covers some 3700 acres. We'll be crossing an 8-mile section. If it's windy, put your spray skirt before launching lunch stop.

Paddlers  
the Inglis  
campsite



will count down the channel markers to the canal for Lock and Dam, our for the night.

- **Day 6/Tuesday, February 18: Inglis Lock & Dam to Bird Creek Park on the Gulf of Mexico**  
**Paddling Miles: 9**

Our final day of paddling will start with a short shuttle, as paddlers need assistance getting past the Inglis Spillway back to calmer waters of the Withlacoochee's final stretch a couple miles downstream. This day's easy paddle of 9 miles will be very scenic as we pass through the quaint village of



Yankeetown. Fresh water will eventually give way to salt in the grassy flatlands of Florida's Nature Coast as we near the Gulf of Mexico and our trip's final destination. Lunch and shuttles will be waiting at Bird Creek Park, ready to whisk paddlers and boats back to their vehicles in Lake Panasoffkee.

