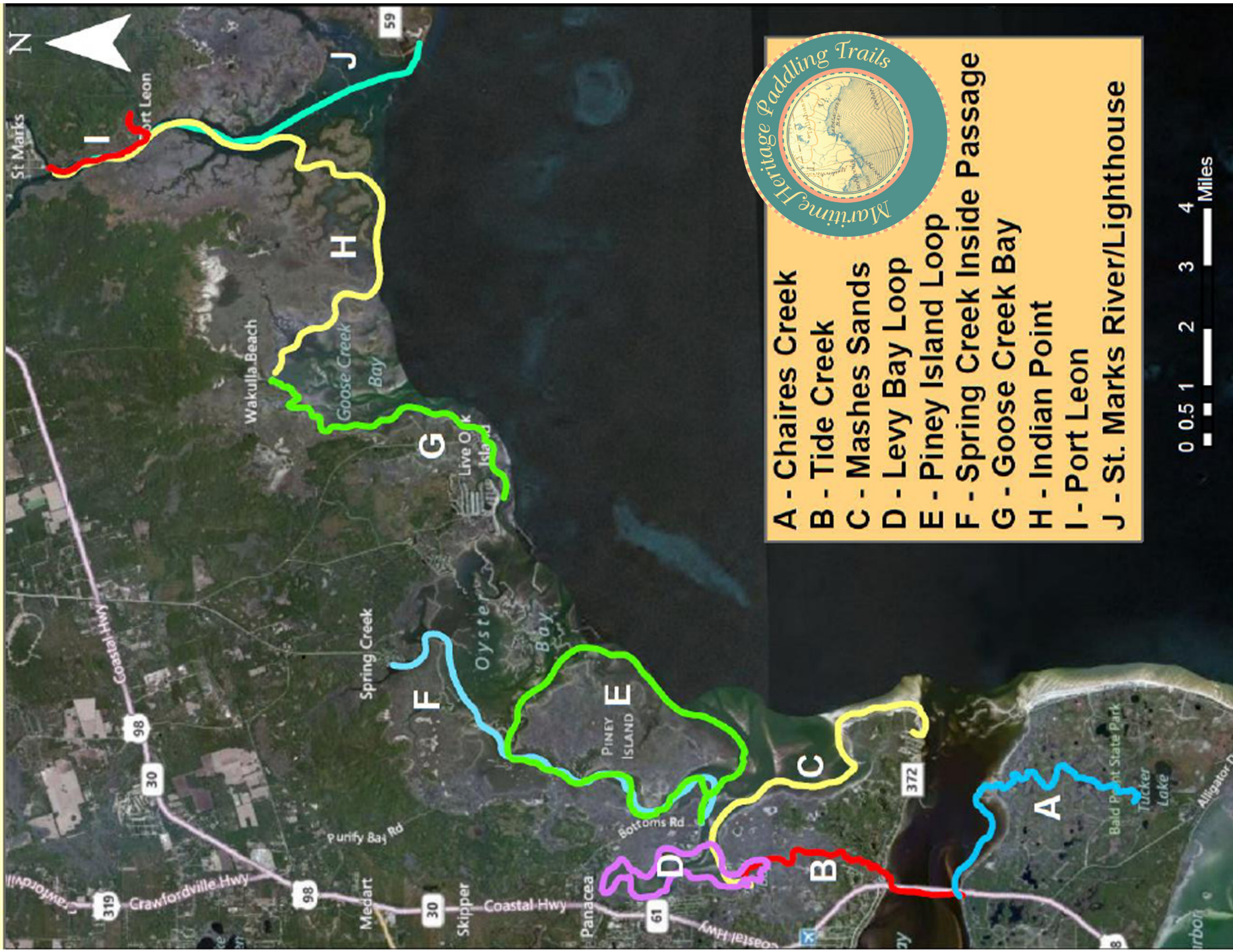


Suggested Gear List

- Lightweight paddle • U.S. Coast Guard approved personal flotation device • Towline • Marine whistle, bell, or horn within easy reach
- Waterproof GPS and extra batteries • Pertinent maps and tide charts • Cell phone • First aid kit (ace bandage, butterfly bandages, band-aids, moleskin, eyedrops, tweezers, scissors, cold/hot pads) • Rain gear • Medication (bi-ox, Tylenol, antacid, painkiller, antibiotic) • Appropriate clothing for anticipated weather • Sun hat, waterproof sunscreen, and long-sleeved, light-colored shirt • Polarized sunglasses • Insect repellent • Paddling gloves • Easily accessible water bottle • Dry bags for maps, binoculars, camera • Fishing rod, bait, dip net and line

Apalachee Bay Maritime Heritage Paddling Trail System



Potential Hazards

Paddlers should always consult tide charts and weather conditions before planning trips, since each paddling trail is affected by wind and incoming and outgoing tides. Other considerations include:

Oyster Bars: Exposed at low tide, these may look inviting, but are not. Oyster shells have sharp, jagged edges which can cut deep. So never try to walk on these flats.

Alligators: These ancient creatures are common along the rivers and marshes of Apalachee Bay. When startled, they will slide from the bank into the water for safety. Always give them plenty of room and do not feed or approach them, as they may have a nest or young nearby. Never carry a small animal on board, as it would represent a food source and thus create interest on the part of the gator.

Manatees: It is very exciting to see these docile creatures as they graze on vegetation and swim along the shallow waters in groups. However, keep your distance when observing them. They pose no threat, except for the fact that they surface to breathe and in so doing may accidentally tip your kayak.

Trail Design

Trail maps were provided by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Office of Greenways and Trails. Trail development was assisted by Diane Delaney and Don Lesh of Applied Sustainability Enterprises, with guidance from: Doug Alderson, Office of Greenways and Trails; Robert Baker, TnT Hideaway; Madeleine Carr, Historian; Bill Lowrie, Big Bend Maritime Center and Scenic Byway; Mike McNamara, St. Marks Outfitters; Mark Mitchell, Panacea Waterfronts; Pam Portwood, Wakulla County Tourist Development Council; and Liz Sparks, FWC Apalachicola River Paddling Trail System.

Seasons

Spring and fall are the best times to explore the trails, though they can be enjoyed at any time of the year. From December to February, expect windier conditions and colder weather, with normal highs in the mid-50s to low 60s. In summer, from June – August, expect higher humidity, chances of storms, more insects, and temperatures in the upper 80s and mid 90s. During spring and fall, the temperatures are in the upper 70s to mid-80s, with lower humidity. These seasons also offer the best wildlife and wildflower viewing.

Fees

Fees from \$3 - \$5 apply for entrance to parks and/or ramps for most paddling trail launch sites.



Paddle Apalachee Bay



Be transported to a different time and place as you paddle Apalachee Bay's Ten Maritime Heritage Trails. Designed for enthusiasts of all levels, enjoy fishing, wildlife viewing, and photography as you explore one of Florida's last great bays, its inlets, rivers, and springs. Apalachee is one of the healthiest and most productive bays in the United States, providing a host of ecosystem services to an area that lacks industrial and commercial development. Most of the Bay's coastline is protected as part of the St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge.

The Bay is bounded by the Ochlockonee River in the west and the Econfina River in the east. Named for the Apalachee Indian nation, Apalachee Bay is in the northeastern Gulf of Mexico, occupying an indentation of the Florida coast known as the Big Bend region. It occupies a 412 km² surface area with an 11,900 km² drainage area. It is surprisingly shallow, with an average depth of 3.0m. Most trails occur in Wakulla County, between the Waterfront Florida Communities of Panacea in the west and St. Marks in the east and can be completed in 2-3 hours.

Natural Splendor

The water flowing into Apalachee Bay is its lifeblood. The Florida Aquifer moves underground, occasionally surfacing as springs, from South Georgia to the Bay, creating seven rivers which feed into it. The extensive marsh grass ecosystem serves as a nursery for a wealth of marine life and is also important for erosion control, serving as a buffer between sea and land. Forest lands, primarily Long-Leaf Pine, protect the Bay's watershed and water quality. In addition to this natural beauty, premier wildlife viewing – Black Bear, Deer, Bobcat, River Otter, Manatee, Dolphins, a host of shore birds, Eagles, Osprey, White and Brown Pelicans, and migrating waterfowl and butterflies – makes paddling these trails a real adventure!



Amenities

US Highway 98 -- known as the Big Bend Scenic Byway, a 220-mile state and nationally designated scenic route -- connects the town of St. Marks and the St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge to Panacea, Ochlockonee Bay, and Bald Point State Park. All launch points are off this route, as are lodging, camping, shopping, dining, and other amenities. Go to Visitwakulla.com and FloridaBigBendScenicByway.org and for more information.

Trail Information

Laminated itineraries for each trail can be borrowed at the Wakulla Welcome Center (850/984-3966) in Panacea and St. Marks Outfitters (850/510-7919) in St. Marks or downloaded at Visitwakulla.com. Brochures are available at area Information Centers and paddlers can purchase the waterproof Top Spot Map: Panacea to Apalachee Bay Fishing and Recreation Map # N231 online at offshoremapping.com. Contact the following ACA certified professionals and outfitters for additional information and assistance and visit the listed marinas for maps, supplies, and rental equipment.

Doug Alderson, DEP Office of Greenway and Trails
850/421-3677; 850/245-2061,
doug.alderson@dep.state.fl.us

Robert Baker, T-n-T Hideaway, (850) 925-6412
Tnhideaway.com & Wilderness Way,
850/ 877-7200 Thewildernessway.net

Mike McNamara, St. Marks Outfitters,
(850) 510-7919 Stmarksoutfitters.com

Liz Sparks, FWC Apalachicola River Paddling Trail System,
850/922-6160, liz.sparks@myfwc.com

Rock Landing Marina, 850/984-5844,
Rocklandingmarina.com

Shields Marina, 850/270-0584, Shieldsmarina.com

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May, 2013."

