



A Guide
to Area
Canoe &
Kayak
Trails
3rd Edition

Paddle Manatee



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Manatee County

Paddling the Braden River



www.mymanatee.org/naturalresources
www.facebook.com/manatee.natural.resources

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About this Guide

Long ago, waterways, both fresh and salt, were usable long-distance “trails and highways” prior to other forms of transportation. Water routes played a key role in the exploration and settlement of North America. Water routes are still serious business today, used for transporting goods and products, benefiting commerce and trade. But these waterways also offer an unique opportunity for passive recreational enjoyment and communing with nature.

Manatee County created a series of over 75 miles of paddling trails through wondrous area waterways for recreational canoeing and kayaking enjoyment, creating links to the Florida Circumnavigational Saltwater Paddling Trail, an officially designated National Recreational Trail.



Clean up on Old Braden River

Terry Longpre

The guide can be used along with designated paddling routes to help guide the canoeist and kayaker through multiple mangrove trails as well as open water terrain.

There are seven area waterways to be explored with the help of this guide. The first and northernmost trail system is the *Bishop Harbor Trail*. The second trail is the *Terra Ceia Trail* which includes Miguel Bay and Terra Ceia Bay areas. The third trail is the *Manatee River Trail*, which includes the Upper Manatee River (easterly tributary), and the Manatee River (westerly tributary). The fourth and fifth trails include the *Braden River Trail and Lower Braden River Trail*. The *Palma Sola Bay Trail* is next, followed by the *Sarasota Bay/Barrier Islands Trails*, completing the Paddle Manatee System.

Each trail system is unique and requires different skill levels varying from easy to moderate to difficult. Before setting off on your excursion be sure to read the accompanying paddling trail information to properly assess the skills required and level of difficulty. Additionally, checking local tide and weather information before you begin your day will ensure a safer and more enjoyable outing for all.

Enjoy the area's most magnificent blueways (paddling trails) as you explore the vast array of wildlife, commune with nature, and learn about the area's rich heritage.





ENVIRONMENT

Habitat

Two forms of coastal wetlands are present in the region: tidal marshes and mangrove forests.

Healthy wetlands, including both freshwater and intertidal habitats, are important to the vitality of area waters because they provide food and shelter for marine life. Wetlands also filter pollutants while intertidal habitats, such as salt marshes and mangroves, help protect shorelines from erosion.

There are three different kinds of mangroves found throughout area waters. Red mangroves (*Rhizophora mangle*) are found closest to open water. They have arching prop roots and have seed pods or propagules. Black mangroves (*Avicennia germinans*) are found



Red Mangrove with arching prop roots.

Patti Cross

growing among red mangroves. Black mangroves “sweat” salt from their leaves and send up twiggy projections from their roots embedded in the soil surrounding the tree trunk, called pneumatophores, which provide oxygen to the tree’s roots. White mangroves (*Laguncularia racemosa*) usually grow above the high tide line. Green buttonwood (*Conocarpus erectus*), although not a true mangrove, grows in the most landward location of the littoral zone, behind the other mangrove species. It generally has small, elongated leaves and bears round “buttons” that turn brown.

Try to identify which types of mangroves you encounter on your paddling excursion.

Seagrass meadows characterize most of the shallow waters of the area. The most common species of grass in the area are shoal grass, widgeon grass, turtle grass, and manatee grass. The grass beds provide protective nursery areas for juvenile fish, shrimp and crabs, and provide surface for growth of algae epiphytes which serve as food for fish and crustaceans, as well as manatees.

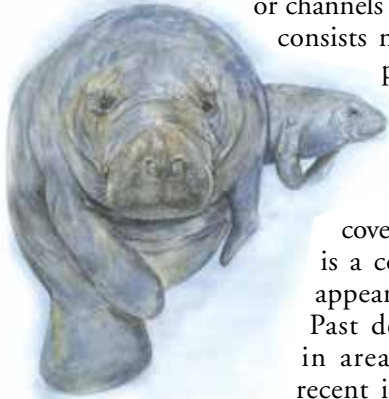
Reptiles

Reptiles do call these waters home. The alligator is probably the best known and recognized, but many kinds of turtles, lizards, and snakes abound, along with amphibian frogs and toads. Exercise due caution around these reptiles.



Mammals

While paddling, you may be lucky enough to see the two species of marine mammals which normally inhabit the area - the Atlantic bottlenose dolphin and the West Indian manatee. Manatees, though mammals, are included in the world of water creatures. These endangered “gentle giants” often swim great distances, especially in the winter, looking for warmer waters and can be seen in parts of the Upper Manatee River, Braden River and Palma Sola Bay during cold weather months.



Manatees

Manatees prefer warm, shallow waters or channels that support their food, which consists mainly of seagrasses. Manatee presence and abundance in the area appears to be related, at least in part, to environmental factors such as water temperature and seagrass coverage. The loss of seagrass habitat is a concern for manatees, as they appear to prefer unaltered habitat. Past declines of seagrass meadows in area waters are a concern, but recent improvements in seagrass are encouraging. If you see any harassed or injured manatees, please contact the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission, 1-888-404-3922.

Dolphins reside in population units described as “communities.” The bottlenose dolphins of Sarasota Bay, for example, are mostly permanent residents including at least four generations and use much of the same home range now as they did 30 years ago. In general, dolphin density is greater north of Buttonwood Harbor and Long Bar than southern Sarasota Bay. Bottlenose dolphins are opportunistic feeders, taking advantage of a variety of fish species as prey (pinfish, pigfish, and mullet).

Of the other mammals associated with a water habitat, those most likely to be found are raccoons and marsh rabbits. Occasionally, a river otter will surprise an observer on the Braden and Upper Manatee rivers. Bobcats may also be seen, often mistaken for the endangered Florida panther.



Dolphins

Mind Your Manners

- Wear polarized glasses on the waterway as it makes seeing objects below the surface easier to observe.
- Look for the swirl. This swirl occurs when a manatee dives and looks like a large footprint on the water's surface or it looks like a half moon, if the manatee is traveling.
- Practice “passive observation” and watch manatees from a distance.
- It is illegal to feed or give them water.
- Stash your trash.





Common Names:

Flounder, Grouper (red), Florida Pompano, Red Drum (redfish), Grouper (black).

region. Light tackle, 10 lb. test line with 20-30 lb. test leader works well. Live shrimp can be purchased or live baitfish netted. Artificial lures also work well. A fishing license will be required, except for Florida residents over 65 or those under 16 years of age. For a license visit your county tax collector's office, ask a local bait and tackle shop operator, or visit www.floridaconservation.org and click on: "licenses".

Fish

Our waters support a wide array of fish and crustaceans such as red drum, spotted seatrout, snook, flounder, blue crab, pompano, mullet, stone crab and shrimp. The west coast of Florida offers some of the finest shallow-water in season fishing in the world. The trails in this guide and the beautiful clear flats studded with mangrove shoreline, large expanses of grass flats, oyster bars, and sandbars provide access to some of the best fishing holes found in the

Birds

Manatee County has many areas essential for waterfowl, both resident and migratory. It is a food source and nesting ground for wading birds like ibis, herons, and wood storks. Diving birds such as cormorants and anhingas are also in the area. Bald eagles, ospreys, hawks, and vultures can be seen at high altitudes riding the winds. Other birds may be observed including egrets, gulls, brown pelicans, roseate spoonbills, kingfisher, terns, frigates, white pelicans, ducks, and coots.

A word about canoeing or kayaking etiquette around bird colonies: Don't go ashore at any posted islands. Sometimes birds roost or nest in places that are not posted. As a general rule, remain 20-30 yards offshore. You are too close if the birds stop what they are doing to watch you or begin to move away; you are at their "flushing distance," and you need to move slowly farther away and keep paddles low. Birds need lots of energy for nesting and migrating. Adding stress could take away their ability to survive.



Great Blue Heron

Area History

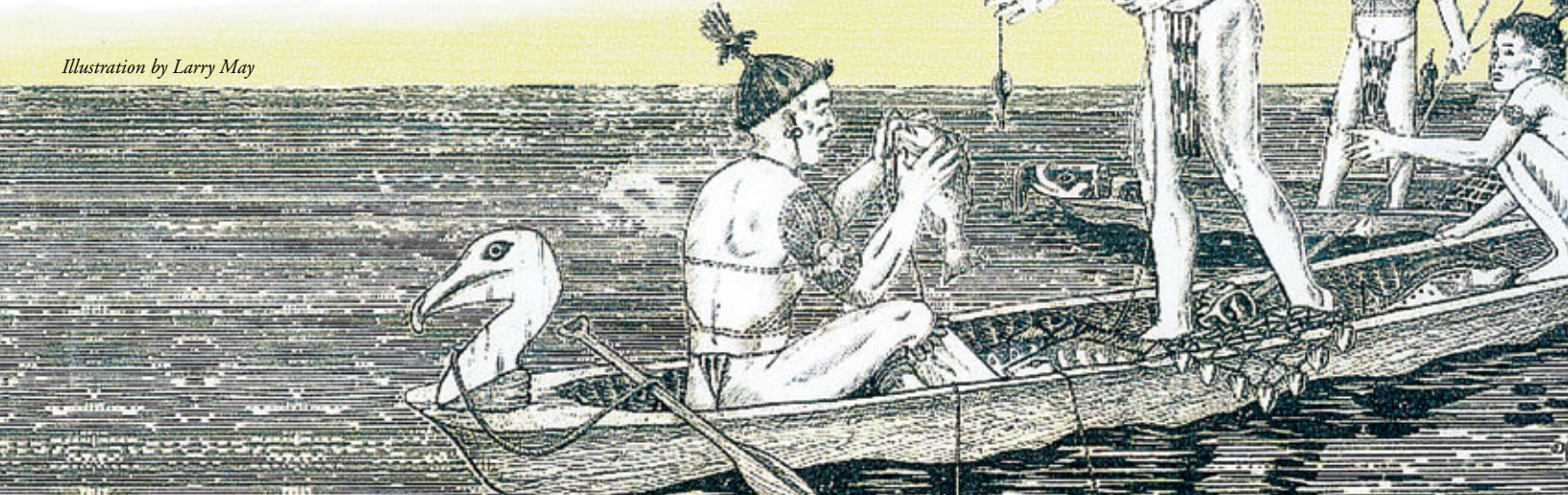
The shorelines you paddle by, especially Terra Ceia areas, are dotted with shell middens (discarded food remains of shell and bone as well as broken pottery and tools) of the Tocobaga Indians. They inhabited the area from as early as 900AD to the 1600s. Many of their tribal names and traditions are lost to us.

The Tocobaga Indians, named after a high chief, primarily inhabited the area between Tarpon Springs and Sarasota. The village typically consisted of a configuration of mounds. The man-made mound summit served as a foundation for structures like temples, ceremonial stages, village residences, and the chief's residence.

On Snead Island, within the boundaries of Emerson Point Preserve, the Portavant Mound (or Snead Island Temple Mound) is noted for its size and is the largest temple mound in the Tampa

Bay area. Excavations of Tocobaga mounds have revealed a myriad of artifacts suggesting they subsisted mainly on fish and shellfish, practiced limited agriculture, and hunted game. The pottery fragments indicate a culture rich with art. Disturbance or collection of artifacts from these areas is prohibited by state and federal laws. Please take only photos, leave only footprints.

Illustration by Larry May



Bishop Harbor Trail



SHORT TRIPS

Skyway to Bishop Harbor

The main Skyway to Bishop Harbor Trail is approximately 5 miles. Head northeast to Bishop Harbor from Sunshine Skyway South Fishing Pier. Opportunities abound for off-trail exploration. The public launch points include Bishop Harbor, Terra Ceia/Frog Creek, and the Sunshine Skyway. Conditions vary from protected backwater areas like Frog Creek to open water treks in Tampa Bay. A sea kayak with spray skirt or sit-a-top kayak is recommended for all trails in this area, with the exception of Frog Creek, where a canoe will do fine.

Skyway to Joe Island or Miguel Bay

Kayak 4 mile loop around Joe Island or kayak 7 mile loop around Miguel Bay.



Frog Creek area

Pete Blevis

Bishop Harbor

Kayak/canoe 3 mile loop inside Bishop Harbor.

Frog Creek at Terra Ceia Preserve State Park/ Aquatic Preserve

2-8 miles round trip on seldom traveled trail of mangrove islands and tunnels before transitioning into upland habitats.

Paddle Manatee

LAUNCH POINTS

See map for additional Launch Points.

Skyway Fishing Pier State Park

Located at the Sunshine Skyway South Fishing Pier Rest Area on I-275.

Bishop Harbor Boat Ramp

Take I-275 north until Exit 2, north on US 41 to Bishop Harbor Road/Moccasin Wallow Road (the yellow blinking light just north of I-275). Turn left and the launch is almost a 1/2 mile on the left.

Terra Ceia Preserve State Park/

Terra Ceia Aquatic Preserve at Frog Creek

Located at 130 Terra Ceia Road, Terra Ceia, Florida. From Palmetto take US 19 north. After crossing Terra Ceia Bay make a right at Bayshore Drive. Take Bayshore to the "T" intersection on Terra Ceia Road, turn right. Park adjacent to the Frog Creek Bridge and put in. Designated future launches are under development.

POINTS OF INTEREST

Terra Ceia Preserve State Park/Terra Ceia Aquatic Preserve

The State of Florida, Department of Environmental Protection, manages two types of conservation areas at Terra Ceia. Approximately 27,000 acres of submerged lands, including seagrass beds, hardbottom communities and other

POINTS OF INTEREST

underwater habitats have been designated as aquatic preserves. More recently, the State has designated nearby coastal upland habitats as Terra Ceia Preserve State Park. The coastal upland habitats function as a buffer to the adjacent Aquatic Preserve. At present, the park includes approximately 2,000 acres of mangrove forests, salt barrens, maritime hammocks, and fallow farmland that is being restored to pine flatwoods. Acquisition, restoration, and preservation of additional land are in the works. While conservation is the primary objective of the “preserve,” compatible passive recreational opportunities are being planned which include canoe/kayak launches, hiking trails and other primitive public access facilities. Remember that all natural and cultural resources are protected at the park and preserve; please take only photos and leave only footprints.

Terra Ceia Little Bird Key/Washburn Sanctuary

Terra Ceia Little Bird Key is owned by National Audubon and maintained year-round as a bird sanctuary. This beautiful mangrove key is shaped like a cornucopia that has up to 3,000 breeding pairs of 16 species of birds nest here, making it one of the most diverse bird colonies in the nation. The island is posted and closed to public entry to protect the nesting birds. Seventeen acres in size, the Washburn Sanctuary has been part of the Florida Coastal Islands Sanctuaries network since 1939. It is named for Nina Griffith Washburn, a former resident of Chicago and Palmetto who donated the island to Audubon in 1968. Washburn Sanctuary is surrounded by lush seagrass meadows and oyster bars. To the southwest, along the edge of the

main navigation channel, is a large “hard-bottom” community consisting of sea fans, sea whips, soft corals and sponges.

Breeding species include brown pelican, double-crested cormorant, anhinga, great blue heron, great egret, snowy egret, little blue heron, tricolored heron, reddish egret, cattle egret, green heron, black-crowned night heron, white ibis, glossy ibis, and roseate spoonbill. Most nesting occurs from February through July, but the island is an important “night roost” year-round. During the nesting season, paddlers should look carefully through the mangroves to see nestlings begging for food, or watch the “traffic” of parent birds flying to and from foraging grounds. Remember to bring binoculars and keep a wide buffer while at low tide and near dusk, then look for dozens of herons and egrets foraging on shallow flats just offshore.

Rarest nesting species are the reddish egret and roseate spoonbill. Both of these species were exterminated from the region in the late 1800’s, victims of their own beauty. Egret nuptial plumes were prized for use on ladies’ hats, and spoonbill wing feathers for fans. After an absence of 100 years, the reddish egret returned about 1980 and the spoonbill a decade later. Washburn Sanctuary is located on the Terra Ceia Trail map between GPS coordinate points 21 and 22.





Roseate Spoonbill



LEGEND

-  Blueway Trail
-  Mangroves
-  **CAUTION AREAS**
High Boat Traffic or Strong Currents
-  Exit Numbers

LAUNCH POINTS

-  **1** Skyway Fishing Pier State Park (South Skyway Fishing Pier)
-  **2** Terra Ceia Preserve State Park/ Tampa Bay Aquatic Preserve

BOAT RAMPS

All boat ramps accommodate canoe and kayak launch



-  **1** Bishop Harbor Boat Ramp

PARKS & PRESERVES

* Has amenities

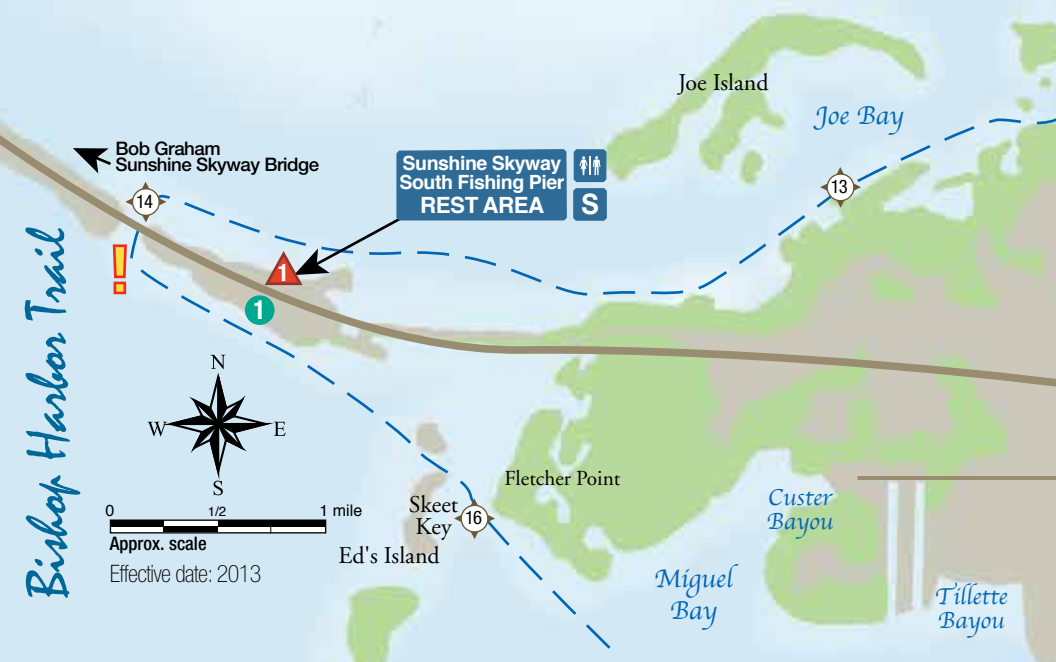
-  **1** Skyway Fishing Pier State Park*
-  **2** Terra Ceia Preserve State Park/ Tampa Bay Aquatic Preserve*

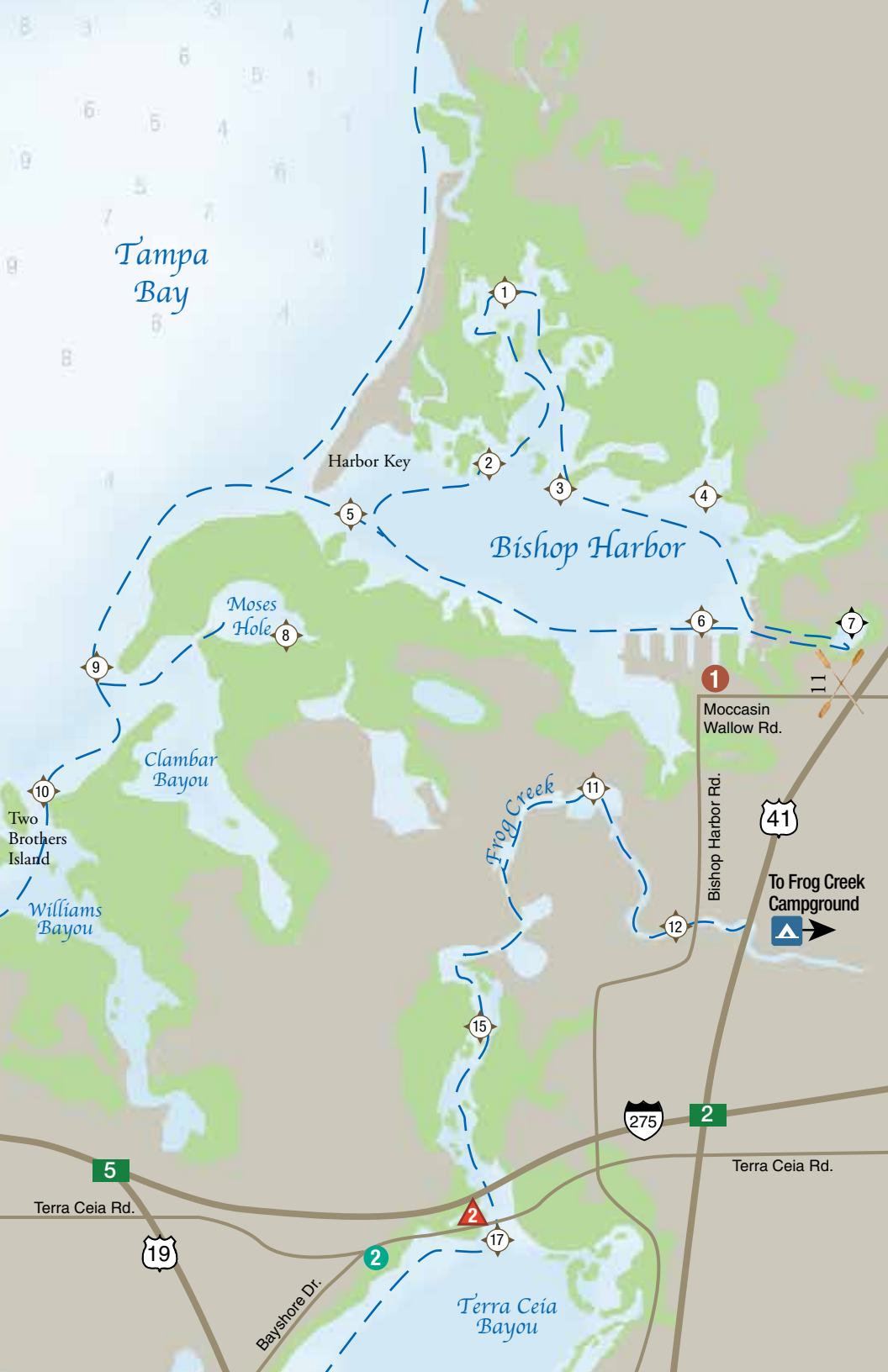
AMENITIES

-  Campground
-  Restrooms
-  Snacks

GPS COORDINATES

	Latitude (DMS)	Longitude (DMS)
1	27 37 2.316	-82 33 38.916
2	27 36 35.784	-82 33 46.008
3	27 36 32.976	-82 33 31.716
4	27 36 25.2	-82 34 7.068
5	27 36 31.86	-82 33 5.688
6	27 36 11.268	-82 33 7.776
7	27 36 8.856	-82 32 44.556
8	27 36 8.568	-82 34 17.904
9	27 36 5.796	-82 34 44.868
10	27 35 44.196	-82 34 57.396
11	27 35 48.336	-82 33 23.652
12	27 35 28.032	-82 33 10.116
13	27 35 17.268	-82 35 37.032
14	27 35 13.704	-82 37 11.928
15	27 35 13.632	-82 33 44.028
16	27 34 38.208	-82 36 20.088
17	27 34 48.864	-82 33 43.02





Tampa Bay

Harbor Key

Bishop Harbor

Moses Hole

Clambar Bayou

Two Brothers Island

Williams Bayou

Frog Creek

Terra Ceia Bayou

Moccasin Wallow Rd.

Bishop Harbor Rd.

41

To Frog Creek Campground

Terra Ceia Rd.

Terra Ceia Rd.

19

275

Bayshore Dr.



SHORT TRIPS

The Emerson Point to Skyway Trail

This blueway is approximately 9 miles in total length. There are multiple launch points including Emerson Point Preserve, the Sunshine Skyway South Fishing Pier and at an area north of the Crab Trap Restaurant. See map for complete listing of launch facilities. A sea kayak with spray skirt or sit-a-top kayak is recommended for this area. Weather changes can occur quickly changing from calm conditions to high winds, waves, and thunderstorms. Tides and currents around the Skyway Bridge area can also be swift.

Emerson Point to Little Bird Key

Kayak 6 mile loop around Little Bird Key and back.

Emerson Point to Riverview Pointe/ De Soto National Memorial

Kayak 3/4 mile across Manatee River to Riverview Pointe and back.

Emerson Point to Palma Sola Loop

Kayak 3 miles to Palma Sola loop off Perico Island (see Palma Sola Trail Map page 34).

Emerson Point to Mead Point

Kayak 5 mile loop west to Mead Point and back (or continue on Palma Sola Trail page 34).

Riverview Pointe/De Soto National Memorial to Emerson Point

Kayak 3/4 mile across Manatee River to Emerson Point and back (or continue to Little Bird Key).

LAUNCH POINTS

See map for additional Launch Points.

Emerson Point Preserve

Located at 5801 17th Street West, Palmetto, Florida. From Sarasota or Bradenton, take Business 41 north, cross the Palmetto Green Bridge, head west on 10th Street to Snead Island, follow signs to Emerson Point Preserve.

Riverview Pointe Preserve

(Adjacent to De Soto National Memorial)

Please use parking area at Emerson Point Preserve to make your initial launch, then take out at Riverview Pointe and enjoy both park areas, Riverview Pointe and De Soto National Memorial.

Crab Trap Paddle Launch

From Palmetto take US 19 north, paddle launch area is on the left (west) adjacent to Crab Trap Restaurant. Just beyond the restaurant pull off on the wide shoulder to put in. This is not a designated county boat ramp. Limited parking.



Kayaking through the mangrove tunnels at Emerson Point Preserve.

POINTS OF INTEREST

Emerson Point Preserve

Emerson Point Preserve makes a great starting point for the Terra Ceia experience. Launch at the Riverside pavilion (at the far west end of the preserve) or at the kayak launch on the north side of the island (approximately halfway inside the preserve entrance). You'll be rewarded with spectacular vistas of Anna Maria Island, the Sunshine Skyway Bridge, and Rattlesnake Key. Paddle east to Terra Ceia Bay and it will take you to Terra Ceia Bayou and into Frog Creek for a quiet relaxing experience. The fishing is great here.

Emerson Point Preserve was purchased through the state Conservation and Acquisition of Recreational Lands (CARL) program and is managed by the Manatee County Natural Resources Department. This 365-acre preserve contains rich cultural and historical resources. A magnificent shell temple mound from extinct peoples and homesteader relics grace the property, visible from a self guided trail. The property is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Some areas of the preserve show the evidence of historical agricultural activities while other areas are home to centuries-old live oaks, strangler fig and gumbo limbo and a number of endangered and threatened species such as bobcat, fox, and gopher tortoise. Within the preserve, restoration projects have been implemented to recreate coastal habitats and restore native vegetation. In addition to the Terra Ceia Trail access, the preserve provides hiking and fishing opportunities as well.

Riverview Pointe Preserve

A great diversity of wildlife and plants are found within the boundaries of Riverview Pointe Preserve. This preserve is unique because it encompasses several distinct habitats in a very small area. The rise in elevation from the riverfront leads you into an oak/hickory hammock. As you continue up the path, the Sabal Palms lead to Sand Pine and Scrub. A noteworthy Scrub inhabitant is the Gopher Tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*) which creates burrows up to 10 feet deep and 30 feet long that are home to many other species: insects, frogs, snakes, mice, and even rabbits have been known to share the sand burrow.

Riverview Pointe Preserve is also part of Shaw's Point Archeological District, an area listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Indian shell middens and related artifacts on the property indicate that Native Americans occupied the site as far back as 365 BC. A one mile nature trail connects with the adjoining De Soto National Memorial. Restrooms and water are available at the De Soto Visitor Center from 9-5 daily.



Riverview Pointe, easily accessible for a take out. Look for the cross on the property.

De Soto National Memorial



Terra Ceia Trail

LEGEND

Blueway Trail

Mangroves

CAUTION AREAS
High Boat Traffic
or Strong Currents

Exit Numbers

LAUNCH POINTS

1 Skyway Fishing Pier State Park
(South Skyway Fishing Pier)

2-4 Terra Ceia Preserve State Park/
Aquatic Preserve
(located at the Haley House)

5-6 Emerson Point Preserve

7 De Soto National Memorial
& Riverview Pointe Preserve

BOAT RAMPS

All boat ramps accommodate
canoe and kayak launch

1 Bishop Harbor Boat Ramp

2 Warners Bayou Boat Ramp

3 Palmetto Boat Ramp

PARKS & PRESERVES

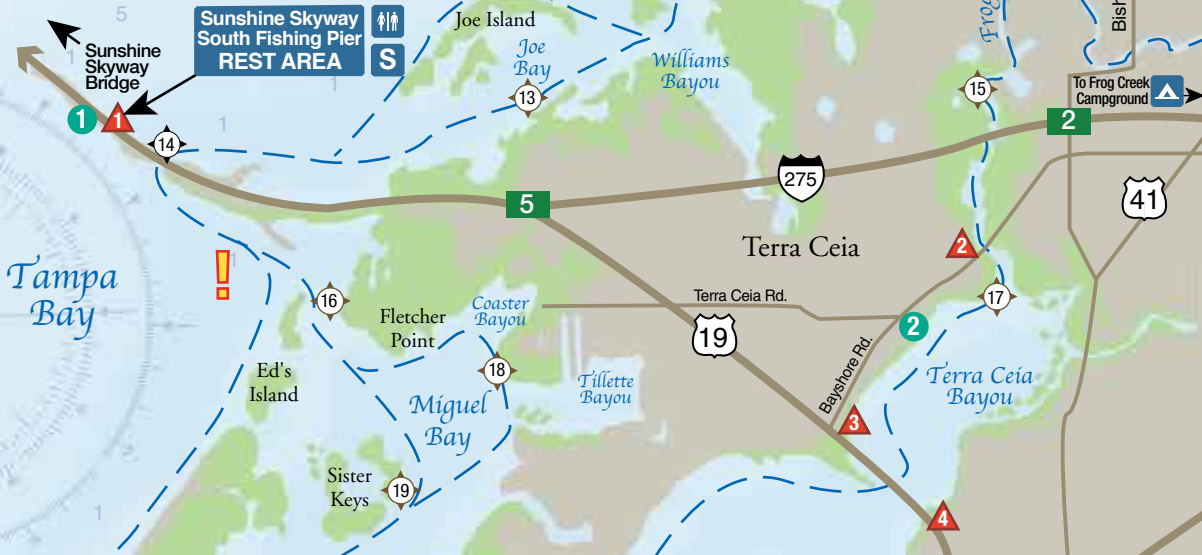
* Has amenities

1 Sunshine Fishing Pier State Park*



GPS COORDINATES

	Latitude (DMS)	Longitude (DMS)	Latitude (DMS)	Longitude (DMS)
1	27 37 2.316	-82 33 38.916	19	27 34 3.216
2	27 36 39.276	-82 33 41.076	20	27 33 33.732
6	27 36 11.268	-82 33 7.776	21	27 33 37.656
10	27 35 44.196	-82 34 57.396	22	27 33 3.924
11	27 35 48.336	-82 33 23.652	23	27 32 31.956
13	27 35 17.268	-82 35 37.032	24	27 32 15.396
14	27 35 13.704	-82 37 11.928	25	27 32 21.444
16	27 34 38.208	-82 36 20.088	26	27 31 56.748
17	27 34 48.864	-82 33 43.02	27	27 31 17.904
18	27 34 31.044	-82 35 43.62		



Paddle Manatee

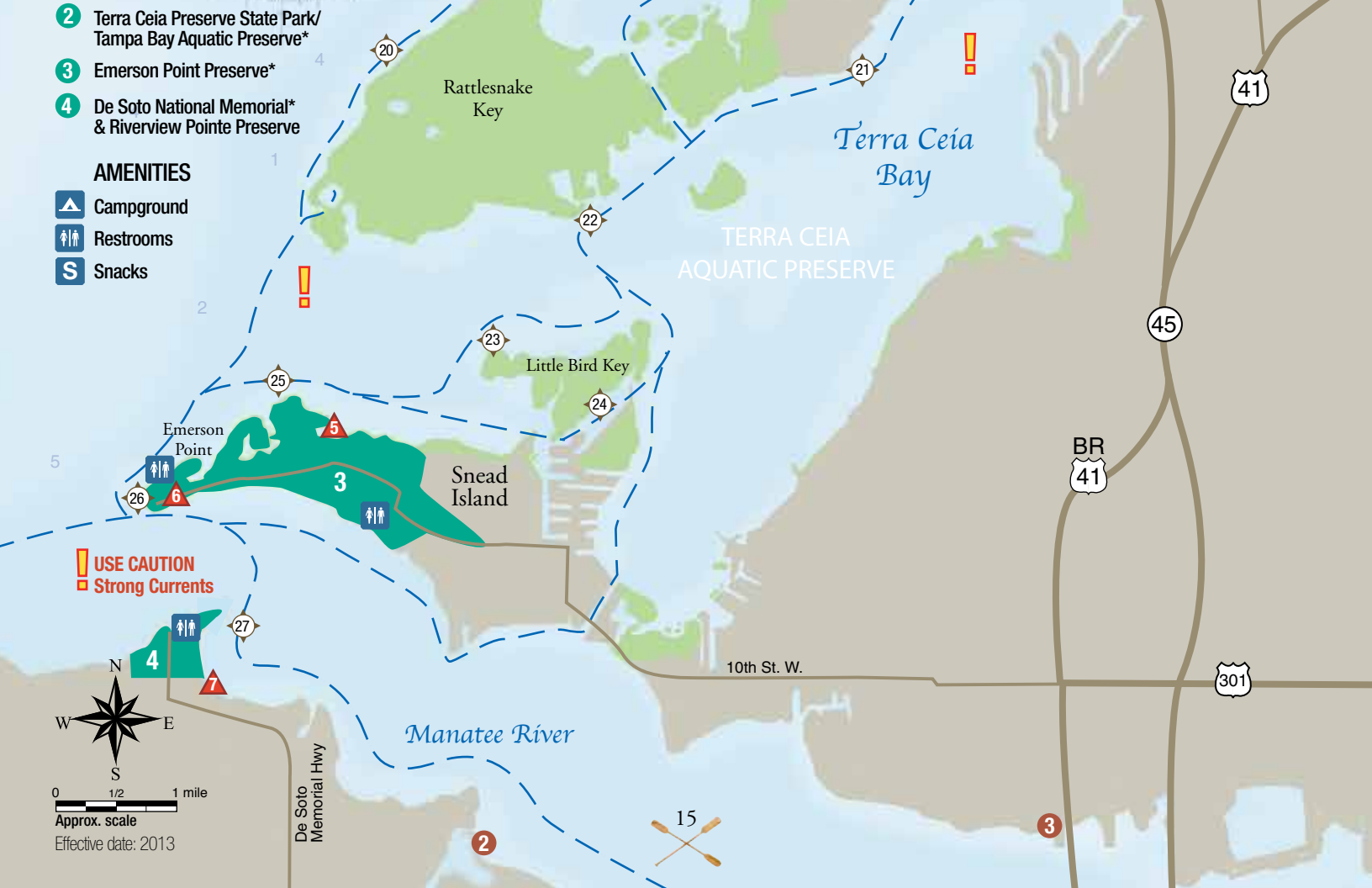
1 Moccasin Wallow Rd

To Frog Creek Campground


- 2** Terra Ceia Preserve State Park/
Tampa Bay Aquatic Preserve*
- 3** Emerson Point Preserve*
- 4** De Soto National Memorial*
& Riverview Pointe Preserve

AMENITIES

-  Campground
-  Restrooms
-  Snacks



N
W E
S



0 1/2 1 mile

Approx. scale

Effective date: 2013

De Soto
Memorial Hwy



3



SHORT TRIPS

Upper Manatee River State Canoe Trail

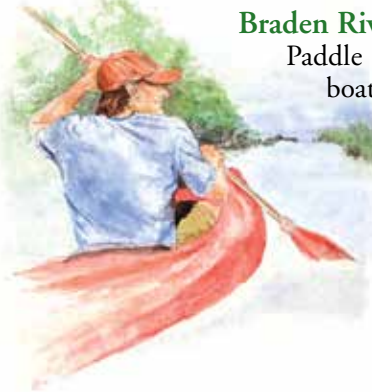
This is a 5 mile blueway, designated as part of Florida's statewide system of Greenways and Trails. From Gamble Creek to the Lake Manatee Dam is for everyone with all skill levels to enjoy. Public launch points include Fort Hamer and Braden River boat ramps, Braden River Park and Rye Wilderness Preserve. Ray's Canoe Hideaway is a fee-based launch. See map for complete listing of launch facilities.

Ray's Canoe Hideaway to Rye Preserve

From Ray's Canoe Hideaway, paddle upriver to cross under the Rye Bridge. Pull ashore after the Rye Bridge to access the Rye Preserve. Picnic areas are located on the south side of the river. Picnic shelters, restrooms and campground facilities are located on the north side of the river within the county-owned preserve.

Braden River

Paddle north from the Braden River boat ramp under the SR 64 bridge to view the historic homesites on the westside of the Manatee River or the new homesites on the eastside. Without too much effort, a crossing to the north side of the Manatee River to explore this shoreline is also possible.



LAUNCH POINTS See map for additional Launch Points.

Fort Hamer County Boat Ramp

Located at 1605 Fort Hamer Road, Parrish, Florida. From Sarasota, take I-75 north, Exit 224, go east on US 301 until Old Tampa Road, take a right until it dead ends into Fort Hamer Road. Take a right and go until you reach the river. From Bradenton, head east on US 301 and follow the same directions.

Rye Preserve

Located at 751 Rye Wilderness Trail, Parrish, Florida. From Sarasota, take I-75 north, Exit 220A (SR 64) east to Upper Manatee River Road. Turn left at Rye Road, the first right after bridge. From Bradenton, head east on SR 64 to Upper Manatee River Road. The kayak launch is at the first parking lot on the right and down the trail and stairs, 200 yards.

Braden River (SR 64) Boat Ramp

From Sarasota, take I-75 north, Exit 220B (SR 64) to just over the Braden River Bridge. From Bradenton, head east on SR 64 to just over the Braden River Bridge.

Ray's Canoe Hideaway

Located at 1247 Hagle Park Road, Bradenton, Florida. From Sarasota, take I-75 north, Exit 220A (SR 64) east to Upper Manatee River Road, go 4.5 miles to Hagle Park Road, turn north and follow the signs to Ray's. From Bradenton, head east on SR 64 then north onto Upper Manatee River Road, go 4.5 miles to Hagle Park Road, turn north and follow the signs to Ray's.



Sarasota Bay Estuary Program

Ray's Canoe Hideaway on Manatee River

POINTS OF INTEREST

Manatee River

In Native American Legend, the Manatee River, dividing line between the Calusa and Timucuan peoples, was known as the "Singing River" because of the most beautiful and lovely music it mysteriously made on certain moons.

The river's headwaters at 136 feet above sea level is the highest point in Manatee County. It flows south, then west through Lake Manatee to Tampa Bay, a total of 46 miles.

Gamble Plantation Historic State Park

This antebellum mansion was home to Major Robert Gamble and headquarters of an extensive sugar plantation. It is the only surviving plantation house in south Florida. It is believed that Confederate Secretary of State, Judah P. Benjamin, took refuge here after the fall of the Confederacy, until his safe passage to England could be secured. In 1925, the house and 16 acres were saved by the United Daughters of the Confederacy and donated to the state. Today, the mansion is furnished in the style of a successful mid-19th century plantation. Guided tours of the house are given six times a day, Thursday through Monday, and there are picnic tables on the grounds. The visitor center is open from 8:00 a.m.- 4:30 p.m., Thursday through Monday; it is closed on Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day. Located in Ellenton on U.S. 301 East. For Information about Gamble Plantation Historic State Park, please call 941-723-4536.



Bradenton Area CVB

Gamble Plantation Historic State Park

Manatee River Trail

POINTS OF INTEREST

Fort Hamer

Fort Hamer, named after a brigadier general of the Florida Volunteers, was built in 1849 on the south shore across from the present public boat ramp, as one of several fortifications around Tampa Bay. The garrison of 165 men stood down in 1850 when the suspected Seminole uprising never came about. However, the Fort again saw brief service in the third Seminole War between 1855-1858.

Manatee Dam

Manatee Dam was built in 1966 to create a drinking water reservoir for Manatee County. It is 50 feet high, 4,500 feet long and over 30 feet wide at its crown. Lake Manatee is 9 miles long and about 40 feet above sea level.



Upper Manatee River, Florida State Canoe Trail.

Ray's Canoe Hideaway

Paddle Manatee

Christian Retreat

Another landmark on the trail is the Christian Retreat. The Christian Retreat, begun 50 years ago as a campground by Gerald Durstine, a Mennonite missionary to the area, is now a 110-acre church, residential and vacation complex. The property includes the site of "Maydell," a grand two-story home built in 1917 east of Mill Creek by Albert Huyler. He was the owner of the Oak Knoll Grapefruit Company and sponsor of Huyler Boulevard, the first road linking communities to the east, part of which became Upper Manatee River Road. Across the river is an abandoned "Native American" village where missionaries once trained to prepare for missions to Africa.

Rye Preserve

Rye Preserve is located around and near the Rye Road Bridge. Rye, site of the first bridge built across the Manatee River in 1880, takes its name from Erasmus Rye, a Virginia settler of Scottish descent. The community no longer exists, but from 1875 to the early 1900s at the beginning of navigation on the river, Rye was a thriving logging and farming settlement of 75 families.

The preserve offers paddlers a canoe/skiff launch, several take out points, picnic tables, grills, restrooms, pay phone, water fountain, and tent camping. A first aid station is also available when the park ranger is on duty.



Osprey



GENERAL EXPERIENCE

The entire Manatee River Trail offers excellent paddling. The upper portion east of Fort Hamer offers excellent family canoeing because of the ample depth of water, slow-moving stream and forested banks that can provide shade from the sun and windbreaks on breezy days.

For the trail east of Fort Hamer, the water depth, speed and direction of the current can vary with the tide and the rate of water discharge from the dam, but is usually less than 2 mph. The river canopy is covered, narrow, and winding all the way to the Lake Manatee dam. Hearing a warning siren on the river means that a dam gate is opening or closing. Please keep a safe distance of at least 300 yards from the dam, observing a “no entry” overhead cable line maintained by Manatee County downstream of the spillway.

The lower portion of the river west of Fort Hamer widens to almost a mile in parts and the river becomes more of an urban paddling experience. You’ll paddle under a railroad bridge, I-75, US 41, and US 301 bridges, with great views of downtown Bradenton and Palmetto. Remember, this section is for sea kayaks with spray skirts or sit-a-top kayaks as the wind, waves, and tides can be very tough and changes can occur quickly.

The river opens up west of the Fort Hamer boat ramp as boat traffic, wind, waves, and tides increase in this area. A sea kayak with a spray skirt or sit-a-top kayak is the recommended equipment west of Fort Hamer. Use caution!

ENVIRONMENT

The Manatee River Trail is home to a wide variety of wildlife including reptiles, manatees, dolphins, wading birds, turtles, the endangered Gopher Tortoise, as well as fresh and saltwater fish. Alligators inhabit the river and should be given wide berth, never fed. They are most active during mating season and near dusk and dawn. Avoid heavy brush along the river where alligators and poisonous snakes may live. Manatees and other marine animals use the river as a protected nursery to have and raise their babies, and lay their eggs. Manatees are in the river year round and, like dolphins, the slow moving manatees are protected by the Marine Mammal Protection Act and should not be harassed, fed, given water, or harmed.

As you paddle the river, you will see flashes of brilliant color dance in mid-air. You may see a wide variety of beautiful butterflies and moths, including the Florida White, the Great Southern White, the bright yellow Southern Dogface, the Monarch-mimicking Viceroy, or the tiny spotted Cassius Blue. The Palamedes Swallowtail or the distinctive Zebra Longwing, Florida’s State Butterfly, might even make an appearance.

Fishermen will appreciate the ample striped bass, bream, speck, and the area’s largest freshwater catfish. Or drift leisurely along and enjoy the lush scenery and rich wildlife including herons, egrets, hawks, ospreys, otters, bobcats, and turtles.



Bobcat



Paddle Manatee

Manatee River Trail

1

2

5

Ellenton

Redfish Point

Manatee River

Bradén River

Pine Island

Possible Portage During Low Tide

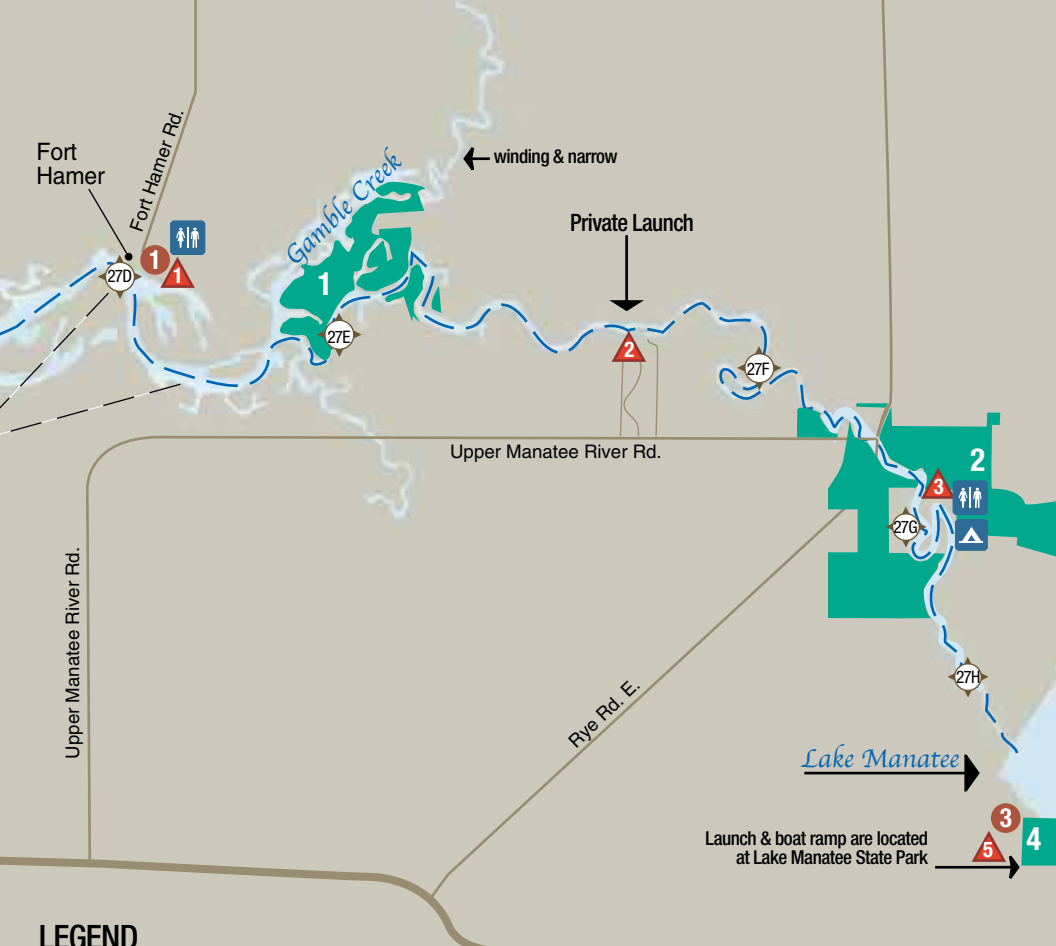
Evers Reservoir

Jiggs Landing



When paddling west of this point please USE CAUTION





LEGEND

- Blueway Trail
- Mangroves
- CAUTION AREAS**
High Boat Traffic
or Strong Currents
- Exit Numbers

LAUNCH POINTS

- 1 Fort Hamer
- 2 Ray's Canoe Hideaway
(canoe & kayak rentals)
- 3 Rye Preserve
- 4 Bennett Park
- 5 Lake Manatee State Park
- 6 Braden River Park

POINTS OF INTEREST

- 1 Gamble Plantation
Historic State Park

BOAT RAMPS

All boat ramps accommodate
canoe and kayak launch

- 1 Fort Hamer Boat Ramp
- 2 Braden River (SR 64) Boat Ramp
- 3 Lake Manatee Boat Ramp

PARKS & PRESERVES

* Has amenities

- 1 Twin Rivers Preserve
- 2 Rye Preserve*
- 3 Bennett Park*
- 4 Lake Manatee State Park*
- 5 Braden River Park*

AMENITIES

- Camping
- Restrooms

GPS COORDINATES



	Latitude (DMS)	Longitude (DMS)
27A	27 31 16.428	-82 29 10.86
27B	27 31 6.564	-82 28 38.676
27C	27 31 15.024	-82 30 17.568
27D	27 31 27.948	-82 25 48.828
27E	27 31 8.796	-82 24 44.028
27F	27 31 3.54	-82 22 34.536
27G	27 30 26.244	-82 21 46.98
27H	27 29 47.868	-82 21 25.56
28	27 29 43.44	-82 31 29.928
28A	27 29 2.76	-82 31 2.1
28B	27 28 45.516	-82 29 53.628
28C	27 28 7.536	-82 29 41.028
28D	27 27 51.84	-82 29 35.664
28E	27 26 55.068	-82 29 28.248



0 1/2 1 mile

Approx. scale

Effective date: 2013

Braden River Trail



SHORT TRIPS

Braden River Trail

This trail is approximately 6 miles in total length. Public launch sites include the Braden River (SR 64) boat ramp on the north end of the river and the Braden River Park via Gap Creek on the south end, as well as Jiggs Landing.

There are several short scenic loops in this river reach. Keep in mind some routes in the northern section can be very shallow or impassible during some low tides depending upon the season.

Braden River to Pine Island

For a quick 2 mile trip, paddle south from the Braden River (SR 64) boat ramp and loop Pine Island. For loop back keep the island to your left and you can paddle back to the north end of the island, then you will again see the boat ramp and SR 64 bridge. You can also use the power lines that go across the river in this area as a navigation tool.

Braden River Park to Braden River

For a quick 2 mile trip, paddle east from Gap Creek. It will open up on the Braden River, turn north to the FPL transmission lines and loop back.

Jiggs Landing to Linger Lodge

The section from Jiggs Landing south provides a peaceful, winding canoe experience. You can paddle from Jiggs Landing to the Linger Lodge (restaurant) and eat while enjoying this eclectic local experience (see Lower Braden River Trail pages 28-29).

Paddle Manatee

LAUNCH POINTS

See map for additional Launch Points.

Braden River (SR 64) Boat Ramp

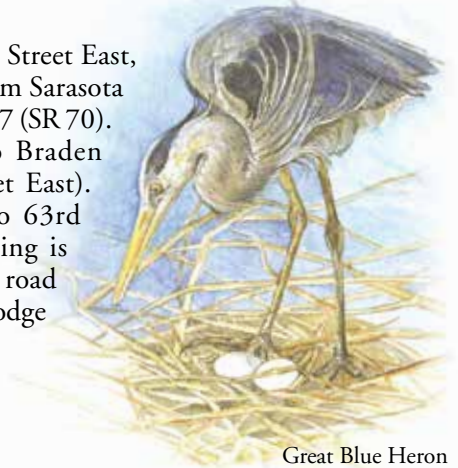
Located at 3020 Manatee Avenue East, Bradenton, Florida. From Sarasota, take I-75 north, Exit 220B (SR 64) to just over the Braden River bridge. From Bradenton head east on SR 64 to just over the Braden River bridge.

Braden River Park

Located at 5201 51st Street East. From I-75 take Exit 217 west, crossing the Braden River bridge. Look for the traffic light at Natalie Way, immediately west of the bridge. Turn right (north) onto Natalie Way to reach the entrance to the park.

Jiggs Landing

Located at 6106 63rd Street East, Bradenton, Florida. From Sarasota take I-75 north to Exit 217 (SR 70). Go west on SR 70 to Braden River Road (63rd Street East). Turn left (south) onto 63rd Street East. Jiggs Landing is .4 miles, just before the road turns east onto Linger Lodge Road East.



Great Blue Heron

POINTS OF INTEREST

Jiggs Landing

This 4-1/2 acre site was acquired from the City of Bradenton and former owners of Jiggs Landing in 2005 by Manatee County. Jiggs Landing provides a freshwater launch to the Braden River and Evers Reservoir. Amenties include a boat launch area, picnic shelters, fishing pier, restrooms, and a handicap accessible kayak launch. A replica of one of the original cabins is on the site. A concession stand and four camping cabins are under development.

Girl Scout Camp Honi Hanta

The Girl Scout Camp, named Honi Hanta or “Home on the River,” was established in 1953. Its banks include bluffs, forested uplands, and marshes. Scouts enjoy panoramic vistas from lookout towers, which mark its location on the west side of the river. The property is private, posted and is off-limits to recreational boaters. The Girl Scouts of the Gulf Coast of Florida purchased the 60-acre tract of land through profits from the Scouts’ cookie sales. A ranger is on duty for maintenance and for security.



Braden River Tower at Girl Scout Camp Honi Hanta.

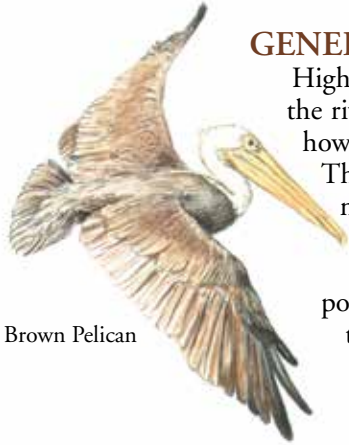
Evers Reservoir

Evers Reservoir, also known as Ward Lake, is located at the south end of the Braden River Trail and serves as the City of Bradenton’s municipal water supply. The river was dammed in 1936 to create Ward Lake, then enlarged and reconstructed in 1985. It was then renamed Evers Reservoir in honor of Mayor Bill Evers who served during the period of reconstruction.

The low dam is guarded by rocks and is not safe to approach or climb. No portage opportunities exist around this deadend point of the dam at this time, however, future plans may include one around the eastern edge of the dam. Paddling opportunities exist south of the dam but require a launch from Jiggs Landing. If you want to partake in fishing, a saltwater fishing license is needed north of the dam because the river is tidally-dominated, while a Florida freshwater fishing license is required (ages 16 and older) south (upstream) of the dam.

Karen Ciemiacki





Brown Pelican

GENERAL EXPERIENCE

High winds in the more open areas on the river may make paddling difficult; however, canoes are fine for this river.

There are also many shallow areas, mud flats, and oyster bars in the river to watch out for. The oyster bars abound in the northern portions of the river. You may want to avoid the upper portions of the river during times of low tide.

Private individuals, local governments, and nonprofit conservation groups own islands on the river. Many islands are comprised of marsh or mangrove forest. Others have ribbons of upland and a few are large enough to support terrestrial habitats. Areas surrounding these islands may be very shallow. It is not recommended to beach canoes/kayak on these islands as mangroves and seagrass flats may be damaged.

The mangrove islands and shores of the Braden River are the homes for a large variety of wildlife. The beautiful call of the chuck-wills-widow resembles that of the whippoorwill and graces the evening along miles of the lower river valley. Calling owls can be heard just as easily. Ospreys are common along the river and eagles are routinely spotted, sometimes nesting in sight of the channel and ample food supplies. Herons, egrets, pelicans,

gulls, terns, cormorants and their freshwater cousins, the anhinga, and vultures are very common, and in winter are joined by many migrating species.



Looking through the mangroves.



Sandy Hammer

Fish & Wildlife

Small anchovies are the most common fish species in the Braden River. Gar and mullet are the most conspicuous. Like gar, small tarpon roll as they patrol the river in search of prey. Schools of jack crevalle cause explosive feeding frenzies as they chase bait into shallow water. Spotted seatrout, red drum, and snook are the most sought-after fish in the river. Some snook were stocked and should be reported if caught. 1,000 juvenile snook were released in the Braden River in April 1997. Each carries internal tags: a tiny stainless steel coded wire tag and a silicone-like visible tag behind the eye. Anglers landing legal-sized snook who think they

have a tagged animal should measure its total length, note the time and location of capture, freeze the head, and contact Mote Marine Laboratory, listed in the Resource Directory.

Although small sharks may be found in the river, stingrays are probably the most dangerous species. Waders should use the “stingray shuffle” when walking through shallow areas, and seek immediate medical attention if injured. Also, be cautious around snakes on the river, as water moccasins inhabit these waters. Alligators may be found anywhere in the tidal river, and are most common downstream of the dam during wet seasons. Alligators should never be fed, as alligators that have been fed pose special hazards to pets and people, especially at dawn and dusk.

Like alligators, otters will move downriver during wet periods to feed. Bottlenose dolphins will enter the river during dry (salty) periods in search of food. Manatees are present in the river almost year-round. Manatees make regular use of some river areas but the large and slow animals may be found anywhere in the tidal river.

There is great freshwater fishing as you travel south down the Braden River.



Snowy Egret



Braden River Trail

Paddle Manatee

21st St. E.

1

28

Braden River

Pine Island

 **High Boat Traffic**
USE CAUTION

64

 **75**
 **220**

28A

Sugarhouse Creek

Possible Portage
During Low Tide

28B

Braden River

26th Ave. E.

57th St. E.

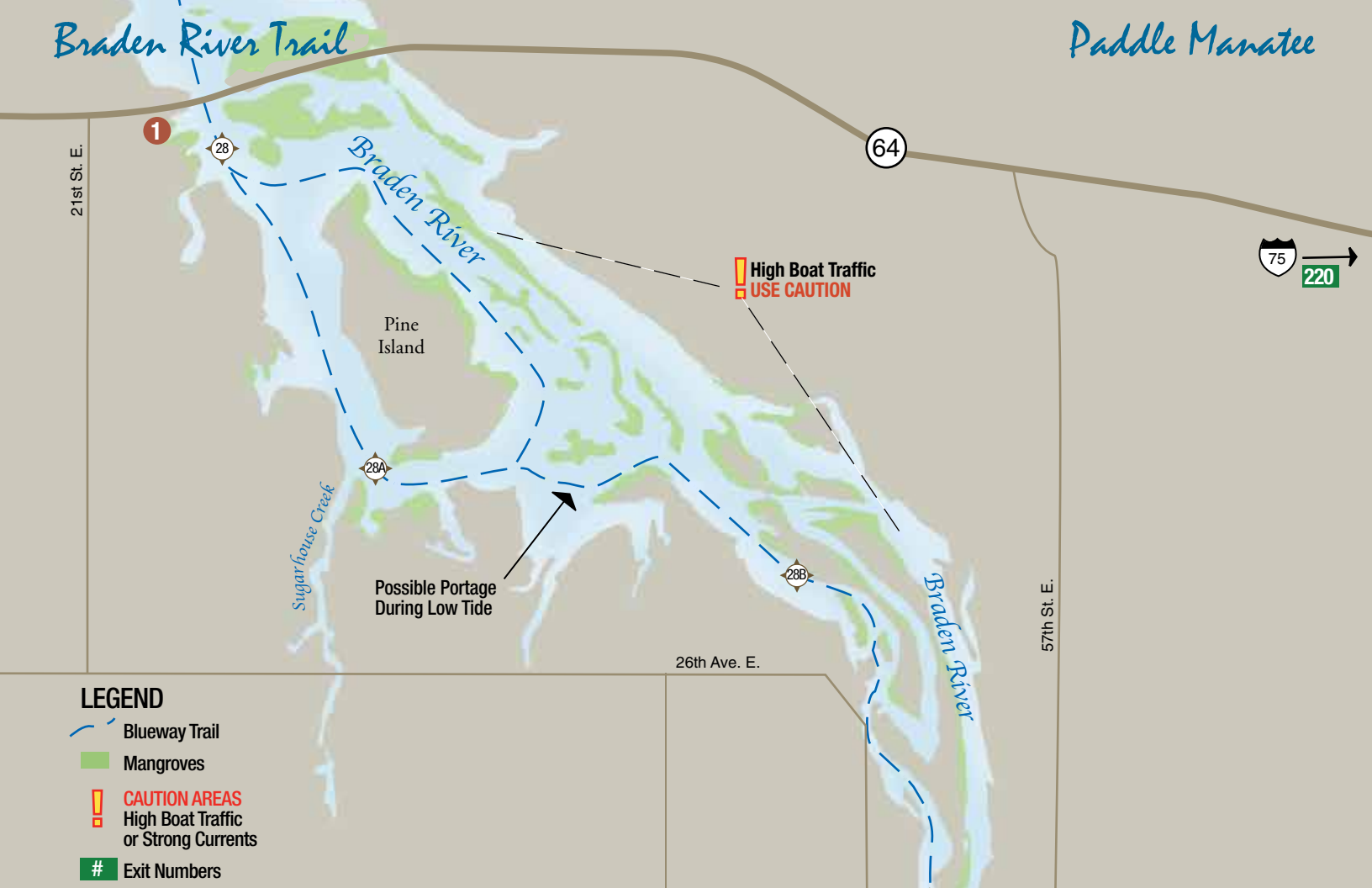
LEGEND

 Blueway Trail

 Mangroves

 **CAUTION AREAS**
High Boat Traffic
or Strong Currents

 # Exit Numbers



LAUNCH POINTS

- 1** Braden River Park
- 2** Jiggs Landing
(south of the dam)

BOAT RAMPS

All boat ramps accommodate canoe and kayak launch

- 1** Braden River (S.R. 64) Boat Ramp
- 2** Jiggs Landing Boat Ramp
(south of the dam)

PARKS & PRESERVES

* Has amenities

- 1** Braden River Park*
- 2** Jiggs Landing

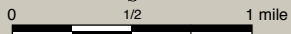
AMENITIES

-  Restrooms



GPS COORDINATES

	Latitude (DMS)	Longitude (DMS)
28	27 29 43.44	-82 31 29.928
28A	27 29 2.76	-82 31 2.1
28B	27 28 45.516	-82 29 53.628
28C	27 28 7.536	-82 29 41.028
28D	27 27 51.84	-82 29 35.664
28E	27 26 55.068	-82 29 28.248



Approx. scale

Effective date: 2013

44th Ave. E.

44th Ave. E.

45th St. E.

51st St. E.

Caruso Rd.

Gap Creek

70

27

More unmarked paddling south of the dam.
Jiggs Landing (public) is a great launch site
for upriver excursions. NO PORTAGE OVER DAM.

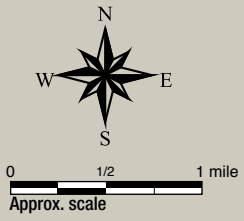
To
Jiggs Landing

Braden
River Rd.



Paddle Manatee

Lower Braden River Trail



Effective date: 2013





217

LEGEND

- Blueway Trail
- Mangroves
- Exit Numbers

LAUNCH POINTS

- Braden River Park
- Jiggs Landing
- Linger Lodge (private launch)

BOAT RAMPS

All boat ramps accommodate canoe and kayak launch

- Jiggs Landing Boat Ramp*

PARKS & PRESERVES

* Has amenities

- Braden River Park
- Jiggs Landing

AMENITIES

- Camping
- Gas Station
- Restaurant
- Restrooms

GPS COORDINATES

	Latitude (DMS)	Longitude (DMS)
28E	27 26 55.068	-82 29 28.248



68th St. E.

Linger Lodge Rd.



Linger Lodge

Palma Sola Bay Trail



SHORT TRIPS

Palma Sola to Perico Island

From Palma Sola Causeway kayak/canoe 5.25 miles around Perico Island, which will take about two hours.

Kingfish to Cortez

From the Kingfish Boat Ramp to the Village of Cortez take a paddle to this historic fishing village. Enjoy lunch here and step back in time to visit “Old Florida” You will pass Grassy Point Preserve which is the mangrove area just to the south of the Kingfish Boat Ramp.



Manatee County

Kayaking event at Emerson Point Preserve

Paddle Manatee

LAUNCH POINTS

See map for additional Launch Points.

Palma Sola Causeway

From Sarasota or Bradenton go north on US 41 until Manatee Avenue (SR 64), go west towards the beaches. Look for the beach and causeway on both sides of Manatee Avenue. Launch at any point along the causeway.

Kingfish Boat Ramp

From Sarasota or Bradenton go north on US 41 until Manatee Avenue (SR 64), go west towards the beaches, just prior to Anna Maria Island/Holmes Beach. Boat ramp and launch will be on your right (north side).

Emerson Point Preserve

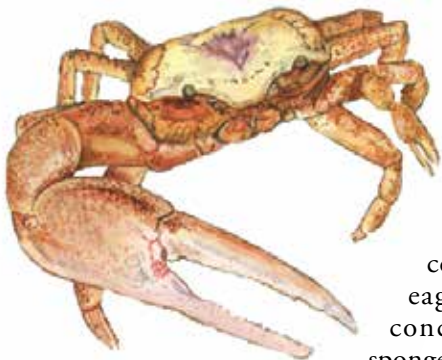
Located at 5801 17th Street West, Palmetto, Florida. From Sarasota or Bradenton take Business 41 north, then cross the Palmetto Green Bridge, head west on 10th Street to Snead Island, follow signs to Emerson Point Preserve.



Egret

GENERAL EXPERIENCE

The Palma Sola Bay Trail/Perico Island Trail will take you around an island that is a rich estuary system. There are many opportunities to observe and interact with the natural beauty of this area. A great fishing spot. Bird watchers will find many rare species that are not often seen or observed in their natural environment. The entire area is used as a nesting and feeding area by many bird and fish species. You may encounter egrets, eagles, osprey, hawks, herons, terns, gulls, frigates, brown pelicans, white pelicans, ibis, cormorants, wood storks, roseate spoonbills, ducks, kingfisher, and coots.



Fiddler Crab

You may also see a variety of marine mammal life that includes: bottlenosed dolphins, manatees, snook, redfish, tarpon, pompano, trout, flounder, lady fish, catfish, jack mullet, cobia, sharks, stingrays, eaglerays, crabs, whelks, conchs, starfish, urchins, sponges, and soft corals live in the seagrass and oyster beds.

POINTS OF INTEREST

De Soto National Memorial

The mission of De Soto National Memorial is to commemorate Spanish explorer Hernando de Soto, who landed on the southwest Florida coast in 1539. With an army of 600 soldiers, De Soto had come to the New World with a license from the King of Spain to explore, colonize and pacify the Indians of the area known as “La Florida.” The expedition faced many hardships throughout the four-year, 4,000-mile journey. Programs at the park explain the prevailing 16th Century Spanish cultural values and the inevitable clash with the native cultures the expedition encountered. This expedition was the first large scale European mission into the interior of North America. Survivors of the expedition reported the abundance of rich natural resources found in “La Florida.”

The De Soto National Memorial is managed by the National Park Service. Enjoy the one mile nature trail that connects with the neighboring Riverview Pointe Preserve. De Soto Visitor Center operates from 9-5 daily, and offers restrooms, water, exhibits, movies and a bookstore. Call 941-792-0458 for more information or visit www.nps.gov/deso



De Soto National Memorial boardwalk

Reed Photography



Palma Sola Bay Trail

POINTS OF INTEREST

Perico Island

On the southwest side of Perico Island is an area known locally as Spoonbill Bay. A small archipelago of mangrove islands guards this small bay. Though you may lose track of time and can easily spend several hours just exploring this area, do not neglect seeing all the beauty of Perico Island. At the north end of Perico Bayou, there is also a group of small islands that are surrounded by oyster beds and is a fantastic place to fish.



Brown Pelican

Paddle Manatee



Egret

Rose Gatto

Marine mammals are also present and you may be lucky enough to encounter dolphins or manatees at some points along this route. Dolphins are often seen under the bridge over the Intracoastal Waterway and north along Perico Island to Gilligan's Island. Dolphins and manatees also frequent the southeast area of Perico Island in the channels and canals of Flamingo Cay. Whatever wonders you may see along this trail, please leave it as you have found it, take only photos and leave only a paddle wake.

Neal Preserve

This 116-acre preserve site was acquired by Manatee County in 2005. Scheduled to open in 2013, the site will include limited parking, a picnic shelter, 20 foot observation tower, interpretative signage related to the Native Americans who once inhabited the site, as well as boardwalk/trails.

Robinson Preserve

This 620-acre preserve includes 40 acres of peaceful waterways for canoeing and kayaking enjoyment. The site was acquired by Manatee County in 2003 and offers paved and natural walking trails, boardwalks and a 40 foot observation tower, a visitors center, restrooms, picnic shelters, and a canoe/kayak launch.



A successful day's catch off Robinson Preserve/Perico Bayou

Fred Loveland



Grassy Point Preserve

SBEP

Grassy Point Preserve

This 35-acre preserve, owned and managed by the City of Holmes Beach, is a beautiful greenspace the city acquired in 1999. The site consists of mangrove swamp, tidal flats, oyster bars, a tidal estuarine creek with a mangrove canopy, and seagrass beds. You may paddle by or kayak through the mangrove canopy. This site is preserved for the wildlife of the area as well as to protect Sarasota Bay. This site will also serve as a historical reminder of what the Bay's natural shoreline used to look like! Enjoy.



Palma Sola Bay Trail

Paddle Manatee

LEGEND

Blueway Trail

Mangroves

CAUTION AREAS
High Boat Traffic
or Strong Currents

LAUNCH POINTS

- 1** Emerson Point Preserve (Manatee River)
- 2** Emerson Point Preserve (Bayside)
- 3** De Soto National Memorial & Riverview Pointe Preserve
- 4** Robinson Preserve
- 5** Palma Sola Causeway
- 6** Neal Preserve

BOAT RAMPS

All boat ramps accommodate canoe and kayak launch

- 1** Kingfish Boat Ramp
- 2** Palma Sola Boat Ramp
- 3** North Coquina Boat Ramp
- 4** South Coquina Boat Ramp

POINTS OF INTEREST

- 1** Cortez Fishing Village
- 2** Bridge Street Fishing Pier

PARKS & PRESERVES

*Has amenities

- 1** Emerson Point Preserve*
- 2** De Soto National Memorial* & Riverview Pointe Preserve
- 3** Robinson Preserve*
- 4** Perico Preserve
- 5** Neal Preserve
- 6** Ungarelli Preserve
- 7** Coquina Beach*/ Leffis Key

AMENITIES

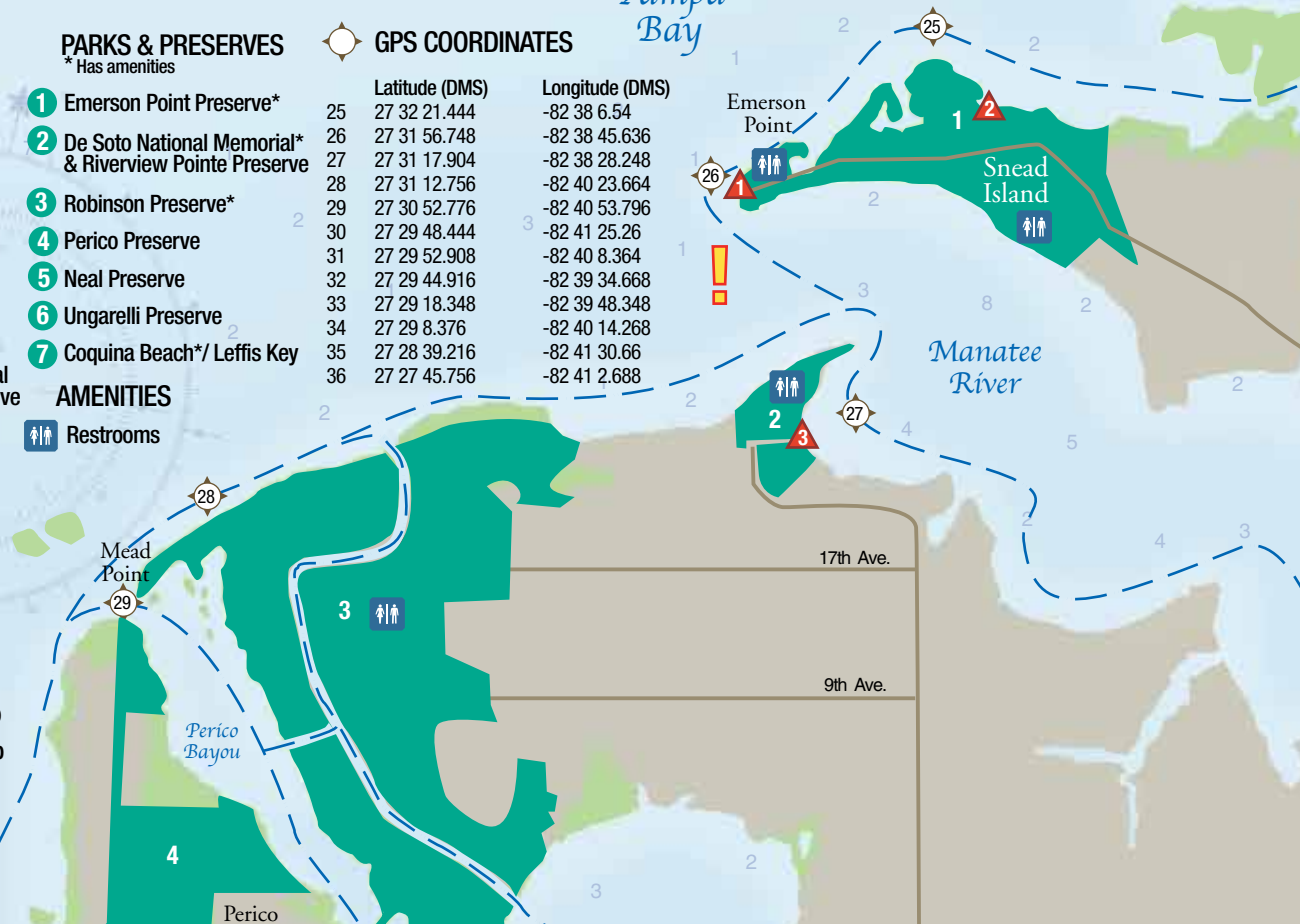
Restrooms

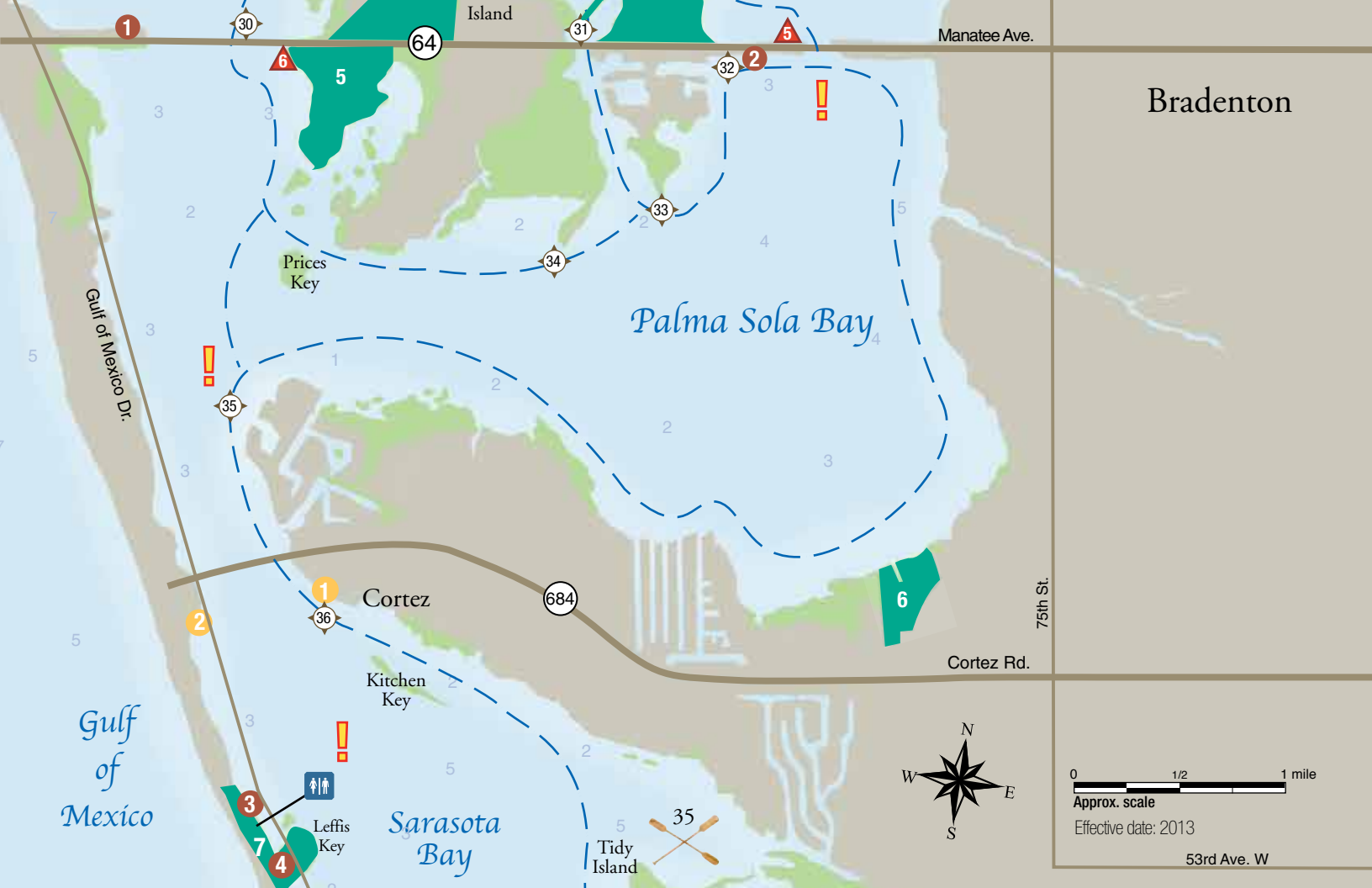


GPS COORDINATES

	Latitude (DMS)	Longitude (DMS)
25	27 32 21.444	-82 38 6.54
26	27 31 56.748	-82 38 45.636
27	27 31 17.904	-82 38 28.248
28	27 31 12.756	-82 40 23.664
29	27 30 52.776	-82 40 53.796
30	27 29 48.444	-82 41 25.26
31	27 29 52.908	-82 40 8.364
32	27 29 44.916	-82 39 34.668
33	27 29 18.348	-82 39 48.348
34	27 29 8.376	-82 40 14.268
35	27 28 39.216	-82 41 30.66
36	27 27 45.756	-82 41 2.688

Tampa Bay







SHORT TRIP

Leffis Key to Cortez

This blueway is a good inner bay paddle. Launch from the Coquina Beach Park Bayside south boat ramp. Paddle east across the bay, crossing the Intracoastal waterway with caution to investigate the moorings of the historic fishing Cortez Village and stop for lunch.

Leffis Key to Jewfish Key

This blueway is also a good inner bay paddle. Launch from the Coquina Beach Park Bayside south boat ramp. Journey without crossing much open water or motorized boating channels. Paddling south, follow the shoreline of Longboat Key to investigate the inlets and waterways. Alternatively, depart from the boat ramp launch and paddle north to check out the waterfront stores of the City of Bradenton Beach.

Palma Sola to Cortez

From Palma Sola Causeway, exit the bay on the south side and continue heading south through Sarasota Pass and travel under the Cortez Bridge. The shoreline turns east along Cortez Village.

LAUNCH POINTS

See map for additional Launch Points.

Palma Sola Bay Causeway

From Sarasota or Bradenton, go north on US 41 to Manatee Avenue (SR 64), go west towards the beaches. Look for the beach and causeway on both sides of Manatee Avenue. Launch at any point along the causeway.

North Coquina/South Coquina Boat Ramps

From Manatee County take Manatee Avenue West (SR 64) or Cortez Road west to Anna Maria Island. After crossing the bridge, head south on Gulf of Mexico Drive. Both ramps are located on the east (left) side of the road at Coquina Beach Park Bayside.

From Sarasota County take the Ringling Causeway Bridge to St. Armands Circle. Exit the circle turning right (north) onto Gulf of Mexico Drive. Continue north on Longboat Key, crossing bridges at New Pass and Longboat Pass you will see Coquina Beach Park Bayside. Boat ramps are located on the east (right) side of the road.



Cortez Village

POINTS OF INTEREST

Cortez Village

Cortez village was pioneered in the 1880s by commercial fishermen from the Carolinas. This historic community has preserved its local fishing heritage and maintains a working waterfront. In 1999, Manatee County purchased the 1912 Schoolhouse on the eastern edge of the village for preservation. The village is actively engaged in habitat preservation and protection with the land surrounding the schoolhouse. The schoolhouse property and entire Cortez waterfront is great for bird watching. Cortez Key located about 100 yards offshore of the village is one of the largest wading bird rookeries in the area.



White Pelicans gather at Cortez Fishing Village

Reed Photography

Paddling south, you'll reach Longbar Point. At this point there will be some shallows followed by deeper water with more exposure to wind. It can get pretty rough after this point. If you are in a canoe, it may be a good idea to head back north unless it is an extremely calm day. Generally, a sea kayak with a spray skirt or a sit-a-top kayak is recommended equipment for this trip.



SBEP

A couple enjoying the vista of Sarasota Bay at Leffis Key

Leffis Key

This 30-acre wetland restoration site includes a productive intertidal habitat and lagoon system benefiting juvenile fish and wildlife. Explore the nature trails and boardwalks at this beautiful preserve. Climbing to the top of the site offers a panoramic view of Sarasota Bay. Stop for a picnic and enjoy the natural beauty of your surroundings!

Sarasota Bay/Barrier Islands Trail

Paddle Manatee

POINTS OF INTEREST

Manatee Public Beach

(SR 64 & Gulf of Mexico Drive)

This beautiful Florida beach offers lifeguards, restrooms, picnic tables, a playground, concessions, fishing, volleyball and world class white sandy beaches.

Bradenton Beach

(SR 684 & Gulf of Mexico Drive)

Bradenton Beach is still reminiscent of “Old Florida.” Seaside inns and small cottages line this stretch of beach located on the southern end of Anna Maria Island. This quaint community has not been changed by mammoth hotels or chain restaurants. Small stores offering live bait and shells are scattered on Gulf Drive, along with pizza and ice cream shops. The Bradenton Beach City Pier (Historic Bridge Street Fishing Pier) is at the end of the street. You can fish, eat in an indoor/outdoor setting or sit on the swing at the end of the pier.



Bridge Street Pier

Manatee County



Bradenton Area CVB

Coquina Beach

Coquina Beach

(West side of Gulf of Mexico Drive opposite Coquina Bayside North and South Coquina boat ramps)

This is a 96-acre stretch of clean beach popular with both families and kids. This beach offers showers, restrooms, picnic tables, a playground, and nearby boat ramps (Coquina Bayside) to launch or take out your kayak. Ample parking is available at all Manatee beaches and fishing is allowed.



North Sarasota Bay

Sister Keys

(South of Jewfish Key within Sarasota Bay)

Enjoy kayaking around these beautiful large mangrove islands and notice the abundant seagrass beds. In 1992, the Town of Longboat Key purchased these mangrove islands for preservation.

Joan M. Durante Park

This 32-acre bayfront site within the Town of Longboat Key offers nature trails, wildlife viewing, picnic areas, and breathtaking views of Sarasota Bay. Stop by on your kayaking or canoeing trip and visit the site for a picnic or to learn about the wetland restoration project that took place here and the importance of protecting wetland habitats.



Joan M. Durante Park boardwalk



Manatee County

Aerial view of Sarasota Bay from Anna Maria looking south

About Sarasota Bay Region

Sarasota Bay is an estuary that extends from Anna Maria Sound south to the Venice Inlet, including both Sarasota and Manatee counties. Seven municipalities have developed around the bay – Bradenton, Anna Maria, Holmes Beach, Bradenton Beach, Longboat Key, Sarasota, and Venice. Sarasota Bay is about 56

miles long and ranges in width from 300 feet to 4.5 miles. The bay is relatively shallow, with an average depth of five feet. The bay is of primary importance for both recreation and commerce. Boating, swimming, fishing, and nature study can be enjoyed on the bay year-round. Enjoy exploring the bay!

GENERAL EXPERIENCE

Birds of the Area

Osprey

Ospreys are found within the region due to the abundance of productive open-water habitats. A fish-catching specialist, the osprey can be observed hovering at heights anywhere from 50 to 200 feet and can then be seen plunging into the water feet first. At first glance these birds may be confused with the bald eagle but can be recognized by a black streak behind the eye, light streaking on the white belly and crooked wings in flight.

Anhinga

The anhinga does not have oil glands for waterproofing his feathers like most birds. When he goes swimming, his feathers get wet. This helps him dive and chase fish under water. But above water, he must spread his wings to dry in the sun. He can fly with wet feathers, but not as well.



Osprey

Sandy Hammer



Anhinga

Rose Gatto



Great Egret

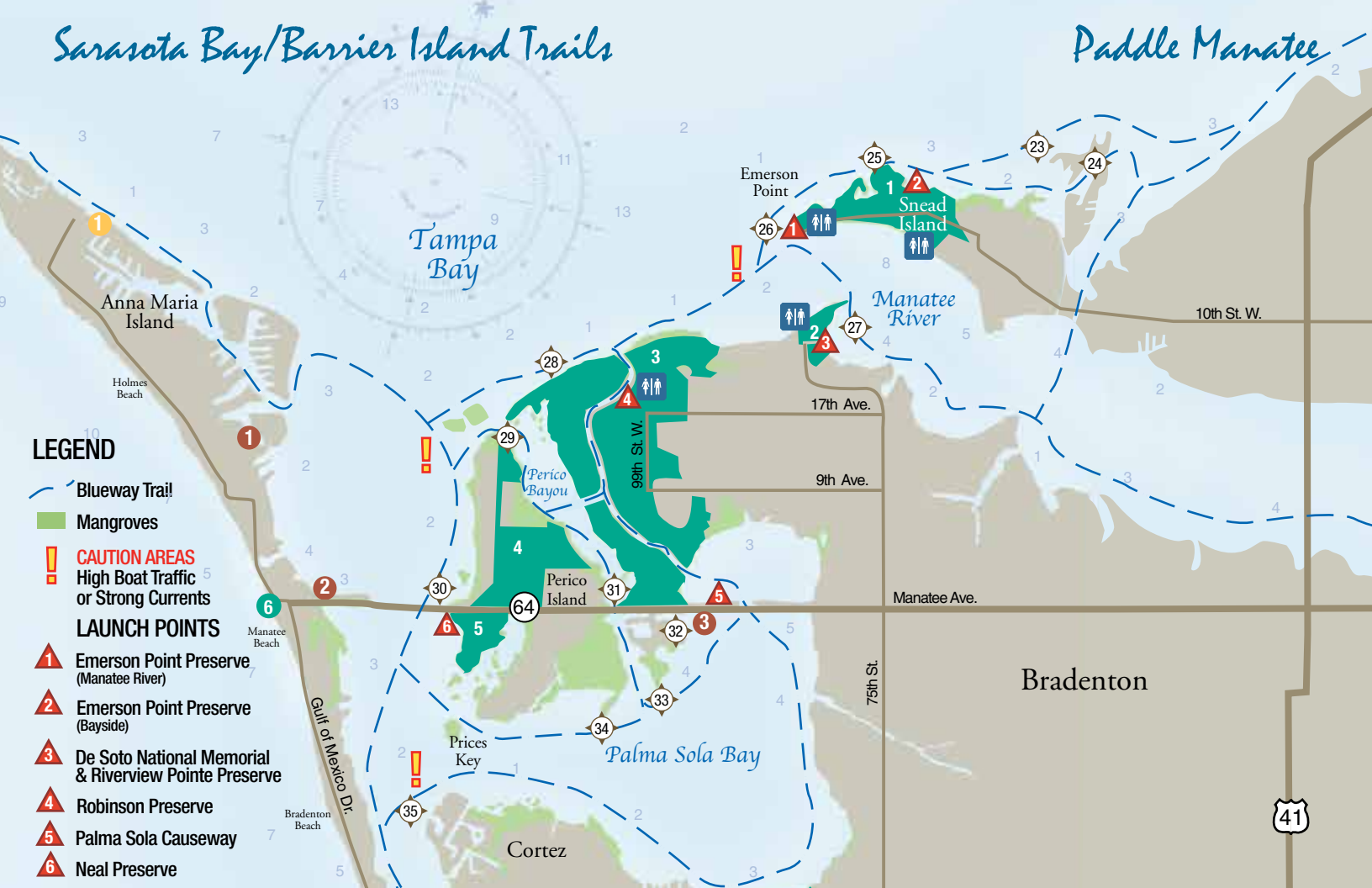
SFWMD

Great Egret

This white heron is a methodical, stalking hunter, seeking its prey in shallow wetlands such as salt marshes and shallow lake margins. Great egrets stand about 40 inches tall, with long black legs and a yellow bill. Great egrets usually nest with large numbers of other wading birds on mangrove covered coastal islands. Today, the chief threat to this species and all other wading birds is the continued drainage of wetlands due to development.

Sarasota Bay/Barrier Island Trails

Paddle Manatee



LEGEND

Blueway Trail

Mangroves

CAUTION AREAS
High Boat Traffic
or Strong Currents

LAUNCH POINTS

- 1 Emerson Point Preserve (Manatee River)
- 2 Emerson Point Preserve (Bayside)
- 3 De Soto National Memorial & Riverview Pointe Preserve
- 4 Robinson Preserve
- 5 Palma Sola Causeway
- 6 Neal Preserve

BOAT RAMPS

All boat ramps accommodate canoe and kayak launch

- 1 63rd St. Memorial Park Boat Ramp
- 2 Kingfish Boat Ramp
- 3 Palma Sola Boat Ramp
- 4 North Coquina Boat Ramp
- 5 South Coquina Boat Ramp

PARKS & PRESERVES

* Has amenities

- 1 Emerson Point Preserve*
- 2 De Soto National Memorial* & Riverview Pointe Preserve
- 3 Robinson Preserve*
- 4 Perico Preserve
- 5 Neal Preserve
- 6 Manatee Beach*
- 7 Ungarelli Preserve
- 8 Coquina Beach* / Lefliss Key
- 9 Joan M. Durante Park*

POINTS OF INTEREST

- 1 Anna Maria City Pier
- 2 Cortez Village
- 3 Bridge Street Fishing Pier

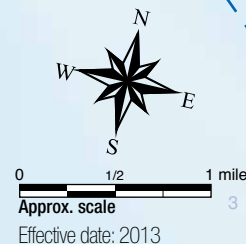
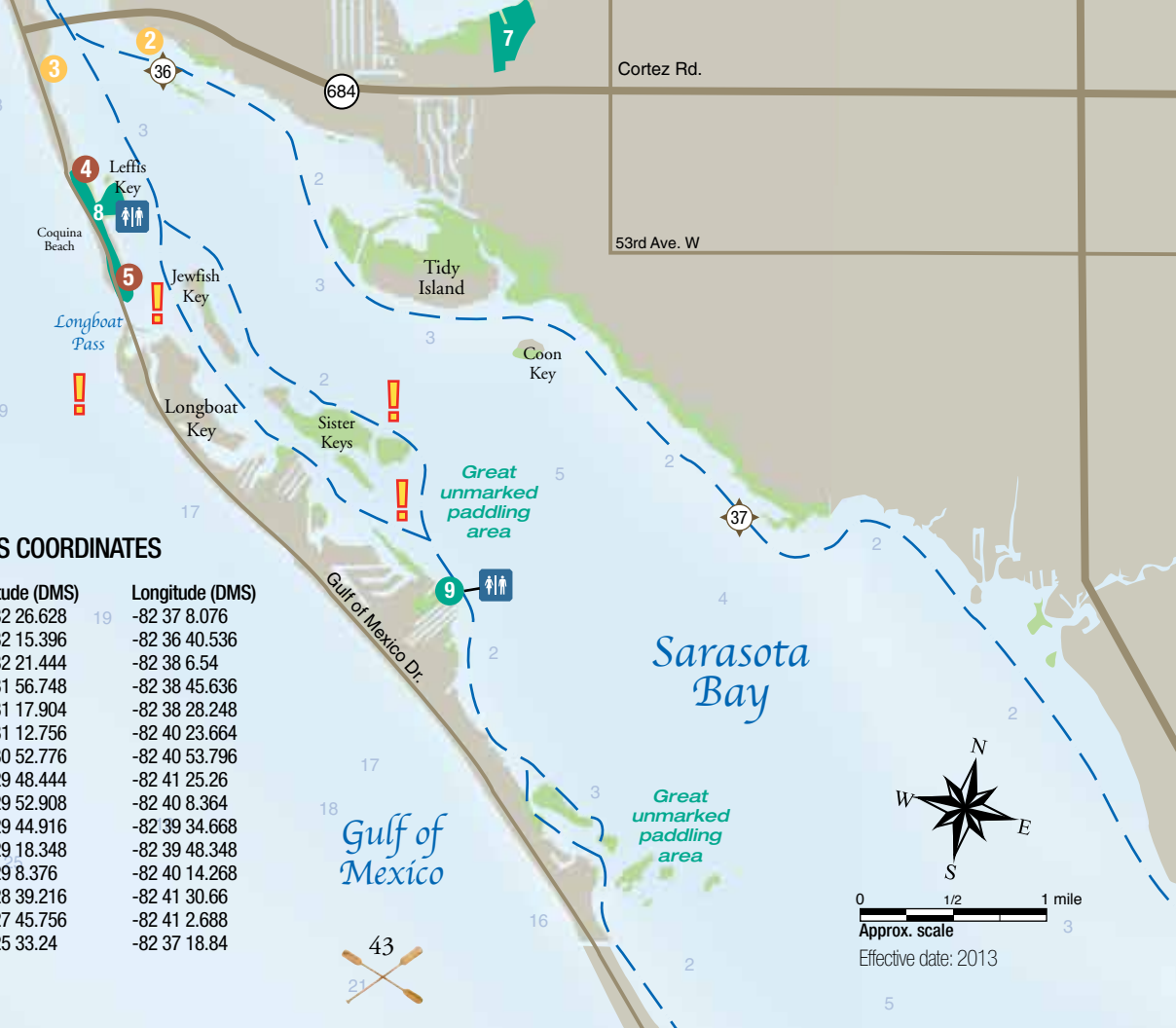
AMENITIES

- Restrooms



GPS COORDINATES

	Latitude (DMS)	Longitude (DMS)
23	27 32 26.628	-82 37 8.076
24	27 32 15.396	-82 36 40.536
25	27 32 21.444	-82 38 6.54
26	27 31 56.748	-82 38 45.636
27	27 31 17.904	-82 38 28.248
28	27 31 12.756	-82 40 23.664
29	27 30 52.776	-82 40 53.796
30	27 29 48.444	-82 41 25.26
31	27 29 52.908	-82 40 8.364
32	27 29 44.916	-82 39 34.668
33	27 29 18.348	-82 39 48.348
34	27 29 8.376	-82 40 14.268
35	27 28 39.216	-82 41 30.66
36	27 27 45.756	-82 41 2.688
37	27 25 33.24	-82 37 18.84





To ensure you have a safe and pleasurable trip please note the following paddle trip and safety information.

REQUIRED BY LAW

- Flotation Gear - Florida law requires a United States Coast Guard (USCG) approved, readily accessible and wearable personal flotation device (PFD) for each occupant. PFD's must be worn by all occupants under six years of age.
- Marine whistle, bell, or horn (USCG approved).
- Visual Distress Signal USCG approved flag, S-O-S light, orange smoke signals, or red flares (only required at night). Flashlight and extra batteries are recommended.
- A Florida fishing license is required for persons 16 years of age and older.
- All canoes and kayaks with motors must be registered.
- All canoes and kayaks longer than 16 feet must be titled, and display a white light with 360° visibility from the watercraft when on the water dusk to dawn.

OTHER NECESSARY ITEMS

- Extra paddle per boat.
- First Aid kit, insect repellent and sunscreen.
- Bow and stern lines (about 15 feet long is best).
- Anchoring device with rope (length of rope should be 5 to 7 times depth of water).
- Hand bilge pump and large sponge to remove water from boat.
- Inflatable bladders in open spaces of kayak or canoe for flotation of craft if taking on water.
- Navigation - trail map, marine map and/or nautical chart of the Tampa and Sarasota Bay areas, and compass at a minimum. A handheld GPS unit is recommended for trips on open water.
- Hat and sunglasses.
- Waterproof storage bags.
- Shoes.



Paddling Tips:



PLAY IT SAFE & KNOW THE WATER

- **CHECK THE MARINE FORECAST** - If your trip is on Tampa Bay, Sarasota Bay or any non-inland coastal waters, be sure to heed any Small Craft Advisories.
- **KNOW CURRENT CONDITIONS** - Wind, tides, river level, etc. Paddling against strong winds and tides can make the trip very difficult and non-enjoyable. And, some trails may be impassible at low tide. Check tide tables and plan your trip accordingly so as not to get stranded in a backwater area at low tide.
- **EQUIPMENT - CANOES ARE NOT RECOMMENDED FOR OPEN WATER TRAILS.** Sea kayaks with spray skirts and sit-a-tops are the recommended equipment for open water trips in Tampa Bay, the Intracoastal Waterway (ICW), and coastal areas especially in winter months where wind and waves can be higher.
- **USE CAUTION IN OPEN WATER** - Coastal area in and around Tampa Bay and Sarasota Bay can be subject to fast approaching thunderstorms and lightning in summer months and high winds and waves in winter months. Stay close to shore.
- **BRIDGES** - Use extreme caution when traveling under a bridge - currents can be very swift and watch for fishing lines.
- **MOTORBOATS AND PERSONAL WATERCRAFT** - Watch for motorboats and personal watercraft and stay to the right and turn the bow (front) into the wake.
- **TRIP LENGTH** - Allow a minimum of two miles per hour paddling time under normal conditions.
- **PLANNING** - Let someone know your plans, where you are going, who's with you, and when you plan to be back. Paddle in a group or with a buddy. Last boat should be the most experienced paddler.
- **BRING DRINKING WATER** - Bring at least 1 gallon per person/per day.
- **FOOD** - Bring food and gear in watertight containers tied to your boat.
- Secure your car and take your keys with you.
- **HYPOTHERMIA** - Warning signs include uncontrolled shivering, slurred speech, lack of coordination, and poor concentration. Get victim into a shelter and remove wet clothes. Give fluids and food until warmed. Hypothermia can occur in summer with wind and rain.
- For additional safety information utilize the Resource Directory found in this guide.



Resource Directory



Paddle Manatee

ASSISTANCE

Florida Fish & Wildlife
Conservation Commission 1-888-404-3922 (FWCC) (wildlife alert)
(Division of Law Enforcement SW region)

US Coast Guard Rescue 941-794-1261 (emergency)
941-794-1607 (non-emergency)

Manatee County:

Marine Rescue 941-748-4501 ext: 5924
Sheriff's Office 911 (emergency)
941-747-3011 (report crime or incident)

Natural Resources Department 941-745-3723
Parks & Recreation 941-742-5923

Lake Manatee Dam/Water Treatment 941-746-3020

Florida Sea Grant Extension 941-722-4524

Wildlife Education
and Rehabilitation Center Inc. 941-778-6324
www.wildlifeinc.org

PROGRAMS (marine resource info)

Save Our Seabirds Sanctuary 941-388-3010

Mote Marine Aquarium/Laboratory 941-388-4441

FDEP Terra Ceia State Park/
Terra Ceia Aquatic Preserve 941-721-2068

Fish and Hunting License 1-888-347-4356
www.myfwc.com/license/

NOAA Weather Service Broadcast (Tampa Bay)
(24 hour weather and marine forecast) 813-645-2506

FDEP Office of Greenways & Trails 850-245-2052
(FL Circumnavigational Paddling Trail) www.dep.state.fl.us/gwt

Sarasota Bay Estuary Program 941-955-8085
www.sarasotabay.org

Tampa Bay Estuary Program 727-893-2765
www.tbep.org

Charlotte Harbor
National Estuary Program 239-338-2556 toll free: 866-835-5785
www.chnep.org

OUTFITTERS & ECOTOUR OPERATORS

Ray's Canoe Hideaway
1247 Hagle Park Road, Bradenton, FL 941-747-3909
www.rayscanohideaway.com

Around the Bend Nature Tours 941-794-8773
1815 Palma Sola Blvd., Bradenton, FL www.aroundbend.com

Florida Discount Water Sports 941-798-3721
4328 127th St. W., Cortez, FL

Island Style Watersports 941-954-1009
2433 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota, FL www.islandstylesports.com

Economy Tackle 941-922-9671
6018 S. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota, FL www.floridakayak.com

Almost Heaven Kayak Adventures 941-504-6296
www.kayakfl.com

A Silent Sports Outfitter 941-966-5477
2301 N. Tamiami Trail, Nokomis, FL www.silentsportsoutfitters.com

PADDLING CLUBS

Tampa Bay Sea Kayakers www.clubkayak.com/tbsk/

Florida Professional
Paddle Sports Association www.paddleflausa.com

Florida Paddling Trails Association www.floridapaddlingtrails.com



Enjoy life and nature! Go out paddling!



