

# Florida Designated Paddling Trails

## Blackwater River

N



Blackwater River Paddling Trail Map 1

Blackwater River Paddling Trail Map 2

Blackwater River Paddling Trail Map 3

Berrydale

Munson

Cannon Town

SANTA ROSA

Baker

Allentown

OKALOOSA

Milligan

Holt

90

10

Harold

Milton

Bagdad

- Designated Paddling Trail
- Wetlands
- Water
- Designated Paddling Trail Index

0 2 4 8 Miles



# Blackwater River Paddling Trail Map 1



KENNEDY BRIDGE RD

MATTIE KENNEDY RD

**Access Point 1: Kennedy Bridge Launch**  
N: 30.9333 W: -86.7358

EADIE COTTON RD

HIGH BRIDGE RD

Blackwater River State Forest

OKALOOSA

**Access Point 2: Peadon Bridge Launch**  
N: 30.8823 W: -86.7312

PEADON BRIDGE RD







SHERMAN KENNEDY RD

JOHN RILEY BARNHILL RD

Cannon Town

4

**Access Point 3: Cotton Bridge Launch**  
N: 30.8336 W: -86.7336

-  Blackwater River Designated Paddling Trail
-  Canoe/Kayak Launch
-  Restrooms
-  Potable Water
-  Florida Conservation Lands
-  Wetlands



# Blackwater River Paddling Trail Map 2



MARTIN MILL RD

CHARLIE FOSTER RD

4



**Access Point 3: Cotton Bridge Launch**  
N: 30.8336 W: -86.7336

CORDUROY RD

NORMAN RILEY RD

SANTA ROSA

Blackwater River State Forest







BROOKS RD

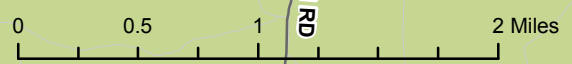
OKALOOSA

PENNY CREEK RD

LIGHTHOUSE CHURCH RD

POPLAR HEAD CHURCH RD

-  Blackwater River Designated Paddling Trail
-  Canoe/Kayak Launch
-  Restrooms
-  Potable Water
-  Florida Conservation Lands
-  Wetlands



# Blackwater River Paddling Trail Map 3

N



**Access Point 4: Bryant Bridge Launch**  
N: 30.7243 W: -86.7931

**Access Point 6: Blackwater River State Park (Deaton Bridge Launch)**  
N: 30.7043 W: -86.8815

**Access Point 5: Johnson's Float Launch**  
N: 30.7077 W: -86.8514

- Blackwater River Designated Paddling Trail
- Canoe/Kayak Launch
- Camping
- Restrooms
- Potable Water
- Florida State Parks
- Florida Conservation Lands
- Wetlands



Milton  
↓



# Blackwater River Paddling Trail Guide



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## The Waterway

This winding stream is suitable for beginners and flows through the scenic [Blackwater River State Forest](#), with trees often forming a dense, shady canopy over the river. High bluffs occur in some sections where pine and cedar trees tower above paddlers. The water is coffee colored by naturally occurring tannins, the reason why Creek Indians called the river “Oka Lusa” (“black water”). White sandbars provide plenty of options for camping or picnicking.

## The Paddling Experience

The lower portion of this popular 31-mile paddling trail can become congested with people floating in tubes near the state park, especially on summer weekends and holidays. Plan a trip for weekdays or during Florida’s pleasant winter months to avoid crowds. Paddlers should check stream flow data and weather conditions before embarking on a trip. The Blackwater River can rise very quickly and make paddling difficult and conditions dangerous. Many of the access sites are remote with unsafe overnight parking; consider parking and shuttle with a local outfitter listed below. **The river is not navigable below the Deaton Bridge in [Blackwater River State Park](#); be sure to exit here.** Glass containers are prohibited on the river. Note: If the [Blackwater River gauge near Baker](#) is over 6 feet in height, contact area outfitters or Blackwater River State Park for current river conditions before paddling as the river may be flooded.



# Blackwater River Paddling Trail Guide

## Access Points

**#1, Start of the Trail, Kennedy Bridge.** Be aware that fallen trees may occasionally block the river between Kennedy Bridge and Bryant Bridge, requiring portaging. Check with local outfitters for current conditions.

*Directions: From Munson, take SR 4 east 2.7 miles to Hurricane Lake Road. Go north on Hurricane Lake Road, it becomes Beaver Creek Road after 3.6 miles. At 2 miles turn east on Kennedy Bridge Road and go 3.1 miles to the bridge.*

**#2, Mile 5.5, Peadon Bridge.** This access is unimproved with erosion and steep banks and is not a recommended launch. It is a very remote area with limited parking and rough local roads. Peadon Bridge is about 5 miles downstream of Kennedy Bridge. *Directions: From Baker, take SR 189 north 4 miles to Riley Barnhill Road. Go west on Riley Barnhill Road 3.2 miles until it becomes Peadon Bridge Road and continue 0.5 mile to Peadon Bridge.*

**#3, Mile 11, Cotton Bridge, SR 2.** 

Access to this small county park is on the west side of the river with an improved, hand-launch only boat ramp. The gates are locked one hour before sunset so take in consideration if leaving a vehicle here. *Directions: From Baker, take SR 4 4.2 miles west to Cotton Bridge.*

**#4, Mile 22.5, Bryant Bridge.** The lower river, especially between Bryant Bridge and Blackwater State Park, can become congested with paddlers, tubers and swimmers in summer and on warm weather weekends. Access is on the west side of the river, upstream from the bridge. There is ample parking but this is a very remote area so take caution if leaving a vehicle here. *Directions: Take US 90 west 14.0 miles out of Crestview. Turn north onto Kelly Mill Road for 0.6 miles, turn west onto Bryant Bridge Road and continue 1.3 miles to Bryant Bridge.*

**#5, Mile 28, Johnson's Float Launch (drop-off launch only—no parking).** Due to limited parking, this is a drop-off launch only. *From Milton, take US 90 East 10 miles to Deaton Bridge Road. Turn north and continue 2.7 miles to Forest Road J40 on right. Turn right and follow J40 2 miles to launch point, veering left at the J46 road junction. This is an improved gravel road with one steep section that may be challenging for small vehicles.*

**#6, Mile 31, End of the Trail, Deaton Bridge, Blackwater River State Park,**



Deaton Bridge is within [Blackwater River State Park](#). **Be sure to end your trip here as the river is not navigable below this bridge.** There are parking lots on both sides of the river. Deposit park admission fee in pay stations. There is a large sandy beach on river left and the access is just downstream of the bridge on a beach, river right. A picnic area and restrooms are a short distance beyond the takeout. *Directions: Take US 90 east out of Milton 10 miles to Deaton Bridge Road. Turn north and continue 4 miles to Deaton Bridge within Blackwater River State Park.*



# Blackwater River Paddling Trail Guide

About a mile before Deaton Bridge on river right is an improved boat ramp with limited parking. It is accessed on a single lane paved road just north of the state park entrance. It is not recommended to leave a vehicle overnight here.

## Outfitters and Shuttle Service

[Adventures Unlimited](#) 850-623-6197

[Blackwater Canoe Rental](#) 1-800-967-6789

## Base Camp

[Blackwater River State Park](#) is an excellent place to gaze at deep, starry skies and share stories around the campfire recounting the day's adventures. Several other [designated paddling trails](#) are nearby: Shoal River, Juniper Creek, Coldwater Creek, and the Yellow River. Stretch your legs and enjoy a stroll on the The Juniper Creek Trail, accessible from the park. This trail is part of the [Florida National Scenic Trail](#) and is maintained by Florida Trail volunteers. Park visitors also enjoy hiking the "Chain of Lakes Nature Trail" starting on a boardwalk on the east side of Deaton Bridge. This is one of many delightful hiking trails in the state park and takes about an hour and a half walk along the river to a river swamp, a chain of ox-bow lakes and a sandhill community of longleaf pine and turkey oak. The trail may be seasonally wet.