

McCormick Creek Paddle

A good paddle option for windy days when big water paddles cannot and should not be attempted. This brackish water paddle presents the opportunity for anglers to catch fresh and saltwater species of game fish such as: bass, bluegill and other pan-fish, gar, redfish and seatrout.

Top Baits:

Popping cork rigged with jig head and shrimp
Heddon's Super Spook in natural and mullet colors
Gulp Shrimp
Z Man Paddler Baits in white and mullet colors
Beetle-spin buzz baits
Freshly dug worms with a split shot and bobber
Live / fresh dead shrimp
Live bull minnows
Redfish Magic Spinner baits

Length:

3.4 miles

Resources:

Lower Suwannee National Wildlife Refuge
16450 NW 31st Place
Chiefland, FL 32626
Phone: (352) 493 – 0238

Weather, Tides, Wind, Lunar:

https://www.windfinder.com/forecast/cedar_key_daughtry_bayou
<http://fl.us harbors.com/monthly-tides/Florida-West%20Central/Cedar%20Key>

WARNINGS:

McCormick and Barnett creeks are very tidally influenced and thus, this paddle should only be completed on a rising tide. This paddle requires intermediate navigational abilities, the paddler should be equipped with a compass and a GPS capable unit (or cell phone with aerial imagery) for navigational purposes. Alligators are present in this area and if left unmolested, will not cause you any harm, although they may startle you as they splash into the creek from their sunning beds scattered along the bank.

Tip:

Use your smartphone's GPS capabilities to precisely pinpoint your location in reference to the oyster bars in McCormick and Barnett creeks. On high tide, soak baits such as cut mullet or live shrimp over these bars to catch redfish and trout.

Information:

Access the launch site by following the Lower Suwannee National Wildlife Refuge Loop Road until you reach McCormick Creek road. Turn down the McCormick Creek Road and follow the

road west until you reach the creek. Kayaks can be launched at the end of the road. After launching, be sure to move your vehicle off to the side of the right-of-way so that others can launch their boats as well. This paddle is a good option to consider on windy days when bigger-water paddles should not be attempted. Due to the sheltering nature of the winding creeks and the grass islands of this area, this paddle can be completed in higher winds but the paddler should always remain vigilant to changing weather conditions and should keep a watchful eye on the weather radar. This paddle route presents the opportunity to view a wide variety of bird species, including: eagles, ospreys, roseate spoonbills and night herons. Paddlers are also liable to see snakes, turtles and the American alligator while completing this paddle. The best time to carry out this paddle is on a rising tide. Launching two hours before high tide should leave the paddler sufficient time to explore the creek and fish.

Peak Fishing Times and Areas:

After launching your boat, paddle up creek (west / northwest) following the main creek line. Cast along the edges of the creek and at the openings within the creek where smaller fingers of the creek meet the main line. Try using top water plugs around these small openings in the creek and above flooded oyster bars during low light conditions for a hot redfish and trout bite.

Spot 1: Fish around this creek mouth opening, positioned just before the creek turns west and forms a right angle. Live / fresh dead baits fished on a popping cork or a reaction bait such as the Redfish Magic spinner bait will work best in this area.

To maximize fishing time and efficiency, try slow trolling a live mullet or shrimp beneath a popping cork while paddling along and moving from one spot to the next. The popping cork plays a vital role as it will not only alert the angler of a fish having taken the bait but it will also help to keep your hook from snagging on the bottom.

Anglers looking to catch freshwater species of fish such as bass and bluegill should cast rubber worms and beetle spin baits toward the grass edges and retrieve slowly, lifting and twitching their rod tip from time to time to add action to the bait's appearance in the water. Look to find these freshwater species of fish around hard structure in the creek. Soaking a freshly dug worm beneath a bobber and a small split shot weight can also be productive for catching freshwater species of fish.

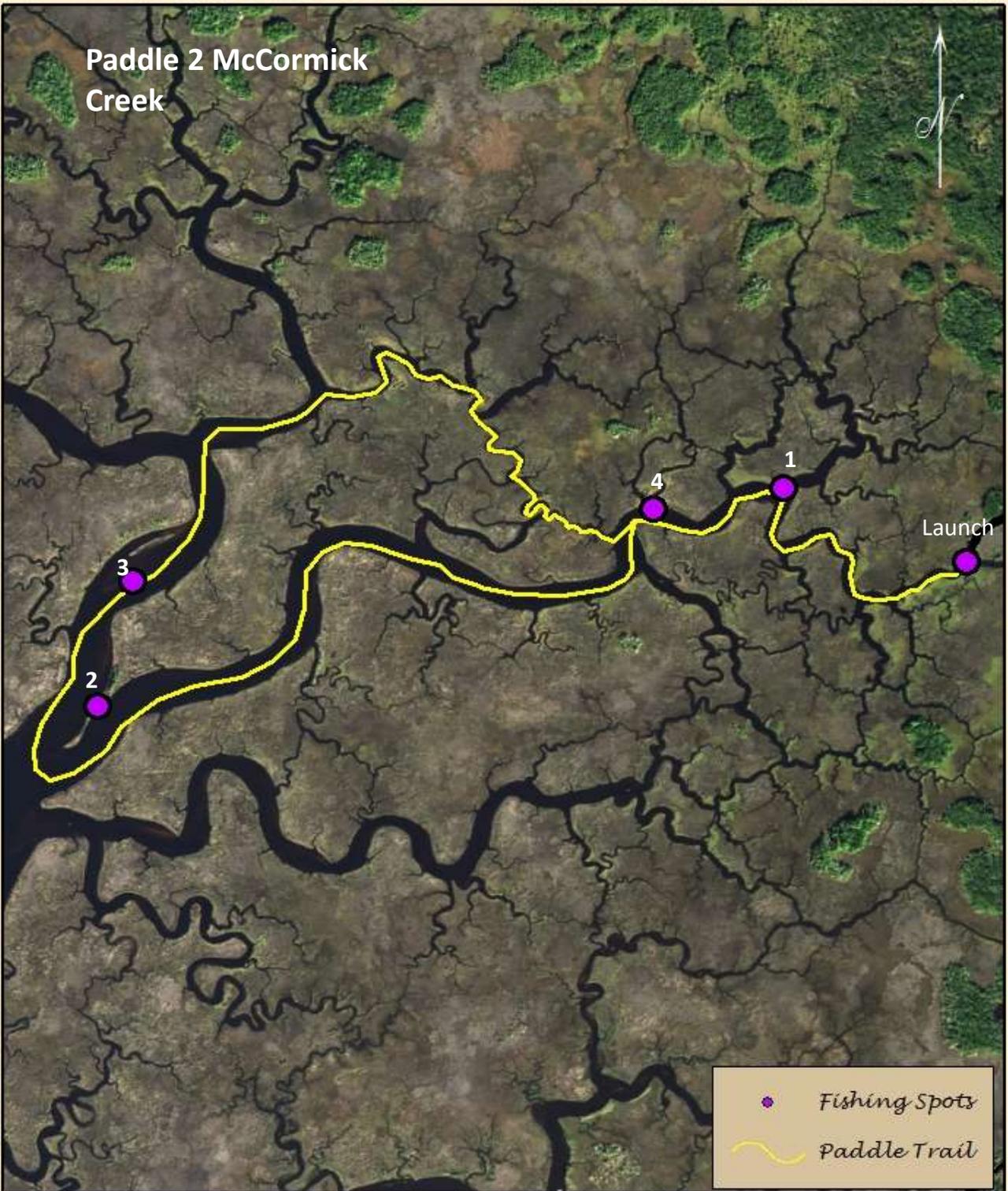
Upon reaching the junction of McCormick and Barnett creeks, the paddler should take a right and begin to paddle back east. Continue to paddle northeast until you come to a "T" in the creek, here you will turn right and head east. Follow the winding creek east / southeast until it rejoins McCormick creek. During high tide, look for fish to be laid up tight against the grassy edges.

Spot 2: There is good fishing all along the thin strip of marsh that separates McCormick Creek's northern edge from Barnett Creek's southern edge. Try using rubber baits rigged on a jig head around the shoals and drop offs in this area of the creek for redfish and trout.

Spot 3: This area features a sandy shoal positioned next to the main creek channel. Trout can be found along this shoal.

Spot 4: Upon exiting the finger creek and returning to the main creek line, Spot 4 will be located just 50 yards to your north and is marked by two smaller creeks opening into the main McCormick creek line. Fish the area directly in front of where these two smaller creeks meet the main creek line.

Paddle 2 McCormick
Creek



● Fishing Spots
~ Paddle Trail

*Lower Suwannee
National Wildlife Refuge*

