

## **Paddling Route Three: Murphy Island Loop**

**Put In and take out:** Lat/Long 29° 34.643'N 81° 37.612'W

US 17 South Base of Dunns Creek Bridge

**Distance:** 5.6 miles

**Difficulty:** Intermediate due to the navigational complexity

**Estimated Time:** 3 hours

**Description:** The put-in is a dirt ramp located underneath the Dunns Creek Bridge on Hwy 17 South. There are no restrooms at the launch site however there is a take-out on Murphy Island which affords an opportunity to go ashore at the half-way point. The route is within a fairly sheltered portion of the St. Johns River (SJR) and makes use of two small creeks so wind is not typically an issue. Boat traffic in this area can be significant however so paddlers should be careful when crossing Dunns Creek. When not crossing the Creek, paddlers should paddle close to the shoreline where wildlife and aquatic flora are abundant.

After launching, cross the Dunns Creek channel and head north towards the SJR. After passing the mouth of Murphy Creek on the west shore, look for the narrower mouth of Rat Creek on the east shoreline approximately .4 miles north of the launch site. Enter Rat Creek and paddle .7 miles to its confluence with the SJR. Exit the Creek and head west in the SJR following the shoreline. Continue 2.15 miles re-crossing Dunns Creek at its mouth until you reach the Murphy Creek Conservation Area boat dock. Look for the Murphy Island Bartram Trail Site Marker BTS-11 mounted at the dock.

Go ashore at BTS 11 and, if time permits, take advantage of the 6 miles of hiking trails on Murphy Island. Be sure to use insect repellent during the warmer months to avoid picking up ticks along the way. There are primitive camp sites on Murphy Island and picnic tables making this a good place to stop for lunch.

Departing from Murphy Island, paddle east, back towards Dunns Creek again staying close to the River's shoreline. Look for the mouth of Polly Creek which is .66 miles east of the Murphy Island dock. Note that there are two other small creeks along the route (refer to map). These creeks are typically clogged with vegetation while Polly Creek remains open so choosing the correct creek should not be difficult. Enter Polly Creek and continue 1.1 miles back to the SJR. Continue east along the shoreline and look for the BTS 8 marker at the mouth of Dunns Creek, just a few hundred yards after exiting Polly Creek. Continue into Dunns Creek, staying along the shoreline crossing the mouth of Murphy Creek and back to the launch site at the foot of the Dunns Creek Bridge.

### **Coordinates:**

Dunns Creek Boat Ramp: 29° 34.643'N 81° 37.612'W

Confluence of Dunns Creek and Rat Creek: 29° 35.007'N 81° 37.604'W

Confluence of Rat Creek and SJR: 29° 35.327'N 81° 37.298'W

Confluence of Dunns Creek and SJR: 29° 35.318'N 81° 37.851'W

West Confluence of Polly Creek and SJR: 29° 35.585'N 81° 38.729'W

East Confluence of Polly Creek and SJR: 29° 35.350'N 81° 38.039'W

Murphy Island Boat Dock and BTS-11: 29° 35.752'N 81° 37.915'W

BTS-8: 29° 35.292'N 81° 39.290'W