

## **Paddling Route Six: Johnson's Spring to Welaka Springs**

**Put In and take out:** Putnam County's Shell Harbor Boat Ramp

**Distance:** 5.7 miles

**Difficulty:** Easy

**Estimated Time:** 3 hours

**Description:** This is a 5.7 mile loop paddle that includes five Bartram Trail Sites. The River in this section is narrow and well sheltered so wind is rarely a problem. Although the east shoreline has a good bit of development, the west (or Indian) shoreline along this route is preserved in its natural state. It is entirely in public ownership and managed by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. The Shell Harbor Boat Ramp has limited parking, but is rarely use so parking should not be an issue.

Launch at the Shell Harbor Boat Ramp and paddle along the east shoreline upstream (south) .6 of a mile. BTS Site 15 – Satsuma Spring is on the shoreline where the small spring run enters the River. All of the springs along this route are on private property so please respect the owner's privacy and do attempt to go ashore. Continue south .2 of a mile to BTS 16 – Nashua Spring. The discharge from Nashua Spring is intermittent and depending on prior weather may or may not be detectable.

Continue paddling south along the east shoreline keeping an eye out for donkeys grazing on palmettos and other vegetation along the shore. Johnson's Bluff is 1.2 miles south of Nashua Spring and extends for over a mile south past the Town of Welaka. The Bartram Trail Site marker is located on the south side of the spring run at the foot of the bluff near Welaka Spring. Continue northeast into the spring run. The BTS 17 – Welaka Spring marker is 140 yards north east of the BTS 18 marker on the southern shoreline however the spring boil itself is another 140 yards beyond the marker.

After visiting the Spring, return to the River crossing northwesterly on the south side of Turkey Island. Watch for boat traffic when crossing the channel from the Island to the west shoreline. Follow the west shoreline 1.9 miles, passing the launch site and look for the BTS 14 – Saratoga Harbor marker on the east shore approximately .7 of a mile north of the Shell Harbor Boat Ramp. Again, be careful of boat traffic when crossing the River channel. After visiting BTS 14, return to the launch site by paddling along the east shoreline.

### **Coordinates:**

Johnson's Spring (Saratoga Harbor) Bartram Trail Site 14: 29° 31.742'N 81° 40.992'W

Shell Harbor Public Boat Ramp: 29° 31.201'N 81° 40.649'W

Satsuma Spring Bartram Trail Site 15: 29° 30.711'N 81° 40.595'W

Nashua Spring Bartram Trail Site 16: 29° 30.554'N 81° 40.638'W

Welaka Spring, Bartram Trail Site 17: 29° 29.608'N 81° 40.439'W

Johnson's Bluff Bartram Trail Site 18: 29° 29.567'N 81° 40.507'W

Welaka Spring boil: 29° 29.667'N 81° 40.414'