

## S825Day Paddles - St Johns River West Watershed

### Ortega River Information Sheet

**Description:** This is a long, mostly protected paddle. After launching at Ringhaver Park, the paddle up river is narrow and without any residential areas. You'll paddle under the I-295 and the Blanding Blvd bridges. On the way out, the river becomes wide after the Timuquana Rd bridge and there is some boat traffic, mostly from local residents. There are a few canals in this area on river that are interesting to explore, although completely residential.

**Skill Level:** Advanced

**Distance/Approximate Time:** 11.8 Miles/5.5 Hours

**Launch Site:** Ringhaver Park Paddle Launch

**Take-out Site:** Wayne B Stevens Park Ramp

**Special Considerations:** 600 yard portage to launching dock at Ringhaver Park. If the portage is too much for you, launching and returning to Wayne B. Stevens Park is an alternative which will add about four miles to your paddle. Heavy powerboat traffic north of the Timuquana Rd bridge on weekends. Possible deadfall and snags the farther you go up the river past Blanding Rd, especially after storms.

#### Skill Level Definitions

**Beginner:** New to paddling and may need tips and or instructions about paddling strokes, safety procedures, and entering/exiting kayaks. Comfortable on short trips of 1 to 3 miles on protected waters, when wind does not exceed 5 mph.

**Novice:** Paddlers acquainted with basic paddle strokes and can manage kayak handling independently in winds not exceeding 10 mph on protected waters. Comfortable on trips up to 6 miles.

**Intermediate:** Paddlers with experience in basic strokes and some experience on different venues, including some open water. Comfortable on trip distances of 6 to 10 miles, winds not exceeding 15 mph.

**Advanced:** Seasoned paddlers who possess skills and experience to paddle all venues and conditions. Experienced in self-rescues. Should be comfortable paddling more than 10 miles in a day.

**NOTE:** Great care has been taken to ensure this guides accuracy, but weather, tides, and water conditions can change rapidly and create hazardous conditions. These maps are for visual reference only, please consult NOAA Charts for navigation. Paddlers should have all proper safety equipment and check conditions before departure. All paddlers should always wear PFDs while on the water, and leave a float plan. There are inherent dangers in any paddle sport. There are special hazards along the Florida coast due to shifting tides, changing wind and weather, shallow waters, and treacherous bottoms with soft mud, rocks, and oyster bars. It is up to each paddler to be aware of these dangers, to accept and be prepared for the risks involved, and to be certain they have the skills to safely paddle in these conditions.