

Lake St. Joseph Paddling Trail

3-5 miles round trip

Lake St. Joseph is thought to be one of the oldest oxbow lakes along the Lower Mississippi. It is also one of the most storied: It was important to the Mississippian peoples who populated the region, and later to the Tensas people who lived in numerous villages along the lake. It is the site of Louisiana's first Christian mass, which was conducted by the LaSalle Expedition. Along its bank is found "Winter Quarters," the only plantation (out of fifteen) left standing during the Union scourge of the south -- and today remains as a reflection of Louisiana's Antebellum cotton culture.

Unfortunately this ancient oxbow is also experiencing sedimentation, and is becoming shallower, murkier, and in places overgrown with invasive water hyacinth. Even still paddlers will enjoy making any number of forays around its perimeter. Canoes, kayaks and stand up paddle boards are the best way to skirt through the stands of cypress and into tributary Clark Bayou. Adjustments to route might have to be made with wind, weather and clumps of water hyacinth.

Please use custom-made google map by going to:

<http://goo.gl/maps/Jk1AT>

<https://maps.google.com/maps/ms?msid=217859314001592865582.0004ee897c23261613b62&msa=0&ll=32.06601,-91.233044&spn=0.022239,0.040426>

Private Landing

32.063468, -91.229153

Unimproved Private Landing off grassy slope at side of Louisiana Hwy 605 less than a mile south of Newellton. Park in grass. Respect private property. No overnight parking or camping. Clean up after yourself.

Public Boat Launch

A Public Boat launch is found at corner of Louisiana Hwy 605 and Hwy 887 in Newellton. Short concrete ramp leads into shallow waters. One mile paddle to reach most interesting forested sections of the lake.

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Approx 3.5 miles round trip. Put in at private Landing and (depending on prevailing wind) cross lake (1,000 feet) and follow cypress shoreline, dodging in and out of the trees for close up views of bankside wildlife. After a mile or two, turn around and cross lake for return trip with fresh wildlife sightings. Watch for eagles and osprey. Frequent

turtles and infrequent gator sightings. Adjust route as necessary for morasses of water hyacinth.

Clark Bayou

Alternate Route up and down Clark Bayou. Paddle under Hwy 605 Bridge and up Clark Bayou for (up to) 3 mile round trip. Overhanging deciduous trees sometimes loaded with birds. Frequent gator sightings. Lots of fish and amphibians.