

Pine Island Paddle



By David Allen
Water LIFE Kayaking

Pine Island is one of the paddling treasures of southwest Florida. Slightly off the beaten track, certainly one of the more rural of the off-shore islands, Pine Island often escapes the notice of area paddlers. Situated among a cluster of islands and Fort Myers, Pine Island is most noted for its fishing and boating. The commercial palm and fruit tree nurseries add to the rural feel of the island.

Matlacha, on the east side of the island and Pineland on the west are the two best areas to explore the surroundings by kayak. On past kayak trips, we have usually favored launching at Pineland, then paddling west to Part Key, Cabbage Key, Useppa Key, and finally to Cayo Costa, the westernmost of the keys. Cayo Costa has wonderful, almost deserted, beaches, a great place

for a swim before returning to Pine Island. And the restaurant at Cabbage Key is always a good place to stop for a quick lunch on the way back.

However, this time our club decided to launch from Matlacha and paddle the eastern side of the island. Matlacha is a colorful little town with art galleries, lots of shops and restaurants, and what is billed as the "Worlds Fishingist Bridge". Matlacha also has a very well designed Municipal Park and Ramp which accommodates powerboats on the west side and kayaks on the east. Nice sandy beaches with lot of space to drop-off your kayak makes the whole process a lot easier. Lots of parking and many covered pavilions for picnic make for an enjoyable outing.

We launched from the sandy beaches of the Park into the Matlacha Canal and headed south along the mangrove islands

that dot Matlacha Pass. The Pass is fairly wide at this point, and we hugged the western side to avoid the powerboat wakes. Lots of fish jumping all along the Pass. Lots of birds fishing in the shallows. Osprey families roosting in their high nests.

We made the turn back north at McCordle Island, about 3 miles south of Matlacha and had an easy paddle with the wind at our back. A picnic lunch put the finishing touches on a interesting paddle.

The Port Charlotte Kayakers meet each Wednesday evening at 5:30 PM at Port Charlotte Beach Park at the end of Harbor Blvd. All are welcome to attend. For additional information contact Dave Allen at 941-235-2588 or ddaa@comcast.net



SCUTTLEBUTT

Sometimes Unsubstantiated, But Often True

FISHIN' FRANK has reportedly bought a big Carolina Skiff, with two motors on it and taken it to Alabama to work on the oil cleanup. "You need a twin engine boat for the work he will be doing, a friend explained. Frank reportedly said if we do get oil here in Charlotte Harbor he wanted to know what to do.



Life in the big city?

BOCA GRANDE MARINA, formally Miller's Marina, is said to be closing. It is not known if this is a summer closing or a economic closing. The marina has sustained several openings and closings over the years.

BOATLIFT COLLISION FWC Uniform Patrol Investigations and the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Officers responded to a boating accident in the Intracoastal Waterway in Jupiter. A vessel struck a fixed boatlift. The vessel on the boat lift then fell onto the striking vessel, seriously injuring the operator. No photo was available.

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