

# Tampa Bay Sea Kayakers

April, 2018 - Volume 26, Issue 04

[www.tbsk.club](http://www.tbsk.club)

[www.facebook.com/TampaBaySeaKayakers](http://www.facebook.com/TampaBaySeaKayakers)



Month: April 2018  [Switch to List View](#)

Week **Month** Year [< Previous Month](#) [Today](#) [Next Month >](#)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Apr 1	2	3	4	5	6	7 9:00 AM Maximo Park to Shell Key - Level II plus  9:00 AM Lake Tarpon/ Brooker Creek - Level 0 
8	9 7:00 PM TBSK Monthly Meeting - Non-Members Invited 	10	11	12	13	14 10:00 AM Silver Lake/ Withlatchoochee River - Level I 
15	16	17	18	19	20	21 8:30 AM TBSK Picnic - Ft De Soto 
22	23	24	25	26	27	28 9:00 AM ALAFIA BANKS BIRD SANCTUARY - Level I 
29	30	May 1	2	3	4	5

 Trips & events indicated by this symbol are led by TBSK members.

[Click here to go to Event Page on tbsk.club](#)

**Our Speaker for the April meeting will be our own amazing Jill Lingard, who is also the FPTA President. She will be describing her recent paddling adventure in Cuba which was not only a change of location but was like paddling in a time warp.**

- In May the Nature Conservancy will tell us about their local Florida programs and successes.



# DEEP HOLE on the Myakka River By Brian Katz



There's a place deep in the woods where Gators gather together as if it were a private country club. Deep Hole on the Myakka River is a sinkhole that was swallowed by the River. Wildlife thrives within the hole, and the Gators gather to snap up easily found food.

I paddled there twice this year: Feb 15<sup>th</sup> and March 23<sup>rd</sup>. There were major differences in River Levels, and that's part of the story. I highly recommend checking River Levels before you go. The right level is important because there's nothing funny about heading into Deep Hole and getting lodged on a Sand Bar. Also, gators feel much scarier in a narrow sand-clogged stream.



So, for planning purposes, you can find the gage here at [USCG Myakka River](#). As a benchmark for me, paddling the river at 60 CFS (Cubic Feet per Second) was less scary than paddling it at 20CFS.

Before you go, you will need to commit to getting to the Ranger's office early - as close to 8am as possible. Only 30 Wilderness Permits are available, and they disappear quickly. Particularly in Tourist season. The permits ran out at about 10:30am in Early February, but near Spring Break in March the permits ran out shortly after 9am.

The put-ins are up at the Bridge. There's one before the bridge and one after the bridge. The one before the bridge is blessed with less gators, but it's cursed with being very shallow. At low water you may need to drag your boat out 20 meters through the mud before you get floating. If you park on the other side of the bridge, you'll have a cleaner put-in, but there's usually a small congregation of gators camped a little downstream across the river. If you find that unnerving, the first put-in is for you. (cont page 3)



With a permit to the wilderness, you'll head downstream on a fairly wide river until you get to the Route 72 bridge. Then it narrows to twist through the trees for a bit, and then it narrows even further to twist through the flatlands. Good boat control at either level is important for this narrow stretch. Gators lurk around many bends, and you don't want to be cutting the corners nor meandering into the banks.

Continuing downstream, you'll run into a large lake. You need to take care at this point of two things. First, at low levels this turns into an unpassable sand bar. You'll need to get out and pull. Second, carefully watch your site lines as this channel may be hard to spot on the return trip.

The lake is shallow, but both times we ran into a gator. The first trip, a gator surfaced beneath one of our boats. It scared the paddlers, but the gator seemed nonplussed. And on the second trip, a paddle mistakenly hit (and scared) a small gator.

The channel to Deep Hole is straight across the lake. It bends to the right. At low water, once you see the Big Hole, watch the sand bar because there's only a narrow kayak-wide floatable channel. This is a place you don't want to get stuck.

We soaked in this spot for quite a while. On one of the trips we even left and then decided to come back in for more viewing.

Leaving the Hole after so much excitement on a 4 mile trip, we decided we needed a break. There's a tall gage pole over on the left shoreline, and that's roughly where the hiking trail pops out. So we headed over there for a bit before heading upstream.

Back after crossing the lake, there's one more thing to take care of. The flow from the river at 60CFS is a challenge.

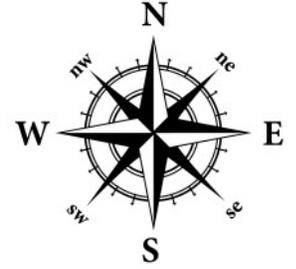
And then after spotting another 50 gators along the 3 mile river, you may hear the take-out before you see it. The bridge is a Tourist Gathering spot where folks are excited to see several Real Wild Gators sitting less than a hundred yards away.





# SAFETY AND TRAINING

By Phil Sheesley



## Safety and Training Notes – April

Hopefully the water temperatures will be rising soon (remember how good the Gulf water felt in our unusually warm February ?). If that happens, we can look forward to getting a little wet during our training session at the April picnic. Weather permitting, we will be looking at the proper way to make a wet exit as well as quickly completing an “Eskimo Rescue”. Remember though, that our TBSK picnic training sessions are intended to help the members who are there to work on what is important to them; so if the group has a particular skill or has specific questions, those are the things we’ll work on. The intent is to help our members feel more comfortable on the water so they can better enjoy sea kayaking. That said, our time will generally include a review of the forward stroke (the one you use 99% of the time). It’s all free and you are encouraged to include a note that you are interested in the Training Session when you reply for the picnic. We’ll have a good time, and then we’ll all go for a short paddle – one that will ensure that we’re back in good time to enjoy the picnic fare.

Phil Sheesley  
Training & Safety Coordinator



Photo By Bill Biles



*Having the “right stuff” (equipment) on a paddle can make the difference between an enjoyable one and something else!*

For Tom Komar and myself on a recent paddle this was the case.

While paddling I felt some water in my kayak... I pumped it out and in about twenty minutes or so there was more water than before. After finding a suitable place to take out we discovered a very small hole in the hull. With “Plumbers Helper” a pipe leak temporary sealant the whole was plugged.



“Plumbers Helper” is a hand moldable epoxy putty a something to carry in addition to the “required “items by the Coast Guard and State Regulations etc.” also, a paddle float, sponge, towrope and pump should be carried.

We should all carry a “KIT” as the English call it of items we take on every paddle.

### **Kit items should include**

*First aid kit*

*Plenty of water*

*Sunglasses, sunscreen and a hat*

*Repair tool*

*“Plumbers Helper” such as AquaMend (marine epoxy putty stick and tape like Duck or Guerrilla)*

*Roofing patch with a form of tar on it is said to be good for sealing large holes!*

*Power Bar*



*Flash light*



In cooler weather Fleece.. Windbreaker etc. a Storm Cag (a hooded garment that goes over the PFD which fastens like a spray skirt. This can be put on while on the water, it is a very good item to have for a kayaker to put on who has gotten wet and chilled

**It is better to be safe and prepared than have any regrets!**



# Lost & Found on the Little Manatee River

By Hank Brooks With Pictures by Jan Machnikowski



The Tampa Bay area had one of its warmest February's in history in 2018. If we ignore the implications of global warming, it made for great winter paddling weather. Since the winds have frequently blown this winter, this paddle was planned for the Little Manatee River – launching at Commongood Park in Ruskin. There were eight TBSKers on this paddle – Betty Dawson, Seven Loeven, Al Tillson, Barb Uzenoff, Jan Machnikowski, Mayra Rodriguez, Kathy Nagel and myself.



The paddle on this part of the Little Manatee has several unique parts to it. Commogood Park is on an estuary which leads to the river, the first mile winds thru residential neighborhoods as you make your way toward the river. There are many twists and turns and it is not obvious which direction to go – so Steven and I picked out houses to remember where to turn thru the maze. So I felt very comfortable that we could find our way from the river back to Commogood Park.



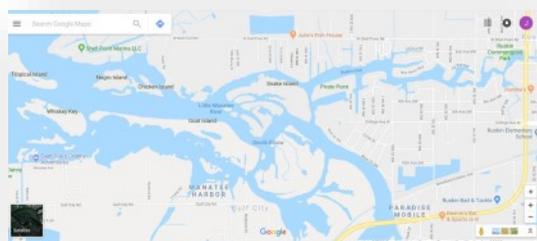
The lower part of the Little Manatee, from the river mouth at Shell Point to 2.5 miles upriver to the U.S. 41 Bridge, is quite interesting because of the many mangrove islands – some only 50 yards wide and some extremely large at one mile long. This creates a labyrinth to explore on our paddling adventure. The large islands have creative names such as Snake, Whiskey, Goat, Negro, Chicken, Devil's Elbow. I had brought a Google Map to help guide me. However, I was lacking my trusty navigator, Bill Biles with his GPS, because he was taking a kayak class at Sweetwater's Kayak Symposium.



It had been about 6 months since I had paddle on this part of the river. All was well as we arrived at the Little Manatee River itself. Snake Island was right where I remembered it and it was right across from the “copula house” with the copula on top of the second story. And just around the corner, on the river itself, was a large building which I called the “warehouse”. We found Devi's Elbow and turned into the mangroves. Once you get on these trails, they all seem to look alike with no distinguishing features. We did arrive at the opposite side of the river looking for a place to take out – but found none. After looking around, I was not quite sure exactly where we were on the river. So I huddled with Al and he suggested a way thru the islands. Within about 10

minutes someone shouted, I see the “warehouse” – we had our bearings again.

Since we did not find a suitable takeout, we decided to paddle back to the take-out and have lunch. Yes I would go back, but only with either a GPS or Bill Biles as our guide.





By Tampa standards it was cold. Our TBSK group of nine paddlers braved getting up to 46 windy degrees to paddle the middle section of the Hillsborough river on a Wednesday morning in mid-March. We left Lowry Park at 9:30 to paddle up river to the Rowlett Park dam, a pretty easy Level II paddle of just a little over 6 miles.



The first landmark was the derelict Sulphur Springs water tower marking the spot where, in times gone by, the city used to maintain a popular swimming pool that was fed by the springs. No more, the area is “home” to squatters and not a particularly safe spot for walking alone. The tower is now only used by the birds. We stayed in the river to take a closer look at the springs outflow. The water level in this part of the river is largely tidal and with the low water as we went by we could see the clear spring water flowing over a small dam into the river. This is the one spot in the lower section of the river that has crystal clear water. The picture here is of the group at the entrance to the spring (you aren’t allowed past the bridge pictured).



While the Hillsborough is largely “wild” up river from Rowlett Park, and “urban” below Lowry Park, this part of the river can probably best be described as “eclectic”. The variety of dwellings and “constructions” along the river bank could be the subject of a book. Tom Komar, as usual, took a great many pictures as we progressed, one of which here is of “River

Rat Jim’s” work of art.



There are homes and docks along both sides of the river in this area and few places to land until you reach Rowlett Park, which has shelters, picnic tables, and good facilities. Because the water at the time of our visit was low, we couldn’t paddle all the way to the dam, but at other times it can be interesting to paddle up to the spillway. Our group took a middle paddle break here. On the way back downriver, we had to stop at another exotic structure, this barge advertising .

“Dining & Cocktails”, replete with lounge chairs, dining tables, a large flat-screen TV, and a huge (7x10ft) mirror to allow passing kayakers to admire themselves. As we posed for this picture, the owner told us that he can join the two barges together to form a “craft” about 60ft long. He entertains groups on trips from this home all the way to downtown. Interesting.



*TBSK paddlers pictured from right to left; Dave Schmidt, Jim Wainwright, Holly Wainwright, Al Tillson, Barb Usenoff, Steven Loeven, John Marek, me. Tom Komar’s paddle is also prominent in this one.*

We were back at Lowry Park by noon. Everyone lived.



# Events

## Kayak Camping for TBSK Members

Many of our TBSK members are interested in camping, especially from a kayak. If you are interested in camping, please make sure to let Gary Bernier [gwbarnier@gmail.com](mailto:gwbarnier@gmail.com) know. Contact him you need to get in touch with all of the TBSK members interested in camping .

Also, Andy Bartley launched a Facebook Page for TBSK Camping:  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1780031405551417/>



## Member Requested Trips

Anyone can request a paddle to a location they want to go and we will see if we can find a trip leader to lead the trip for you. Just submit a Trip Request by the 10th of the month prior to your trip so the next newsletter can advertise it with the trip leaders' name.

**You Can Do This By Emailing [tbsk@tbsk.club](mailto:tbsk@tbsk.club) with "Trip Request" in the subject line.**

1. Put-in and take-out locations
2. Destination and total distance
3. Preferred Date(s) and time
4. Skill level required ([see Trip Planning/Paddling guide on TBSK.club](#))
5. Phone number (should trip leader have questions)

### **Trip Coordinator will:**

- Post this trip request with the monthly "request for trips" which is sent out to trip leaders.
- Notify the person requesting the trip if we can find a trip leader and if the trip can be led exactly as requested, or if some modification to the trip is necessary.

## New Places To Paddle

Comments from our member survey observed we always paddle the "same old places". We need to get out of our rut! With that in mind, we are encouraging our trip leaders to expand their paddling horizons. All members should note that we have a "Paddle Places" section on our web site which lists places to paddle in the greater Tampa Bay area (see menu on bottom of the home page).

In "Paddle Places" one of the things you will find is the Pinellas County Paddling Guide, which lists about 100 different places to paddle in Pinellas County - where most of our members live. The link to the guide, which TBSK helped create, is found below:

<http://www.pinellascounty.org/blueways/pdf/BluewaysGuide.pdf>

If you have a favorite place to paddle, and it is not listed in "Paddle Places", please contact Hank Brooks at [jbrook5@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:jbrook5@tampabay.rr.com)



# News & Events Around the State

(updated info in red)



**Friends of the Island Parks** (<http://www.islandparks.org>) supports Caladesi Island State Park and Honeymoon Island

- Osprey Trail Walks every Wed, Sat, Sun at 11
- Beach Walks every Friday at 11
- Monthly Shell Show. 3rd Saturday each month at Nature Center, 1pm
- Wildlife Status:
  - Osprey: 15 Active Nests in March, and first chicks spotted March 28th
  - Eagles: 2 Eaglets fully grown and ready to Fledge in March
  - Great horned owls: Owls are not anticipated to nest in the parks this season
  - Sea Turtle: Season runs from May through October. 43 nests were spotted last season
- Visit [caladesidiscoverycenter.com](http://caladesidiscoverycenter.com) to learn about the forthcoming interpretive facility.
- **April 21-22 Island Earth Days**



CALADESI DISCOVERY CENTER

For an update on this year's Sea Turtle Baby Boom, see this article: <http://www.tampabay.com/news/environment/wildlife/baby-boom-sea-turtles-set-new-record-for-nesting-on-pinellas-beaches/2307517>

**Florida Paddling Trails Association (FPTA).** We are the steward of all of Florida's water trails. Our mission is to develop water trails, protect the environment along the trails, and be a resource and voice for paddlers. Jill Lingard is the FPTA President, and Hank Brooks is this Region's Director for FPTA. (Our region is Hillsborough, Pinellas, & Manatee)



**The Adventurous Woman.** Fishing, Camping, Kayaking, Hikes for women of all skill levels. Meets the 3rd Wednesday at Bill Jackson's. 6:30pm, February-November.

**Society for Ethical Ecotourism:** Florida SEE is looking for volunteers to help vendors become certified. See info about SEE on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/FloridaSEE.org>.

Info on the volunteer position can be seen here:

- [http://www.floridasee.org/docs/Florida\\_SEE\\_Assessor\\_Position\\_Description\\_2015.pdf](http://www.floridasee.org/docs/Florida_SEE_Assessor_Position_Description_2015.pdf)



**Paddle Florida** <http://www.paddleflorida.org/>

- **March 10-16, 2018: Choctawhatchee Challenge**
- **April 6-8, 2018: Suwannee River Paddling Festival**

To register for trips: <http://www.paddleflorida.org/services/preview-and-register-for-trips-5165.html>



**Tampa Bay Watch:** <http://www.tampabaywatch.org>



**Keep Pinellas Beautiful** strives to keep our community clean and beautiful.

We have many volunteers and adoption programs available in which you can participate.

<http://www.mykpb.com/>



**Keep Tampa Bay Beautiful:** <http://keptampabaybeautiful.org>

Our mission is to promote a culture of environmental stewardship through volunteer and educational opportunities.



**Egmont Key Alliance** (<http://www.egmontkey.info/>)

- **Volunteer Work Day, April 12, 2018**
- **Raptor Fest Feb 3, 2018 Boyd Hill Nature Trail**



**Florida Water Environmental Association:** Over 70 years after its creation, FWEA continues to make historic differences in the advancement of the water environment, science and technology, making it a leading professional water organization in Florida. Our history says a lot about the leadership, dedication and hard work. <http://www.fwea.org>

# Visit our Sponsors for the Best Kayaking Equipment and Advice!

## How did new participants find out about the club?

Since early April we have been tracking how new members found out about TBSK. The results so far are:

- Outfitters 3
- Internet Search 3
- A Friend 3
- Other 3
- Facebook 3
- Brochures 3

Support our sponsors!

One of the Finest  
Kayak Shops in the Country!

Bill Jackson's

SHOP FOR ADVENTURE

"Every Day is a  
Demo Day at Bill Jacksons"

9501 US 19 North, Pinellas Park, FL 33782 (727) 576-4169  
www.BillJacksons.com



# Info for TBSK.club

## Board Members

.....

### President

John Marek 813 951 5650  
tampajohn@gmail.com

### Vice President

Cynthia McGregor 305.619.8276  
sailingcyn@gmail.com

### Trip Coordinator

Bob Morris 727 804 3636  
rcmorrisfa@aol.com

### Membership Coordinator

Steve Loeven 516 729 3297  
sl72056@yahoo.com

### Training/Safety Coordinator

Phil Sheesley 813.695.7395  
philshesley@hotmail.com

### Activities Coordinators

Clay Kent 727.557.8159  
kentdata@yahoo.com  
Irm Lukanik 727.557.4880  
llukanik@gmail.com

### Webmaster

Hank Brooks 727 724 8983  
jbrook5@tampabay.rr.com

### Secretary/ Treasurer

Hank Brooks 727 724 8983  
jbrook5@tampabay.rr.com

### Newsletter Editor

## TBSK MEMBER CLASSIFIED ADS

.No classifieds submitted this month. Classified Ads Policy: Any TBSK member may place a classified ad. The ad is free for the first six months. After six months ad expires. May be maintained for \$5 per month. Please notify the editor when item is sold.

## Welcome New Members!

### Members that renewed this month:

- Mary Jo Woodward
- Jackie Simpson
- Deb Schroeder
- David Bates
- Carol Behnken

## NEW MEMBERS FOR MARCH

- Al Gammons
- Chad Dumke
- Deb Schmidt .
- Tabitha Saletri
- Karen Dealy

## Treasurer's Report

Feb 2018

**Beginning BALANCE** \$4601

### INCOME

Dues \$275.00

### EXPENSES

picnic \$118  
Postage/P.O. Box \$20  
Software \$432  
Office supplies \$12  
Checks \$44  
**TOTAL \$697**

**Ending Balance \$3640**



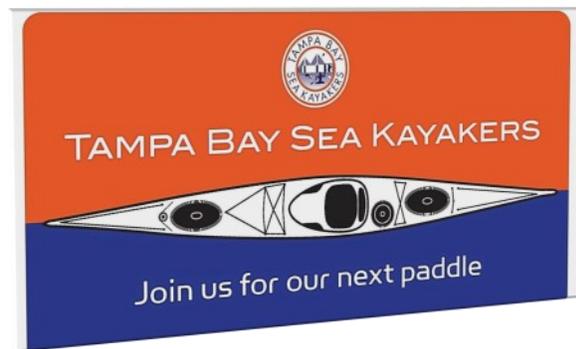


## **Tampa Bay Sea Kayakers Become A Member**

You may join TBSK online using your web browser. Just go to the link <http://www.tbsk.club> and click "Join Us" at the top of the page. You can pay club dues at the end of the process.

To join the Tampa Bay Sea Kayakers by mail, click on "Join Us" at the top of the TBSK web site. Click on the Liability / Waiver Form. Print the form and send it to the address listed at the bottom of this page. The application and waiver form are also available at TBSK meetings held at Bill Jacksons Store on the second Monday of each month at 7:00pm.

We hope to see you at our next TBSK event!



**Tampa Bay Sea Kayakers  
P.O. Box 8682  
Seminole FL 33775-8682**