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Shingle Creek: Paddle it before the secret is out



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Orlando Sentinel

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Shingle Creek: Exercise and surprises in Kissimmee

SEPTEMBER 1, 2015, 11:38 PM

I've canoed Rock Springs Run, the Wekiva River and Econlockhatchee River, but I hadn't canoed Shingle Creek despite driving over it countless times near Mall at Millenia on Interstate 4.

How pretty could such an urban creek be? Turns out, very pretty indeed. The creek, which starts in wetlands near Pine Hills, is considered a headwaters of the Everglades and flows south to **Kissimmee** and Lake Tohopekaliga. There is a **put-in point** for kayakers and canoeists behind **Hunter's Creek Middle School**, as well as at Babb Park and where Pleasant Hill Road crosses the creek, but the only place to rent canoes, kayaks and SUP (stand-up paddleboards) for the creek as far as I know is the **Paddling Center at Shingle Creek**, 4266 W. Vine St., Kissimmee, at Shingle Creek Regional Park -- Steffee Landing.

If you rent there, or simply launch your canoe or kayak there, you can paddle about a mile upstream before reaching a stop sign saying to turn around, and then return and go about a mile south of Steffee Landing to the other stop sign, then go back to the start. It takes about two hours to do about 4 miles total paddling.

Single kayaks are \$13 an hour; two-person kayaks and two- to four-person canoes are 16 an hour, while SUPs are \$18 an hour.

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On a recent outing, my friends and I in [Orlando Front Runners and Walkers](#) saw no gators but some fish, turtles and lots of waterbirds and raptors. The creek this far south is quite wide, but with lots of trees on both sides for the most part. I picked handfuls of muscadine grapes and a persimmon hanging over the water. North of the put-in point, a new bridge for Shingle Creek Trail -- under construction -- crosses the water.

And you'll give your upper body a decent workout, especially paddling upstream. Check it out before the Wekiva crowd catches on!

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