
Another Texas Nature Kayaking Guide

Introduction to Kayaking With Nature

These guides are written specifically for people who want to observe nature up close from a kayak. That having been said, there is much in these guides that is appropriate for all kayakers and canoeists. The kayak may be a sit-inside kayak or a sit-on-top kayak, depending on the environment you will be in.

Recreational kayakers make up the majority of the kayakers who have joined the sport in the last 5 to 10 years. A majority of the recreational kayakers fall into the Nature Kayaking category. Some are casual nature kayakers, while others are serious nature kayakers.

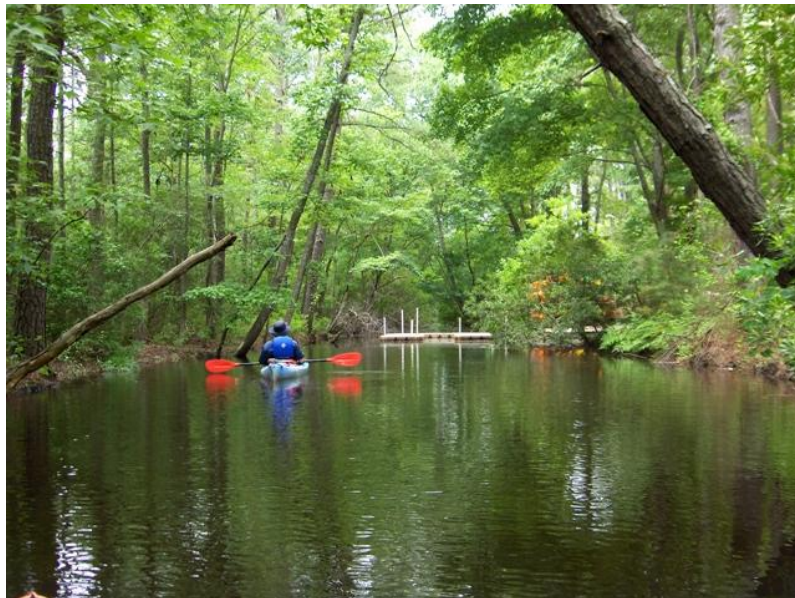


Figure 1 *Communing with nature at Black Bayou National Wildlife Refuge, VA.*

Kayaking is one of the fastest-growing sports. Kayaking activities range from white-water thrills, to quietly exploring nature, to playing water polo. These guides give you an introduction to what we consider some of the “saner” parts of kayaking. If you are interested in some of the wilder sides of kayaking, we can give you introductions to people who can train you.

All water sports carry risks with them, just like driving a car. With experience, training, and time, we can very comfortably drive a car on Loop 410 in San Antonio. When we first started driving, that was beyond the ability of most of us. So it is with kayaking. To provide a safe environment in which to kayak, we recommend:

Copyright © 2010 by Herb Nordmeyer. Permission is granted to reproduce as long as this document is reproduced in its entirety without modification and it is not sold.

- Limiting the risks, by selecting paddling events that you and your companions can handle, and by briefing them of any risks that they should know about,



Figure 2 This young lady knows the proper way to kayak, but kept us in stitches demonstrating how those without training kayak.

- Pairing experienced people with inexperienced people, so one-on-one training can take place in a group setting,
- Never forcing or intimidating a person to go beyond his/her comfort zone, but encouraging fellow kayakers to push past their comfort zone when they are with more experienced kayakers. and
- Taking training from a certified instructor or from a very experienced kayaker.

As mentioned above, kayaks can be divided into two very broad categories:

Sit-Inside Kayaks, and

Sit-On-Top Kayaks.

Each of these broad categories can be further subdivided. Sit-Inside Kayaks can be divided by function into kayaks that are designed for running white water, touring at sea, touring in protected waters, and running gentle rivers. Sit-On-Top Kayaks can be designed for most of the functions of the Sit-Inside Kayaks, but in our opinion are not as functional for white water or for sea kayaking. A Sit-Inside kayak is generally harder to get into, but when using a spray skirt is drier and warmer.