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I drove 1200 miles in 16 days, may not be much for the typical Florida visitor but more mileage than I like. If I do it again I will spend at least three weeks in Florida, three days on Dry Tortugas, camp more, paddle more, and explore Lake Okeechobee as well as a few more out-of-the way locations. ♣



A campsite tucked beneath the limbs of a buttonwood tree offered a sense of privacy without loss of the breeze. One good thing about remote National Park Service sites: having the rangers practically to yourself. At right, one of the best paddles was through a cypress swamp on Arbuckle Creek. Photos/Lee De Cola

Suggested Reading

Ferguson, Jason. (2015) *Moon Florida* road trip. Berkeley, CA, Avalon Travel.

Landrum, L. Wayne. (2008) *Fort Jefferson and the Dry Tortugas National Park*. Big Pine Key, FL, L.W. Landrum.

Ripple, Jeff and Bill Keogh (1995) *The Florida Keys: the natural wonders of an island paradise*. Stillwater, MN, U.S.A., Voyageur Press.



If your boat + vehicle measures 8'5" or fewer in height, you may be in luck for the Auto Train.

What's in your PFD?

By Ralph Heimlich

I polled a sample CPA paddlers at Gear Day on June 2 and asked them what they carry in their PFD. The results are tallied in the [chart on the next page](#), sorted by the number of respondents who carried an item and the number of items carried by each respondent. So, what should you carry in your PFD? The Coast Guard requires you to carry a sound-making device (whistle or horn) and a white light to show to avoid collision (signal light). Our poll indicates that you should carry some food items for energy, a knife, and a VHF radio. Everything else seems optional. If you paddle on the Potomac near DC, you should have proof that you've passed the boater safety course, or you can be ticketed. Another great idea is to put your name on your PFD with indelible ink and have some kind of ID card (helps to ship the body). A lot of other emergency gear can be carried in your boat (versus on your person). Many people recommend having a "bailout bag" in your cockpit in a dry bag that you can grab if

you are separated from your boat. Because most of the bay is civilized, a cell phone in a dry bag, a credit card, and your car key might be a better choice than fire-making stuff, a bear trap or a Viking battle axe. Check through your own PFD before you wish you had. ♣

Since the demise of Sea Kayaker Magazine several years ago, there has been a dearth of paddle-written magazine articles for the more typical paddler. *Atlantic Coastal Kayaker*, edited by Dave Eden and his wife Tamsin Venn, is one of the few holdouts in this genre. Now it has gone online-only, making it more accessible to paddlers in a variety of ways. Check them out at <https://www.atlanticcoastalkayaker.com/index.htm> where you can see a free issue. Several CPA paddlers, including Rich Stevens and I, have had articles in ACK, and there is a wealth of information from many authors ranging from the Canadian Maritime to the Caribbean islands, but focused on the Mid-Atlantic. ACK also has free classified ads, so you might find that boat you've been looking for, or find a buyer for yours. ~ Ralph Heimlich

ITEM	Sum	Sue Stevens	Ralph Heimlich	Bill Smith	Mary W. Lin	Greg Welker	Beth Boyd	Lisa Giguere	Julio Perez	Dave Isbell	G???	Marla Aaron	Rich Stevens	Jim Allen	Jill Allbritta	Chung Ha	Chip Walsh	Jean W. Under	Mike Vore	Andrew Blischak
whistle or horn	18	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
food bar or snack	14	1	1	1	1		1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		
VHF radio	13	1	1	1	1	1		1		1		1	1	1		1	1	1	1	
knife	11	1	1	1	1	1			1	1		1	1	1			1			1
signal light	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		1		1	1		1					
sunscreen	8	1			1		1		1		1			1	1	1			1	
lip balm	8	1	1		1		1	1				1			1	1	1			
tow rope on waist	8	1	1	1		1	1				1	1	1					1		
compass	7	1	1	1	1		1	1	1									1		
cell phone (in drybag)	7	1		1	1						1				1	1	1			1
paddling gloves	7	1	1		1		1			1				1	1				1	
signal mirror	7		1		1	1			1	1		1	1							
waterproof digital camera	5	1	1	1				1		1						1				
ID card or driver's license	4	1	1			1					1								1	
nose plugs	5			1	1	1		1		1										
name on PFD	4	1	1	1		1				1										
money (\$5, \$20)/credit card/wallet	3	1								1	1				1					
car key	3	1			1						1					1				
water bottle/hydrator/camelback	3	1		1			1				1									
signal flares	3					1		1									1			
length of strong cord	3		1						1		1									
skull cap when cold	2							1	1											
emergency phone numbers	1	1				1														
small dry box with 1st aid kit	1	1							1											
boater safety course card	2		1										1							
thermometer	1	1											1							
stirrup for rescue	2			1														1		
sunglasses	2											1		1						
cow tail with biner	1			1																
trip leader checklist	1			1																
ultralight raincoat	1								1											
GPS	0	1																		
Emergency Position Indicating Radiobeacon	1					1														
extra kayak wheel lock	0	1																		
bug spray	1													1						
chimes ginger chews	1						1													
glasses cleaning cloth	1						1													
number of items		22	15	15	13	12	11	10	10	10	10	9	9	8	8	8	7	6	5	3