

*Moon River, wider than a mile,
I'm crossing you in style some day.
Oh, dream maker, you heart breaker,
wherever you're going I'm going your way.*

Savannah's Johnny Mercer evokes images of moonlight shimmering on glassy water with these memorable lyrics from the song featured in the 1961 film, "Breakfast at Tiffany's."

You figure Holly Golightly's dreaming about gazing up at that big ol' moon as she cruises aboard a luxurious yacht. That's crossing it in style.

You figure paddling a kayak on a full-moon night is the last thing on her mind.

But combine a full moon on a clear night with a Golden Isles tidal river, and you've got yourself a pretty stylish river crossing. With a few quick strokes, you can shift yourself out of the chaos and into the calm.

Michael Gowen co-owns Southeast Adventure Outfitters. His company includes full-moon kayak trips on its menu of paddling opportunities.

The moon, Gowen says, sheds a different light on the creeks and salt marsh.

"Going out at night gives you a whole different perspective on wildlife," he says. "Seeing the bioluminescence – the animals in the water that glow – and being able to hear the fish around you and not being able to see what's making the noise, that's what makes it interesting."

On a warm night in September, four nocturnal paddlers join guide John Howland for a moonlight trip on Three Dolphin Creek. Departing from SAO's

Brunswick store on the edge of the Marshes of Glynn, the group paddles away from the lights of the shoreline into the darkness of nature.

Except for the gentle splash of paddles and the muffled screech of civilization to the west, the salt marsh is quiet. The kayakers glide easily, powered by alternating strokes of double-bladed paddles.

Howland's demeanor matches the calm of the salt marsh. The 32-year-old Atlanta native altered his career course a while back, turning away from commercial aviation for something more down to earth.

He speaks softly, paddling effortlessly, keeping a weather eye out, as the nautical expression goes, for those who have entrusted him with their safety. He talks about the flow of his life. In the dark, it's easy to open up.



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"I had a plan," he says, "but that changed after 9-11. I didn't think I wanted to spend a lot of time up in the air after that." He was drawn to the coast.

"I like it out here," he says, "especially at night. It's nice and quiet and peaceful in the moonlight. It's not hot, and nobody has to wear moon screen."