

Welcome to OOPS!

Hello and Welcome to the Oregon Ocean Paddling Society (OOPS). We're happy that you've joined our paddling community! Here are some of the most important things:

OOPS Website

Go to <http://www.oopskayak.org> to check out the Club website.

OOPS Listserv

You will be automatically added to the OOPS Listserv once your membership application has been processed. The OOPS Listserv is a valuable resource for members - it's how we stay connected. You will receive emails on the latest trips, classes, OOPS meetings, and other goings-on related to kayaking in our area, and be able to post your paddling queries and experiences to the group. Please see the section in this packet titled Google Groups.

Signing up for Classes, Paddle Trips, and Events

Go to the calendar on the OOPS website, and click on a trip, class, or event in which you are interested to get the details. Pay particular attention to the rating factors and overall rating to confirm that this is an appropriate trip for your paddling abilities. From the Calendar page you can register for the event directly. Confirmation will be emailed by the trip organizer. The trip organizer may ask for additional information about your abilities and / or gear if they haven't paddled with you before. Please see the sections in this packet titled OOPS Trip Rating System, and Safety Requirements to help you know which trips are suitable for you and considerations about gear. While some trips are open to non-members, many trips and all classes are for members only. This information is shown in the trip or class description. Classes and trips fill quickly so reserve your spot!

Local Affiliated Retailers

Your OOPS membership brings you a discount at many of the local kayak stores. These affiliated retailers not only provide equipment, but also training, so check them out at <http://www.oopskayak.org/affiliated-retailers/>

Happy Paddling!

OOPS Membership Coordinator
membership@oopskayak.org.

Google Groups

Google Groups can be tailored to suit you. For example, you may wish to receive every email posting made to OOPS as it is posted, or you may wish to just receive one email a day with a summary of postings. You can change these preferences by logging into Google Groups and editing your membership to select one of the following: No Email, Abridged Email, Digest Email, Email.

Creating Your Google Group account

1. Go to <https://groups.google.com/>
2. Click on Create an account
3. Your current email address must be identical to the email you provided on your OOPS application. If this changes in the future, be sure to notify membership@oopskayak.org as there is no way for you to edit your own email address within Google Groups.
4. Complete the account information

Accessing the OOPS Google Group

1. Once your application has been processed, you will automatically be added to the OOPS Google Group and will receive email messages either as they are posted or as a summary, depending on how you set your preferences above.

Changing the Amount of Email You Receive From OOPS

1. Go to <https://groups.google.com>
2. In the dialog box on the right called "My Groups", click on the OOPS group
3. There is a column on the far right side of the screen... click on Edit my membership
4. Select your preferred email option
5. Click on save these settings

The OOPS Trip Rating System – How the Club Estimates Trip Difficulty

The Trip Rating System was revised in 2007 to help club members understand what each level means in terms of conditions expected and skill set recommended. It consists of seven factors:

- Wind strength,
- Sea State,
- Waves or breaking waves,
- Landing type,
- Open crossing distance,
- Total distance, and
- Currents.

Each of the seven factors has objective criteria for each level. The overall rating is the level determined by the level in which the two or more highest factors fall.

If a member is considering a trip, they should open the write-up page link from the calendar, <http://www.oopskayak.org/calendar> and look at each of the seven rating factors. This will give substantially more information than simply looking at the overall level. A trip could be rated a level two simply for an open crossing distance or a difficult landing, and looking at the overall level would not indicate this. The Trip Rating system is spelled out in detail at <http://www.oopskayak.org/documents/> and members are highly encouraged to refer to it.

The skills section of the system is a set of recommended skills, not requirements. It can be used to look at what skills might be good to learn next, or it can be used to evaluate a group's comfort level with the actual conditions on a trip.

Please note that the rating for a given activity is based on the expected conditions. Actual conditions may vary in either direction. It's up to each participant to determine their comfort level. The rating system is designed to give objective criteria for helping you make that decision.

Safety Requirements

To participate in club trips you must demonstrate that you can execute a “wet exit” (releasing your spray skirt and getting out of your boat after it has turned over) and must be able to get back in your boat with the assistance of another paddler in their boat. OOPS offers instruction in these essential safety skills and has a number of members that are qualified to certify your ability to perform them. Instruction and certification sessions are available in local pools and local bodies of water. Check the OOPS calendar for sessions.

Whenever water temperatures are expected to be below 60 degrees F, which is the case for most Club trips, all paddlers are required to wear cold weather protective clothing. Go to <http://www.oopskayak.org/calendar> and click on the trip you are interested in, and read the trip description in the Trip Plan. The Organizer may specify a minimum standard to be worn for a specific trip, such as a dry suit requirement. Depending on conditions, cold water protective clothing may consist of:

- Water repellent outer shell (jacket and pants) with wrist and ankle seals in combination with synthetic or wool insulation; or
- Half wet suit: “Farmer John, or Shorty” with or without synthetic or wool insulation and a water repellent shell; or
- Full wet suit; or
- Dry suit with synthetic insulation worn underneath.
- Cotton clothing will NOT be allowed on OOPS water activities.

Each trip participant is responsible for determining the specific type or types of clothing to wear for the trip based on anticipated conditions. In making these decisions, participants will consider: water temperature; air temperature; trip rating; wind chill; precipitation; distance from land; group size/rescue conditions; and their skills and experience. Trip Organizers may turn away participants at the put-in if, in the organizer’s opinion, the participant is ill prepared for immersion.

Questions regarding a particular trip organizer’s minimum standard for cold water protection and skill level should be addressed by phone or email prior to the day of the trip.

Paddling Etiquette – Some Tips for Good Group Dynamics

- Be familiar with and abide by the club Activity Policy.
<http://www.oopskayak.org/documents/>
- Be responsible for your own safety: Organizers are volunteers, not professional guides. Organizers are not necessarily experienced paddlers.
- Be safe. Prioritize other's safety and comfort over having fun.
- Maintain an awareness of the location and condition of the entire group at all times while on the water. All participants should stay with the group. This means keeping close enough to communicate with visible or audible signals.
- Be prepared: Arrive on time. Allow time for unloading and getting geared up. Know the route. Be prepared for conditions to be more or less than expected. Be prepared for immersion. Be prepared to take care of yourself. Remember – even the most experienced paddlers can have something go wrong.
- Be honest in evaluating your ability for the trip. Do not get in over your head; doing so will jeopardize your own safety and the safety of the group.
- Do NOT do anything that you are not comfortable doing. Other paddlers cannot know the limits of your comfort zone. Communicate those limits.
- Be respectful to your fellow paddlers and the environment. Littering, arguing, bickering, or simply being rude are not good examples to set.
- At a minimum, carry along a personal first aid kit, a warm dry change of clothing, pump or bailer, and food and water for the day. For night paddles, carry a flashlight. On level 3 and above trips, carry a tow system.
- Wear a securely fastened PFD at all times on the water.
- Have a whistle or air horn readily available.
- Equip your boat with positive flotation (Bulkheads, air bags, or sea sock)