Fun Tours

COMPLIMENTS OF

Connecticut Coastal Inland Waterways

Inland Waterways are especially useful. Contact the Westport Conservation Commission or call 203-341-1170 for information and permitting.

CTDEP guide entitled Sharing the waterways: Fairfield County Convention & Visitors Bureau

Fairfield County is easy to reach by car, train, bus or ferry.

http://www.visitfairfieldcountyCT.com

Fairfield County Convention & Visitors Bureau

Exits 2 - 33 Exits 27- 52

I-95 North to Exit 16

I-95 South to Exit 16

Norwalk Islands Kayak Trail

Plan your trip by visiting our website or taking a course in safe boating such as those offered by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection or other organizations. Contact 8&depNav_GID=1620 or (860) 434-8638 for further information. All paddlers should know the principles of navigation and seamanship and be comfortable with nautical chart and a compass. When fog occurs, it can result in sudden and total disorientation. The sound of bells or foghorns, sightings of buoys and steady wave formations, coastal access and wildlife habitat. A call 203-854-7806 for information and permitting.

Shea Island and Sheffield Island have sanitary facilities and carry out all trash and garbage. Practice “Leave No Trace ” principles and carry out all trash and garbage. For boats crossing the Norwalk Islands area, the depth of the water is 7.5 feet. Each tidal cycle has high and low water at null and twice daily. Tidal currents are strongest on the mid-outgoing hours. Tidal currents are strongest on the mid-incoming tides and are more intense during foul weather conditions. Strong tidal currents can be felt between Shea Island and Chimon Island, and the right angles. Make yourself visible and never assume a right of way.

Norwalk Islands Kayak Trail

Norwalk Islands Kayak Trail

Fairfield County/CONNECTicut

Safety & Emergency Reminders

• Paddlers must follow the same safe boating practices as any other small boat operator. All paddlers should	

• In addition to food and water, it is recommended to bring warm clothing, a spare paddle, a space blanket, a flashlight. A VHF radio and a cell phone (in a waterproof container) is recommended. Monitor Channel 16 in marine emergencies. Recommended clothing is: http://a013.uscgaux.info/requirements.htm.

• Do not tamper with lobster pot buoys or shellfish bed markers for channels, stay in close groups and cross at right angles. Make yourself visible and never assume a right of way.

• There is no fresh water on the public islands and only necessary supplies. Practice “Leave No Trace ” principles and carry out all trash and garbage. Practice “Leave No Trace ” principles and carry out all trash and garbage.

• Know the weather forecast and leave a float plan. Shear line over the Norwalk Islands area is 7.5 feet. Each tidal cycle has high and low water at null and twice daily. Tidal currents are strongest on the mid-outgoing hours. Tidal currents are strongest on the mid-incoming tides and are more intense during foul weather conditions. Strong tidal currents can be felt between Shea Island and Chimon Island, and the right angles. Make yourself visible and never assume a right of way.

• Fog is a common occurrence in Long Island Sound. It is strongly recommended that paddlers travel with a device, i.e., whistle or air horn. Since visibility becomes poor due to fog, rain, etc and at night, it is important to keep an eye on the weather. Use a nautical chart and a compass. When fog occurs, it can result in sudden and total disorientation. The sound of bells or foghorns, sightings of buoys and steady wave formations, coastal access and wildlife habitat. A call 203-854-7806 for information and permitting.

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Environmental/Wildlife Consideration

Harbor seals have been spotted with greater frequency on the southwest corner of Sheffield Island on the rocks at low tide in the winter months. Recent studies suggest that kayak and canoe approaches disturb the seals which may sense predatory danger from the low draft skiffs vessels. Please maintain a safe distance (50 yards) from the harbor seals. The Marine Mammal Protection Act protects these mammals from harassment and sets limits as to how close observers can approach. Visit Norwalk’s Maritime Aquarium or its website www.maritimeaquarium.org for information about marine life.

The Norwalk Islands

There are approximately 23 islands located off the coast of Norwalk, Connecticut. Many of these islands are privately owned, some with residents living on them seasonally and others year-round. The islands of Chimon and Sheffield are part of the Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge (SBMNWR) and access is restricted. The City of Norwalk owns Shea Island and Grassy Island, both of which are open to the public. Cockenoe Island is owned by the town of Westport. The islands are located about one mile off shore and provide canoists and kayakers with daylong sightseeing, wind sheltered, and open-water paddling opportunities. Overnight camping is permitted only on Shea, Grassy, and Cockenoe Islands. (Camping permit information below.) No fresh water is supplied to the islands.

1. Calf Pasture Beach Boat Launch - Recognized point of entry for can-top carrier boats. There is a $15 entrance fee into the park for non-residents during the summer for a nominal fee. Kayaks and canoes can be launched from the launch area. Restrooms are available seasonally along with 16 tent sites. Camping permits can be obtained from the Norwalk Recreation and Parks Department.

2. Grassy Island - The coastline of this 7.3-acre island is composed of smaller gravel, sand and silts. Almost all the bird rookeries in the island chain. Herons, egrets and black cormorants can be seen on Cockenoe. Camping permits limited to 4 parties per night can be obtained from the Westport Conservation Commission.

3. Chimon Island - This 70-acre island is part of the SBMNWR. The north and west coasts are gravely, the south and east coast are strewn with boulders. Access is restricted from April 1st to August 15th during bird-nesting season. No overnight camping to use of the island’s interior is allowed. For more information, visit the SBMNWR website at http://northeast.fws.gov/.

4. Shea Island - The entire shoreline of this 45-acre island is strewn with rocks and boulders. Many bird species are found on the island. Two solar powered restrooms are available seasonally along with 16 camping sites. Camping permits can be obtained from the Norwalk Recreation and Parks Department.

5. Sheffield Island - This 53-acre island is located 1.5 miles off the coast of Norwalk and is part of the SBMNWR. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service controls the island except for the 3.5-acre parcel occupied by the Sheffield Island Lighthouse and grounds owned by the Norwalk Seaport Association. This is the largest island, and the entire shoreline is strewn with rocks and boulders. Sheffield Island supports a variety of bird species and has considerable nesting potential for osprey, herons, and other migratory birds. To protect these birds, Sheffield Island is seasonally closed to public access each year. The refuge also provides important nesting, feeding, and nesting habitat for many species of wading birds, shorebirds, songbirds and terns, including the endangered roseate tern. Adjacent waters serve as wintering habitat for brant, scoters, black duck and other waterfowl. Kayak landing fee.

6. Sheffield Lighthouse - The Sheffield Island Lighthouse was built in 1868 and provided navigational aid to mariners until about 1902. The Lighthouse is maintained by the Norwalk Seaport Association, a local non-profit, and Friends of the Norwalk Islands in partnership with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. The Lighthouse and surrounding picnic grounds are open seasonally. Tours and use of the picnic grounds are available during the summer for a nominal fee. Kayaks are also available for rent. Enjoy walking the nature trail on the Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge. The trail was constructed to provide controlled public access while protecting the natural resources of the island. Visit the Norwalk Seaport Association website for information on events, island cruises and membership at www.seaport.org. Lighthouse admission fee.

7. Cockenoe Island - (pronounced “kah-KEE-nee”) has almost all the bird rookeries in the island chain. Herons, egrets and black cormorants can be seen on Cockenoe. Camping permits limited to 4 parties per night can be obtained from the Westport Conservation Commission.