

Willamette PaddleCross Challenge

Participant Information & Course Overview

The 2023 Willamette River Festival is holding its 7th annual Willamette PaddleCross Challenge on August 27, 2023.

The challenge course starts in Alton Baker Park in Eugene, and travels up the Canoe Canal into Springfield, where participants will portage over to the Willamette River and paddle downstream through several rapids back to Alton Baker Park, with a dramatic conclusion in the park,

Much of this area is within the Whilamut Natural Area, designated to honor the Kalapuya peoples past, present and future.

Please read the full land acknowledgement here: [Kalapuya Illihi](#)

Please find below:

- Registration
- Safety information
 - Safety Requirements
 - Safety Recommendations
- Specifics about the route
 - Course description
 - Images of course route, hazards, portages and other features

Registration

Race it, or paddle it just for fun...

Register at www.willametteriverfest.org to compete against other participants, or paddle it as a personal challenge to the finish! **Online registration opens July 1, 2023.** The cost to register is \$25, however **paddlers under the age of 18 can participate for free with a parent!** First through third place medals in each category, provided by the American Canoe Association, will be awarded on stage at the Willamette River Festival in Alton Baker Park. Every paddler will receive an entry into our prize drawing, including thousands of dollars in prizes from Oregon Paddle Sports, Paddlesports Industry Partners, and other local businesses. Winners not awarded on stage will be notified by phone and/or email.



Schedule & Parking

The 2023 Willamette PaddleCross Challenge will be held on Sunday, August 27th, starting in and finishing at Alton Baker Park. Parking will be available in the main parking areas, though we recommend arriving early, and parking in the upper lot, nearest the Pre's Trailhead and Canoe Canal pond for best staging area access. We will be visible from the upper parking lot in Alton Baker Park, with canopies set up for support at the Canoe Canal, and the staging area will be coned out.

9AM to 12PM – REGISTRATION & WATERCRAFT STAGING – all volunteers and participants will be required to check in prior to the race to sign a waiver, receive your race bib number, and stage your boat according to skill and fitness level. Registration will be located in the main Festival footprint, next to the Defazio Bridge. Boats, however, will be staged near the canoe canal by the race start. Festival volunteers will be staffing the staging area before the start.

12PM – VOLUNTEER MEETING & STAGING (we will use this time to shuttle any volunteers not already staged on the river from the Aspen Street boat ramp).

12:30PM – RACE PARTICIPANT SAFETY MEETING at the Canoe Canal staging area (required for all participants in the race).

12:50PM – RACE LINEUP – racers are to ready in the canal lining up with more competitive racers in front, casual paddlers in the back.

1PM – RACE START – Mass “Gun” Start

3:30PM – Expected last racers and participants cross the finish line. Paddlers will exit their boats at the Alton Baker Beach near the canal out take, just before DeFazio Bridge. Volunteers will be staged here to help participants carry boats up over the bike path to the grass and direct them to run though a flagged route to the finish line. The finish line will be in the main Festival footprint, near the Sun sculpture and pond, where paddle demos will be taking place. There will be a finish line arch and colorful flags placed to help guide racers from where they will carry their boats to the finish line. Timing, finish arch, finisher announcements, and results will be provided by Eclectic Edge Racing.

3:45PM – The **2023 WILLAMETTE PADDLECROSS CHALLENGE AWARDS** will be on stage at The Willamette River Festival!

Safety Information

1. Please read the Safety Requirements below and review all course information
2. Please register for the PaddleCross Challenge here: www.willametteriverfest.org.
3. You will be asked to watch our [PaddleCross Safety Video](#) before moving on through the rest of the registration process, including a digital acknowledgment of risk, payment, and registration confirmation. **Please take your time and enjoy the process!**

Safety Requirements

ALL PARTICIPANTS ARE REQUIRED TO SIGN A LIABILITY WAIVER DURING THE ON-SITE REGISTRATION CHECK-IN.

Willamette River Festival will be placing safety boaters in key locations throughout the race, but ultimately, PARTICIPANTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR OWN SAFETY AND ANY DAMAGE TO THEIR WATERCRAFT. Paddling is inherently risky – changes in weather, volume, current, and obstacles in the waterway may play a significant role in unexpected circumstances along the PaddleCross Challenge route. Please note, this course is not appropriate for paddlers without adequate **Class 2 whitewater experience**.

1. **Follow all laws** pertaining to watercraft (e.g. PFD's, whistle, Waterway Access Permit).
2. **Wear an approved PFD** (Personal Flotation Device) that is properly fitting, and suitable for whitewater (class III or V) - please no inflatable PFD's.
3. **Helmets** are strongly recommended (best practices), particularly for downriver sections
4. Have an appropriate **auditory signaling device** on board each boat (such as a whistle).
5. Have proper **training and experience** to travel the entire route (class 2 whitewater).
6. Participants should be in a **craft that is suitable for class 2 rocky whitewater** (including flotation and sea worthiness) such as a packraft, whitewater kayak or whitewater canoe or SUP or durable sea/touring kayak. Inflatables are great, but **fiberglass or composite boats are not recommended**, although several people use them each year in this section.
 - a. **NOTE: Rudders that do not flip up and large fins on SUP's** also create hazards (catching on rocks) and can slow progress while dragging.
7. Have **adequate flotation** for your craft (such as airbags, or sealed compartments)
8. **SUP's** (Stand Up Paddleboard) have two options for **leashes**
 - a. Use a **coiled leash** that has a quick release belt system
 - b. Use **no leash** at all (straight leashed are not acceptable in the river, and any leash can cause an entanglement hazard in the moving current)
7. **Show respect** for the natural environment at all times
8. Follow all **Leave No Trace principles**, including finishing with everything that the racer starts with (no trash/equipment left behind!)
9. Racers must pass through any designated "Gates", markers or directions from Race Officials or Race Guidelines along the course; failure to do so automatically disqualifies the racer (this is a safety issue as well); examples include:
 - a. Go River Right at 'Horseshoe Bend' just above the Weir
 - b. Go River Left at Autzen Footbridge (between bridge posts 1 and 2, looking downstream and counting left to right (DO NOT GO LEFT OF BRIDGE POST #1 ALONG THE SHORE - there is much woody debris here)
11. A [Waterway Access Permit \(Old Aquatic Invasive Sp. Permit\)](#) is required by law if your craft is over 10' long.
13. **Have a good attitude** – this is about building community and enjoying our natural areas! Please don't put yourself, or others, at risk.

14. Please respect private property along the route.

Safety Recommendations:

1. **Remember: YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR OWN SAFETY AND ANY DAMAGE TO YOUR WATERCRAFT!** Please follow all safety requirements and recommendations included in this document and the online PaddleCross registration. You can review personal safety tips by watching our [PaddleCross Safety video](#).
2. Fiberglass/composite boats are **not** recommended; although these boats are generally faster, there are many rocks to avoid on this route. However, many racers do use them.
2. Please be sure to review the [PaddleCross Challenge Route video](#) before you paddle the course! Even if you paddled it last year, water levels, and many hazards have changed in both the canoe canal and the Willamette River. It is best to be prepared.
3. Consider carrying a spare paddle in case you lose/break your main paddle.
4. Contact organizers if you want more in-depth course descriptions, or boat suggestions:
 - Chance Rey, Oregon Paddle Sports (541) 505-9020
chance@whitewaterdesigns.com
 - Michelle Emmons, Willamette Riverkeeper (541) 913-4318
michelle@willametteriverkeeper.org
 - Marcel Bieg, City of Eugene River House Outdoor Center (541) 682-5329
mbieg@eugene-or.gov

Specifics About the Route

Course Description:

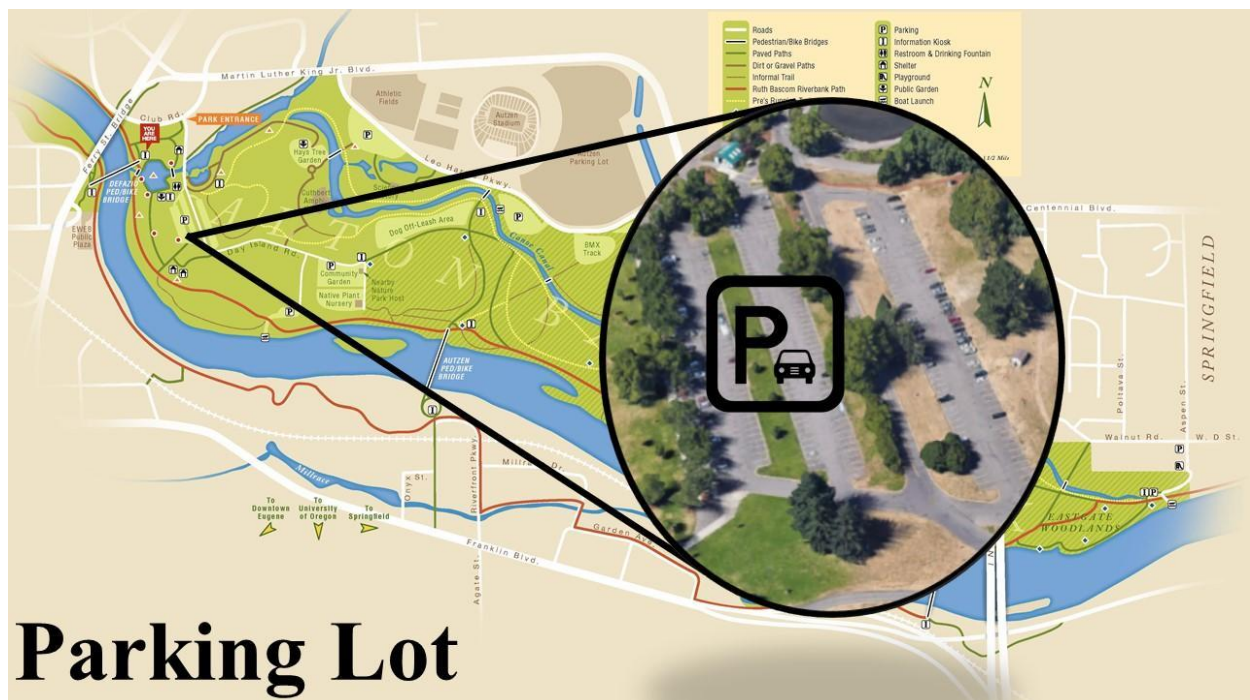
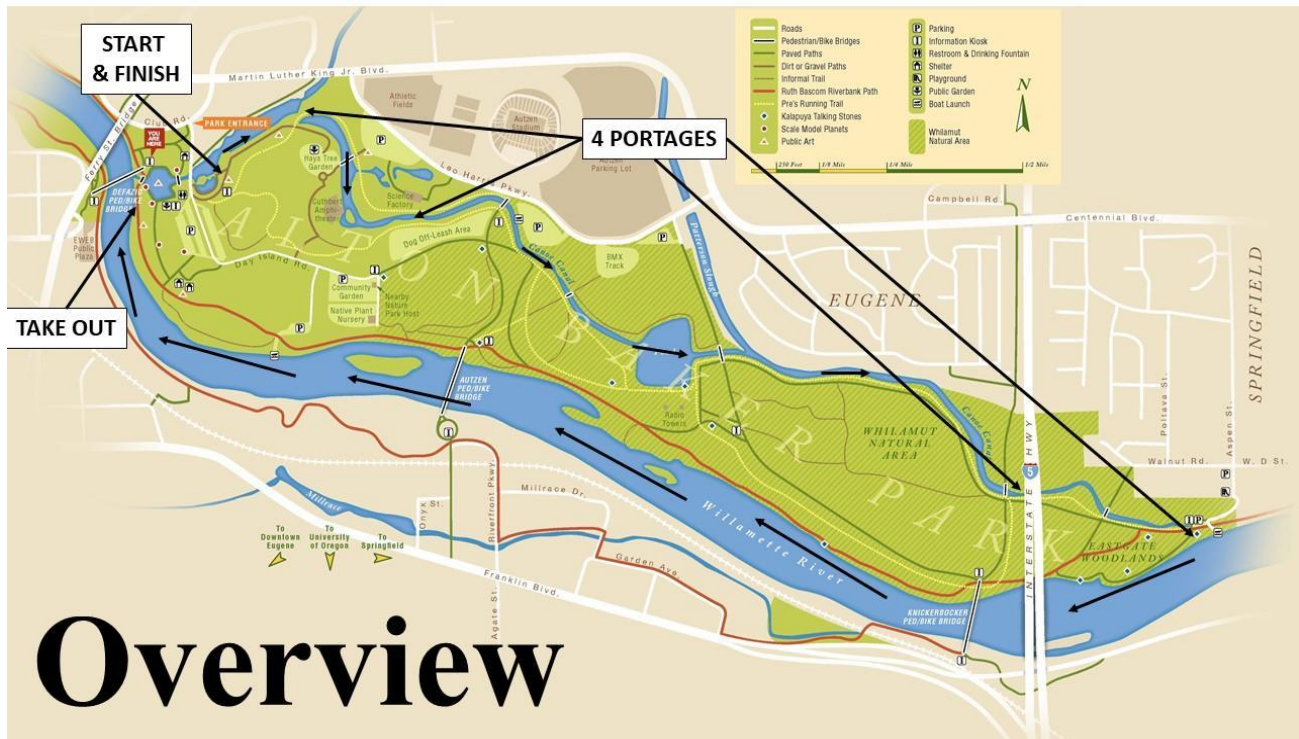
The Race starts and ends at the Put-In Area (see image below) at the pond connected to the canoe canal. Racers will travel approximately 2.5 miles up the canoe canal, and approximately 2.5 miles downstream. There are 4 portages throughout the course, each of varying difficulty (see images below). How racers deal with portaging will play a large role in efficient times. As racers reach the "Take Out" beach, they leave their boat on the beach, and sprint across the finish line on the Defazio Bridge

PLEASE NOTE: the down river section is rated as Class 2 involving whitewater rapids, rocks, hazards, and required maneuvers.

Please review the PaddleCross Challenge [VIDEO HERE](#).

Images of Course hazards, portages, and other features

The following pages offer visual images and maps of major hazards and other components of the race course.



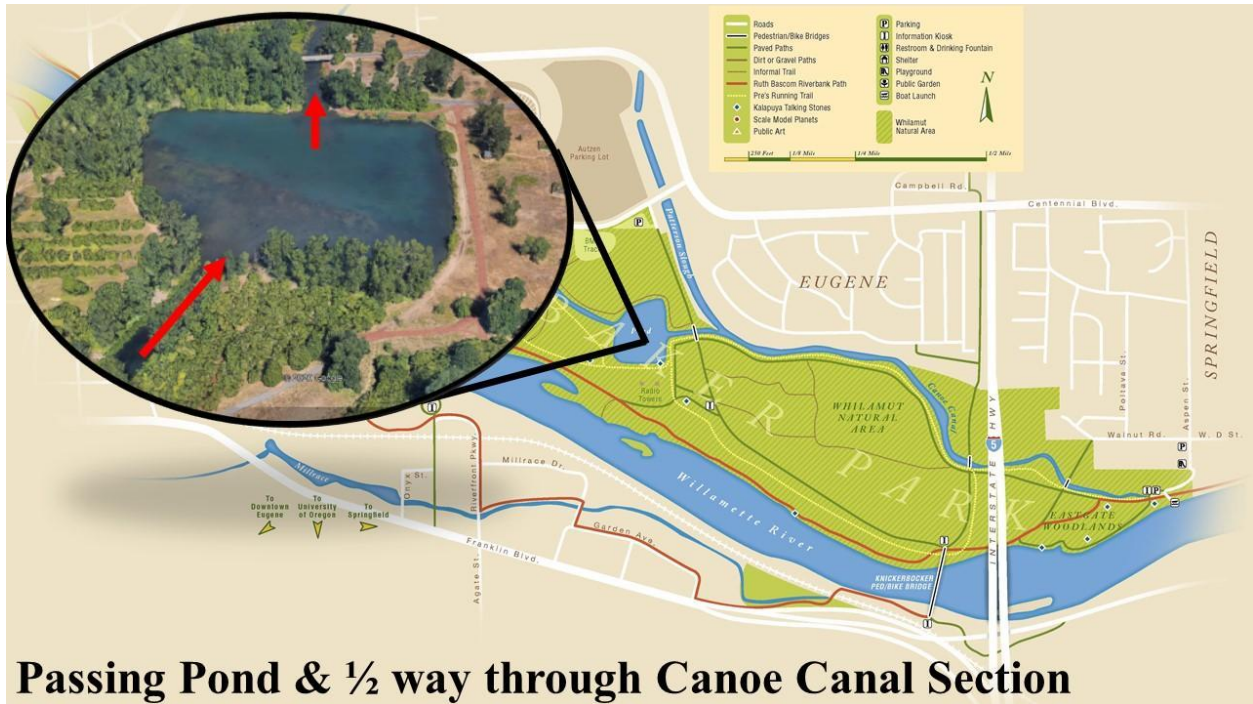




Portage 2: River Right in view of Autzen Stadium

Portage #2 Take out and put-in





Passing Pond & ½ way through Canoe Canal Section

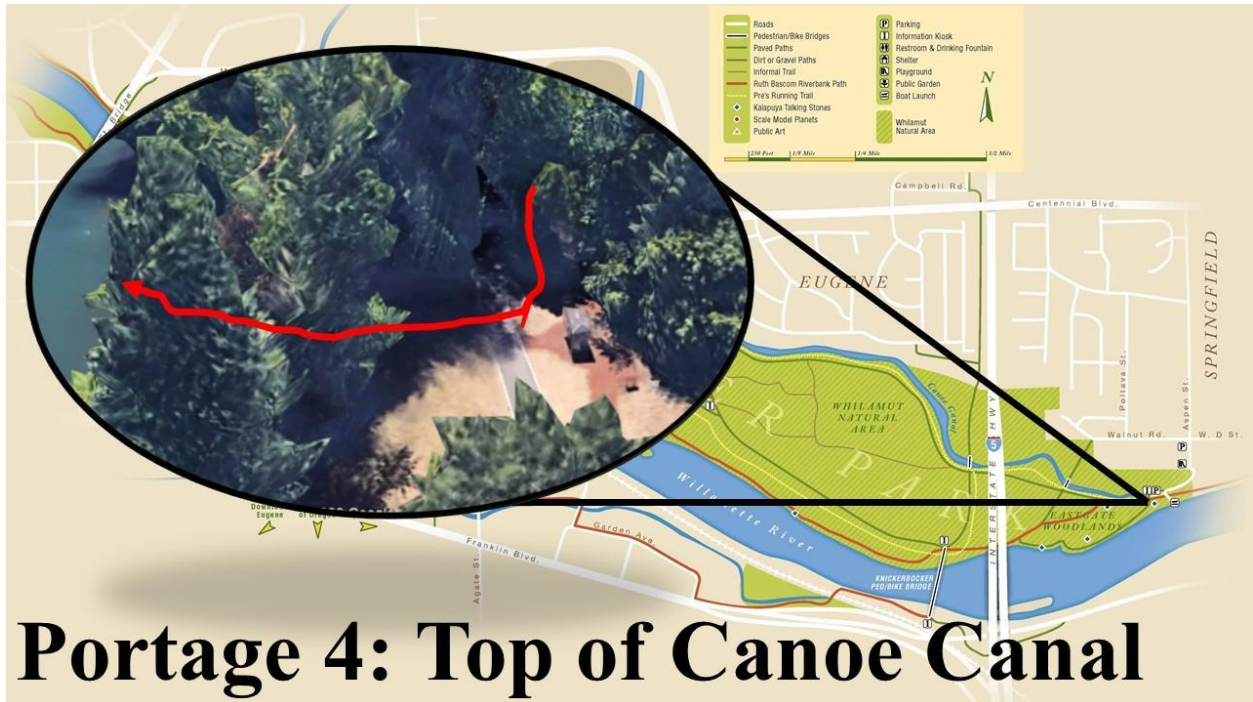


Private Property River Right



Portage #3 take out and put-in





Portage #4 Take out and put-in





