



# WILLAMETTE DOWNRIVER RACE

## SATURDAY, AUGUST 24, 2024



Willamette  
RIVERKEEPER<sup>®</sup>



### PARTICIPANT INFORMATION & RACE OVERVIEW

\*\*New for 2024, our WILLAMETTE DOWNRIVER RACE starts at Day Island Park in Springfield, and travels downstream on the Willamette River through several rapids with a dramatic conclusion at the River House Beach on the east edge of Maurie Jacobs Park. Participants will then join the party on the beach with live music, vendors and prizes.

The Eugene-Springfield riverfront is part of the greater Whilamut Natural Area, designated to

honor the Kalapuya peoples past, present and future. Under that acknowledgement, the Willamette River Festival strives to integrate the stories, traditions, and cultural connections of the Kalapuya Peoples into our Festival. **Please read the full land acknowledgement here:** [Kalapuya Illihi](#)

**Please read this document carefully for directions and guidelines:**

- **Registration**
- **Safety information**
  - **Safety Requirements**
  - **Safety Recommendations**
  - **Safety Resources**
- **Specifics about the route**
  - **Race 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](http://www.willametteriverfest.org) to compete against other participants, or paddle it as a personal challenge to the finish! 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 Maurie Jacobs Park under the staged canopy in the amphitheater behind the River House. 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. Prize winners must be present at the award ceremony in order to receive prizes.

## **Schedule & Parking**

**The 2024 Willamette Downriver Race will be held on Saturday, August 24th.** *You will want to stage your boat at Island Park in Springfield before heading over to the River House for the Downriver Race Registration Check-in at the River House Beach on the east edge of Maurie Jacobs Park after staging your boat. We will shuttle you from the Festival site back to Island Park at 11:45AM.*

***You may choose to participate in BOTH the Paddle Parade and the Downriver Race. If so, please check in at Alton Baker Park boat ramp to stage your boat and park at Valley River***

*Center behind Regal Cinemas. We will shuttle you back to your boat at Alton Baker Boat Ramp before the parade, and you can then drive back to Island Park after the Parade to stage for the Downriver Race.*

For larger watercraft such as rafts or driftboats participating in the race, you will need to park your rig at Valley River Center after checking in and walk across the VRC footbridge back to the Festival site for the 11:45am shuttle to Day Island Park for the race start. The race will begin at Island Park from the eddy at the boat ramp, and end at the River House beach on the east edge of Maurie Jacobs Park. Larger watercraft will need to ferry across the river after finishing the race at the River House beach to Valley River Center.

- 9AM to 12PM – REGISTRATION – 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, on the River House Beach on the east edge of Maurie Jacobs Park. Festival volunteers will be staffing the staging area before the start.
- 10AM - 12PM - WATERCRAFT STAGING will happen at Island Park along and above the boat ramp by category in signed areas. Please follow any direction provided by our staff.  
11:45AM - VOLUNTEER & RACE PARTICIPANT SHUTTLE LEAVING FROM FESTIVAL SITE AT RIVER HOUSE BEACH  
12PM – VOLUNTEER MEETING & SAFETY STAGING at Day Island Park
- 12:30PM – RACE PARTICIPANT SAFETY MEETING at the shore at Island Park (required for all participants in the race).  
12:50PM – RACE LINEUP – racers are to ready in the boat launch parking lot near the sign for their category. Categories will be called individually.
- 1PM – RACE START – Categories called one at a time with 5 minutes of staging time between categories.  
3:30PM – Expected last racers and participants cross the finish line. Paddlers will exit their boats at the River House beach, river left. Volunteers will be staged here to help participants carry boats up to the grass and direct them to run through a flagged route to the finish line marked by rainbow colored flags. The finish line will be in the main Festival footprint, 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.
- 3:30PM – The **2024 WILLAMETTE DOWNRIVER RACE 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 Downriver Race here: [www.willametteriverfest.org](http://www.willametteriverfest.org).

3. We strongly encourage all participants to watch our [Safety Video](#) before registering for this event. While a few references in the video are more pertinent to the former PaddleCross Challenge course, most everything else presented is relevant. **Please take your time and enjoy the entire video!**

## Safety Requirements

**ALL PARTICIPANTS ARE REQUIRED TO SIGN A LIABILITY WAIVER DURING THE ON-SITE REGISTRATION CHECK-IN.** You will NOT be able to race without a signed waiver.

**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. **Appropriate PFDs ARE REQUIRED.** A PFD (Personal Flotation Device) that is properly fitting, and suitable for whitewater (class III or V) - please no inflatable PFD's.
3. **HELMETS ARE REQUIRED** for all participants.
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 get familiar with the race route. We have included maps below but strongly recommend scouting the area before you paddle it. For past years we created this [PaddleCross Challenge Route video](#) - skip to sections XYZ to review the most before you paddle the course! Even if you paddled it last year, water levels, and many hazards have changed in 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](mailto:chance@whitewaterdesigns.com)
  - Michelle Emmons, Willamette Riverkeeper (541) 913-4318  
[michelle@willametteriverkeeper.org](mailto:michelle@willametteriverkeeper.org)
  - Marcel Bieg, City of Eugene River House Outdoor Center (541) 682-5329  
[mbieg@eugene-or.gov](mailto:mbieg@eugene-or.gov)

### **Specifics About the Route**

#### **Course Description:**

The Race starts at the Put-In Area at Island Park boat ramp (see image below). Racers will travel approximately 3 miles downstream. As racers reach the River Wood Beach in Maurie Jacobs Park on river left, they will leave their boat on the beach, and sprint across the finish line, marked off in the lawn just above the beach.

**PLEASE NOTE: This race course route is rated as Class 2 involving whitewater rapids, rocks, hazards, and required maneuvers.**

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.

### Down River Race Overview:









