

Guide to Paddling the South Slough Reserve

The public is welcome to paddle in the estuary. Cell service may be nonexistent in the South Slough Reserve, so plan accordingly. Below you will find a few guidelines to help you prepare ahead of time for a safe and enjoyable experience.

- [Water Trails Map](#)
- [Current Tides in Charleston](#)

Required Gear

You will need a kayak/canoe, paddle(s) and a life jacket with a whistle or horn.

If you are registered for a paddle trip led by South Slough Reserve in a [community class](#), there will be a limited number of sit on top and sit inside styles of kayaks available for rent.

Suggested Gear

- SPF 30+ sunscreen and lip balm
- Dry bag with change of warm clothes
- Water bottle for each participant
- Sponge or bilge pump
- Throw bag or tow rope
- First aid kit
- Small flashlight
- Waterproof cell phone pouch
- Spare paddle
- Lunch or snacks
- Sunglasses
- Insect repellent

Suggested Clothing

The water temperature is seldom above 55°F and the air temperature is not much warmer. If you get wet, hypothermia is an immediate concern.

- Layer clothing made of synthetic fabrics such as fleece, polyester, nylon, neoprene, and polypropylene—avoid cotton clothing
- Waterproof jacket and pants for splash and rain protection
- Hat with a bill or brim to help shield your face from the wind, sun, and rain—chin strap recommended
- River shoes, old sneakers, or neoprene booties to protect against sharp objects and cold-water temperatures



Watercraft Suggestions

These are to ensure that you and all participants have a safe and manageable paddle trip.

- Touring style kayaks over 12' in length work best in estuary waterways
- Recreational style inflatable boats do not handle well in wind or shallow water
- Paddle craft with pedals may not function correctly in some parts of the slough, so please bring a paddle to navigate in areas where you are unable to use your pedals
- Stand up paddle boards are generally not advised from Charleston Launch due to wind and distance, experienced paddlers with awareness of estuary tides and proper gear may find suitable protected areas in the south end of the Slough near Hinch Bridge Launch

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Guided Tours

- Visit the [community classes calendar](#) for paddle trips led by South Slough Reserve
- [South Coast Tours](#) is a local company with a permit to guided paddles into South Slough Reserve

Self-Guided Paddle Trip

Paddle at your own risk. You are responsible for your own safety. Always be aware of your surroundings, the weather, and the water level. Know your equipment, limits, and skills.

You can launch from the public dock or the tide flats at the Port of Coos Bay Distant Water Fleet Facility, located on Troller Lane in Charleston. If you launch from the here, you will have to walk across an expanse of mud to reach the water during low tides.

- Please carefully review the suggested gear, clothing, and boat lists above
- [Water Trails Map](#)
- [Current Tides in Charleston](#)

More information on paddling in Oregon can be found on [this pdf from the Oregon Marine Board](#).

If you have any questions or feedback, please call the South Slough Reserve at (541)-888-5558 ext. 126