

DOWNUNDER WESTPORT: SUP/KAYAKING TRAILS

THE SAUGATUCK RIVER

The Saugatuck River goes all the way up to Danbury. Our end of it, from the Route 1 Bridge in Westport center to Long Island Sound, is about three miles. Like most rivers in the region it was home to many mills supporting local industry. It's a very healthy river, thanks to the efforts of Harborwatch and the Saugatuck River Watershed Partnership, and homeowners that live on the river that are environmentally conscious and responsible.

H. HAZARDS:

Between 2 and 4 is a race course for rowers. Extremely important that you are vigilant as rowers paddle backwards, very fast. Upriver hug the west (left) shore, downriver the east (right). Look both ways before crossing. There are buoys marking rocks at low tide.

1. DOWNUNDER WESTPORT

(203) 956-6217
575 Riverside Ave
Westport, CT 06880
www.downunderct.com

2. DOWNTOWN WESTPORT

1.5 miles to bridge, 30-40 mins one way
2 miles to dam, 40-50 minutes one way
Paddle up river, meandering around the coves, and docks, to the bridge at Route 1 in Westport Center. Watch the tide if you're going under the bridge -don't want to get stuck up there! Depending on the tide, you can go under the bridge and enjoy an even quieter more pristine location – not many houses up here, some businesses. If you go far enough you will come to the dam, where there is a fish ladder. Join us for one of our Eco tours to learn more about the fish ladder, dams and Saugatuck River in general. SUP appropriate.

3. PUBLIC BOAT LAUNCH

To get there from Downunder go over the bridge and turn right onto Compo Road south, follow the signs on the right to the boat launch. Very safe and has a porta potty.

4. STONY POINT

3/4 mile, 20-30 minutes each way
Keeping the land on your left as you head downriver, you will come to a point on your right, beyond which the water opens into a large basin area. Cross the river to the right, watching for rowers and boat traffic. Burritts Landing/Stony Point is around the point to your right - a gorgeous inlet that leads back towards I95, and at high tide you can get that far! We love this paddle for beginners, SUPers, birthday parties, classes and yoga.

5. GRAY'S CREEK

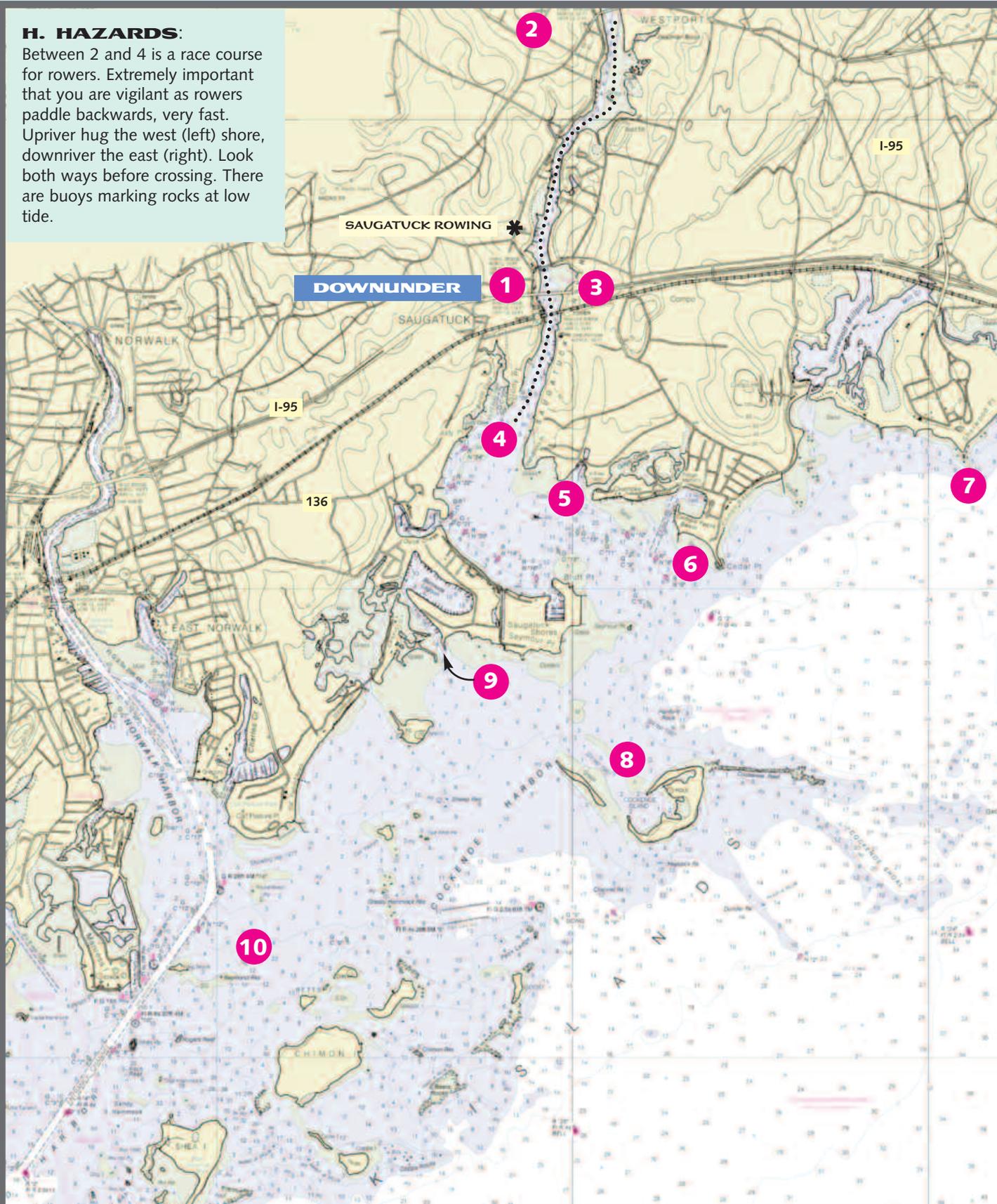
Kayak/SUP
1.5-2 miles, 45 mins to 1:15 hour each way
Longer by SUP, especially in windy conditions
Grays Creek is just past Longshore Sailing club and before the Compo Yacht Basin on your left. A secluded paddle at high tide with an opportunity to shout out to your mates enjoying a round of golf at the Compo beach club! Paddle to the end to see the Minuteman statue.

6. COMPO YACHT BASIN

Kayak/SUP 1.5-2 miles 50-60 mins ea way
Longer by SUP, especially in windy conditions
A nice place to rest, the only place you can get off on the river. NOTE: Compo Beach is just around the bend to the left, you may NOT disembark here.

7. SHERWOOD ISLAND

Kayak Tour
3 miles, 1.5 hours each way
Allow 3-4 hours, lots of areas to poke around the shore line, but you can only officially get off at the nearest end of Sherwood Island. Not recommended as an SUP destination. Always be sure to pull your vessel well up above the tide line when you disembark. You can walk around the shore to toilet facilities and a food concession.



10. NORWALK ISLANDS

Sea Kayak Tour
5 hour tour

Only for seasoned paddlers, ideally in sea kayaks, and in appropriate wind conditions. This is a major boating area, and open to Long Island Sound – where you will end up in an offshore wind. If you follow the shore from Saugatuck river you will eventually reach the Five Mile River, home to Downunder Rowayton. A great 'downwinder' for experienced SUPers, with a public boat launch part way up on the right, opposite Tokeneke Creek.

9. BERMUDA LAGOON

Experienced Kayak/SUP Tour
2.5-3 miles, 1.5-2 hours each way

As you exit Saugatuck river, keep to the right to locate Bermuda Lagoon, a protected marsh area of diverse habitats; ideal for bird watching and fishing. Light wind conditions ideal - it's longer than you think and you want a southerly to get you back.

8. COCKENOE

(KAH-KEE-NEE)
Experienced Kayak/SUP Tour

2.5 miles, 1.5-2 hours each way

There are 25 islands in the archipelago of Norwalk islands, many of which are really more like rocks, and many are private (homes visible, don't disembark). Cockenoe is the closest to the shore from the Saugatuck River. It's beautiful - great paddling, swimming, exploring, abundance of wildlife. This is an advanced paddle – recommended as a guided tour. Be very cautious of the boat traffic and stay on this side of the island to avoid offshore wind and current issues.

DOWNUNDER WESTPORT: PADDLER SAFETY TIPS

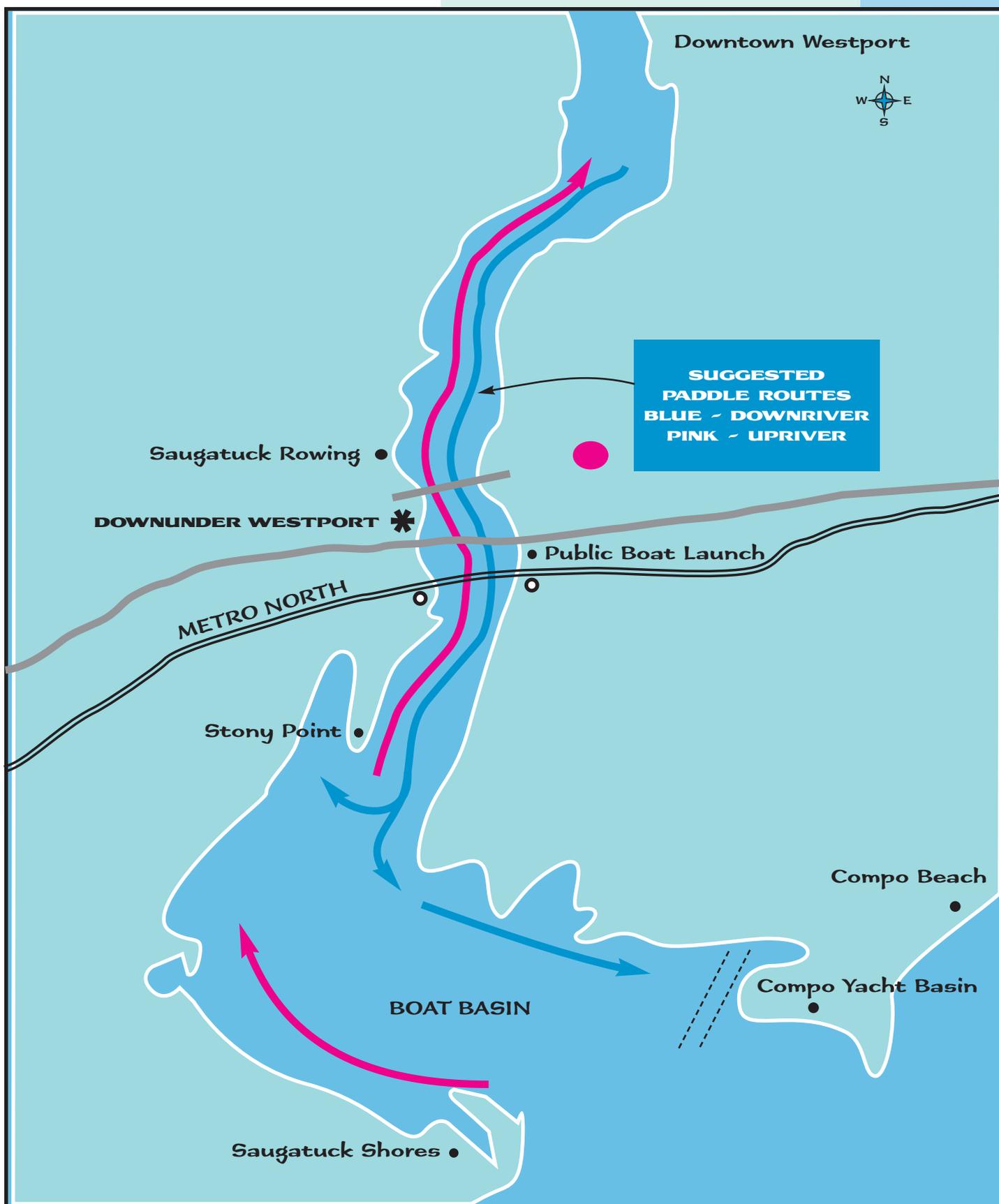


At Downunder we're always looking out for our mates. When you're heading out for a paddle there are a few things you need to know to keep everyone safe.

WEATHER

Wind: Look at which way it's blowing- that's where it will push you. Ideally go into the wind when you leave, save some energy for your return. SUPers - kneel or sit when you get tired, you can still paddle well.

Thunder: is closely followed by lightning, if you hear thunder - head for land, ideally the coastline, not islands. Take cover away from any tall objects. If you have to paddle, keep it horizontal.



BEFORE YOU GO

- 1) **Something to drink:** a sip every 15 mins or so will keep you hydrated. Electrolyte drinks are best - you retain them longer.
- 2) **Sunscreen**
- 3) **Sunglasses:** sun reflects off the water into your eyes.
- 4) **Sunglass strap/Croakies:** #1 item lost while paddling is sunglasses.
- 5) **Hat:** helps deflect the sun
- 6) **Footwear:** #1 accident whilst paddling (other than blisters if you grip the paddle too hard), are cuts from not protecting your feet when you get off on rocky shorelines and beaches. Lots of sharp shells.
- 7) **Phone:** put it in a dry bag, turn it off and have a really nice time out there. If you need help, turn it on and call us.

BOAT CHANNELS

Boat channel – please note the red and green buoys on the river, they mark the boat channel - an area off-limits for kayakers. Don't paddle between the buoys.

BOAT BASIN

High speed boat traffic (tubing, jet skis) at high tide, and at low tide much is a mud flat.

YACHT CLUBS

There are several yacht clubs on the river, please don't enter their marinas.

TIDES

Tidal swings on the Saugatuck River can range up to 9.7 feet. At low tide, normally safe passages can become

GETTING BACK

If you head out to the Islands, it can be disorienting finding your way back. From out in the sound, looking back at land, you can see a tower - aim for this. As you get closer that tower will disappear and the two Railroad towers will appear. Downunder is on the left just upriver from here, under the I95 overpass.

FALLING OFF YOUR KAYAK OR BOARD

You can swim back on, grab it and swim to shore, or best - have a buddy help you.

- 1) While in the water, lean across to grab the opposite side, and while kicking hard pull yourself across and roll yourself back into position. You might also try getting back on from the rear, cowboy style, by pushing down on the stern and pulling yourself up.
- 2) With your buddy on the opposite side of your kayak/board, have them reach across, grab the shoulder straps of your lifejacket and pull you across. Holding onto your boat/board they can keep it stable until you're situated.

ISLANDS AND BEACHES

Only Cockenoe, Compo Yacht Basin, and the west shore of Sherwood Island, are areas you can disembark. All other beaches are private property – you may stop if absolutely necessary, but not go above the high tide mark. If you disembark be sure to pull your kayak above the high tide line, in case of tidal changes.