

The Prairie Club's Paddling Program at Camp Hazelhurst

Randy Lutter

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Welcome to the Prairie Club's paddling program at Camp Hazelhurst. We want to make kayaks and paddle boards accessible to Prairie Club members and guests who are interested in boating at Hazelhurst. Camp Hazelhurst has paddleboards and a variety of kayaks that are fun for beginning and experienced paddlers.

To paddle these boats, you, as a Club member or guest at least 12 years old, need to

- 1) Read and sign the waiver of liability available at the Prairie Club's Camp Hazelhurst [boat program website](#), and send an image or copy of the signed document to both rwlutter@gmail.com and the Club Office at prairieclub@sbcglobal.net. We request that you send in a new signed waiver even if you have done so in the past.
 - 2) Watch videos to learn or to refresh your memory, as appropriate. Some are worth watching twice.
 - 3) Pass a swim test, typically by swimming to the sand bar and back. Even if you are a strong pool swimmer you may (re)learn how hard it is to swim straight without lines at the bottom of a pool or how fatiguing cold water can be.
 - 4) Arrange with Randy a mutually convenient time to take a basic proficiency test, which will cover
 - a. Fitting of a life jacket,
 - b. Selecting an appropriate boat for your skills and size,
 - c. Launching, and reentry on the water
 - d. Basic rules of the road.
 - e. Assessing and managing Lake Michigan weather risks
 - 5) Depending on your proficiency and the weather conditions, we will authorize you to paddle Club boats under specific conditions.
- Hazelhurst weather forecasts useful to boaters are available through free apps, including iKitesurf and Windfinder, Weko Beach buoy (in Bridgman), and Weatherbug, which provides the distance from the nearest lightning strike, as well as hourly forecasts.
 - Also useful are
 - A seven day National Weather Service forecast <https://forecast.weather.gov/MapClick.php?lat=41.876&lon=-86.628>
 - A National Weather Service announcement about thunderstorms and boating. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7GoFYqDh3Q>