

City of Berkeley Marina – Cal Adventures & Small Boat Dock

124 University Ave, Berkeley, CA 94710

Thanks to the generosity of the California Coastal Commission and the Whale Tail Grants Program, BORP Adaptive Sports & Recreation is proud to share resources that help paddlers with disabilities plan accessible kayaking adventures along the California coast.

Overview

Located at the south end of the Berkeley Marina, the **South Sailing Basin** is a popular site for recreational boating, kid's camps, and open-water swimming. While relatively protected, it still presents serious considerations — including **cold water temperatures, tides, currents, wind, and other marine traffic**. Conditions can change rapidly, so safety awareness and preparation are essential.

This location is right for you if:

- ☐ The weather and tidal conditions are favorable (talk to CalAdventures to find out)
- ☐ You can bring your own boat or are comfortable paddling a sit on top style kayak (rented from CalAdventures)
- ☐ You can get in a boat that is in the water from the dock, some assistance OK
- ☐ You can navigate a 29" wide steep access ramp (until the ADA one is fixed.)

Facilities (as of May 2025)

There are 4 docks at this location, currently, the **ADA accessible dock and eastern swimmer's dock are currently closed** due to storm damage. The open dock for small boats has a **steep 29" wide metal ramp with railings** that varies in slope with the tide, but is rather steep. There is a very low freeboard (the distance between the top of the dock and the waterline). There is an **ADA-accessible restroom** available in the adjacent paved parking lot.

CalAdventures

Cal Adventures is a **friendly, experienced partner** for paddlers in the East Bay, with growing capacity to support people with disabilities.

Cal Adventures offers group programs, classes, and private kayak rentals on weekends (note: currently hours are paused due to budget cuts, with plans to reopen this summer). Rentals are dependent on tides — they will only operate when there is **at least 2 feet of water**. They have a large collection of tandem sit on top kayaks (mostly Malibu 2). They also have some sit inside kayaks available but to rent them you need to demonstrate that you can self-rescue.

They recently acquired a collection of adaptive boating equipment including transfer benches, supported paddles, grip supports, and adaptive seats that they are looking forward to putting to use. Their location is flat and mostly paved, with **no stairs**, though the surface is broken or gravelly in some places and some boat yard clutter may be present. They like to encourage their participants to be self-sufficient and encourage repeat customers to pull their own boat and bring it across the bike path to the dock. However, they are happy to bring a boat down to the dock for you and hold it while you enter if needed, just ask. Similarly, while they don't usually offer back supports on sit on top kayaks, they will happily provide them by request. When rentals are operating, Cal Adventures maintains a **trained staff member watching the water at all times and also has a rescue motorboat** available for emergencies. However, due to the size of the sailing basin, **response time may vary**, and paddlers should plan accordingly.

For much of the year, wetsuits may be required. Wetsuits are **provided** (but not assistance with putting them on or removing them).

Changing rooms are available, with **at least one accessible stall** (pending a door modification).

Wetsuit requirement guidelines:

- Air Temp + Water Temp < 120 → Required
- Air Temp + Water Temp ≥ 120 → Optional
- Air Temp + Water Temp ≥ 150 → Not offered

Contact Tony Dianda for more information about paddling with CalAdventures:
tony.dianda@berkeley.edu

Summary

In the right conditions (warm weather, low wind), the small boat dock at the Berkeley Marina can be a lovely place for independent paddling. CalAdventures, while somewhat new to adaptive paddling, is excited to serve people with disabilities within the limits of what the location can safely support.