

Olympia Area Rowing Traffic Patterns

As our club gets more and more active we rowers present an additional navigational hazard to each other! Because of this we have established some traffic patterns that you should become familiar with.

These are the most commonly used routes in Budd Inlet for Olympia Area Rowing members:

- **Priest Point to DNR Dock**
- **Breakwater to Priest Point**
- **Breakwater to Head of East Bay**

A description for each traffic pattern is included in the following pages. (Additional traffic patterns may be defined in the future.)

General Comments

1. Follow the Club's traffic patterns.

The traffic patterns are there for the safety of the club members. Need we say more?

2. Always check the Log Book to see if other club rowers are on the water.

If there is someone on the water keep this in mind while you are rowing and try to spot them during your workout, especially looking in the direction that you are heading! If you go out when no one else is on the water, keep an eye open for other shells when you are returning, because might have launched after you!

3. Be extra careful during lower tides.

Budd Inlet has a variety of shoals. It can have up to 16-foot variation in water level height, between high and low tides. At extreme low tides you need to stick to the channel near the breakwater.

4. Beware of tidal currents near buoys, pilings or anchored vessels.

Know what the tide is doing. Is it coming in or is it going out? You can tell whenever you pass something that is anchored in the water. Which way are the ripples leading? Don't try to closely round a buoy when you are up stream in the current. There's a good chance you'll be dragged into it!

5. Watch for other vessels.

Budd Inlet has several marinas and a very active commercial port. It is your responsibility to notice where the other boats are on the Inlet. You don't want to be surprised!

Before starting any power piece, be it a start & 20, 1000m or 10 minutes, look around and see what traffic there might be which will effect your piece. You cannot assume that another boat is going to see you and stay out of your way as you do your workout!

When you are in the channel stay to the right (in the direction you're going). Remember "Red, Right, Return" – meaning stay close to the red buoys or markers when returning to port in a channel. When there is traffic in the channel and you don't need to be there because of low tides, get out of the channel and let the motorized boats have the passage.

6. Flotsam and Jetsam*

Budd Inlet has flotsam in the form of logs that have gotten loose from log booms. A variety of other things get loose in the Inlet as well. These will include branches and trees that citizens have been cutting down along the shore. At any rate, always be on the look out for stuff in the water. Skegs/fins can be torn off your shell pretty easily.

* Flotsam and Jetsam

These are legal terms in maritime law. Flotsam is any part of the wreckage of a ship or her cargo that is lost by accident and found floating on the surface of the water. Jetsam are goods or equipment deliberately thrown overboard (jettisoned) to make the ship more stable in high winds or heavy seas. (Lagan are goods cast overboard with a rope attached so that they may be retrieved and sometimes refers to goods remaining inside a sunken ship or lying on the bottom.) The term flotsam and jetsam shore-side means odds and ends of no great value.

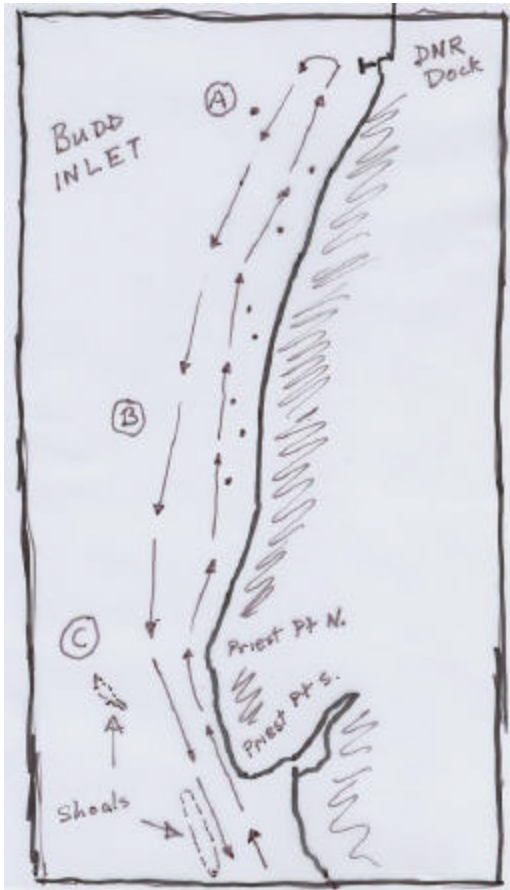
(Courtesy of <http://www.boatsafe.com/nauticalknowhow/terms0101.htm>)

OAR Traffic Pattern: Priest Point to DNR Dock

General Notes

Budd Inlet north of Priest Point opens up to be a mile and a half to two miles wide. If you head straight north from Priest Point you will end up rowing into the middle of the Inlet. Our suggested traffic pattern when you head north is to stay closer to the eastern shore of the Inlet, with a possible destination of the DNR dock (approximately 5.75 miles round trip from the breakwater). Scullers should begin to use the 4th Avenue Bridge as a stern course after passing Priest Point. If you use the State Capital Dome to guide your course you'll end up in the middle of the Inlet.

When you return follow the eastern shore but keep farther out, always staying to the right of oncoming traffic.



Specific Notes (see letters on sketch)

A. The South Sound Sailing Society keeps a buoy for their races a quarter mile out from the shore, not quite as far north as the DNR dock. Their old buoy was fairly easy to see. The new one as of 2005 is very difficult to see. Keep your eyes open. Stay closer to shore when you are approaching the DNR Dock to avoid hitting it.

B. A variety of boats and swimming docks are anchored along the eastern shore of Budd Inlet. As you pass north leave them between you and the shore. Sometimes the wind picks up when you are as far north as the DNR dock, forcing you to row closer into shore on your return. If this happens just be extra careful with your steering!

C. Make it a habit to briefly pause your rowing at the north end of Priest Point. This will allow you to see if there are any oncoming boats.

The channel by the Point is narrow when the tide is lower than mid-tide, due to the shoal

opposite Ellis Creek. During this time you need to keep your distance from the shore going north, especially at the north end of Priest Point, which has a rocky shoal that isn't drawn on this sketch...

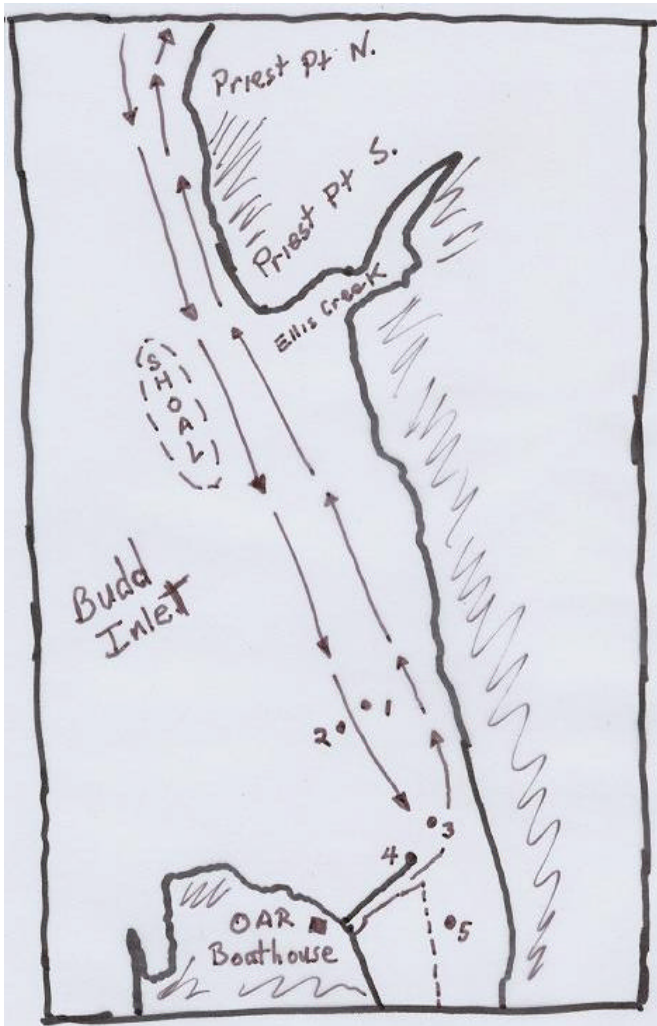
At extreme low tides you will not be able to row along Priest Point. You'll instead have to leave the shoal to your right (starboard), rowing farther west, or you can choose to row in the channel.

OAR Traffic Pattern: Breakwater to Priest Point

Notes

Always stay to the right of oncoming traffic.

At the breakwater you need to watch for marina traffic as well as other rowers. The marina traffic will tend to stay in the channel. Most of the time they also will be following the standard rules of the road and they will pass on-coming traffic to the right. This means that they will stay close to the navigational markers "3" and "1" (on pilings) as they head north, and close to navigational marker "2" (on pilings) and "4" (end of the breakwater) when returning to the marina. The shipping channel veers northwest after passing between markers "1" and "2", away from the rowers path to Priest Point. Smaller pleasure craft will occasionally head straight north to Priest Point.



As you near Priest Point going north, stay close to shore, allowing southbound rowers to pass to the west, farther out from the point. When the tide is lower the channel becomes narrower, so be sure to be extra vigilant when passing Priest Point during these times. When you reach the north end of Priest Point pause to see if any shells are coming around the corner. At low tides beware of the rocky shoal that is close in to the north point.

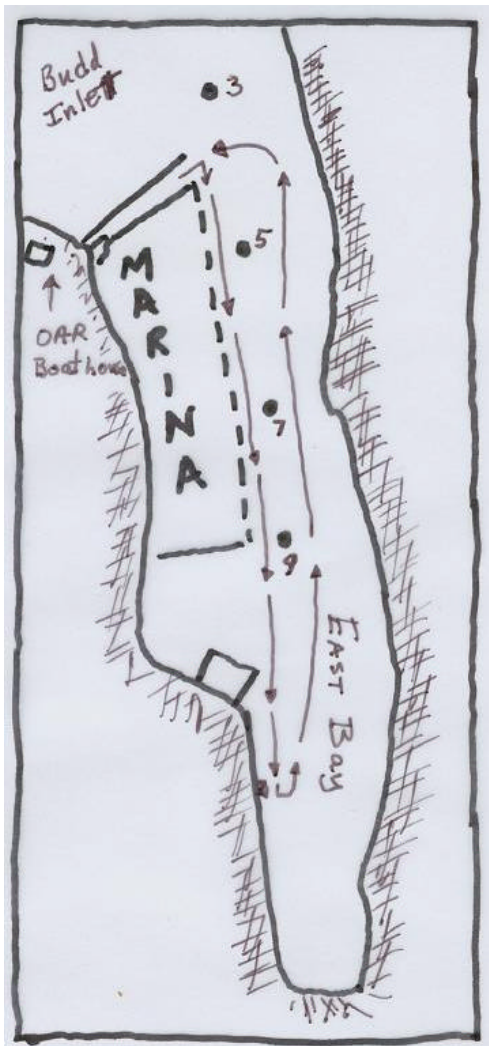
Note that sometimes the club has regattas in the area between Priest Pt and the Breakwater. During these times, the regatta director may adjust the traffic pattern.

OAR Traffic Pattern: Breakwater to Head of the East Bay

Notes

Always stay to the right of oncoming traffic. When rowing in the channel row at half-pressure or less.

At the breakwater you need to watch for marina traffic as well as other rowers. Unless rowing at high tide, row south in the channel, watching for traffic from the marina, which might be entering the channel. (It is only 100 ft wide.)



There are three single pilings to mark the east side of the channel, numbered "5", "7" and "9". These tend to pop-up suddenly. Don't do full power pieces in the channel, in either direction!

At mid-tide and higher you can row past the Marina to where the Bay narrows. Look for a large concrete block, which rests on the west shore of the Bay, along marine drive. This is a good place to turn around. Heading north you can row outside of the channel markers, closer to the east shore – but only mid-tide or higher. Going north, outside of the channel, you can row at full pressure. But always be extra careful in East Bay, simply because it is a narrow water way. There are navigation pilings that you can run into and at higher tides pleasure craft and shells alike may be outside of the channel getting in your way.

At low tide you will find that you can only row in the channel.