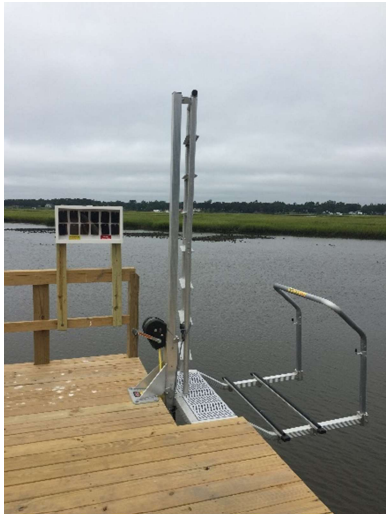


Kayak Launch Guidelines



Before you start - To use the kayak launch by yourself, you must be able to raise and lower the lift using the winch mechanism. Turning in one direction lowers the lift, turning in the opposite direction raises it. You must also be able to climb up and down the attached ladder.

Using the tag board - Prior to launching your boat (canoe or kayak) select any tag on the tag board and turn it over – from black to red. If you are launching several boats as a group and returning together, you only need a single tag. When you (or the group) returns you must turn the tag over to the black side. ***This tag system is critical.*** When all tags are black, the lift should be left in the up position by the last person to turn over a tag. When any tag(s) are still red, the lift must be returned to the lower position, far enough in the water so that additional boats can be retrieved.

Here's what you'll see on the tag board:



**Turn to RED when ON WATER
Turn to BLACK upon RETURN**

**Any tag RED,
leave LIFT DOWN**

Getting your boat onto the lift - You will find it helpful to attach a rope to your boat. Holding onto the rope while sliding the boat onto the lift will give you better control of the craft. You can then loosely tie that rope to the lift grab bar so it won't float away during the launching process. During retrieval, the rope can then be used to drag the stern onto the pier and off the lift.

Understanding tides - When lowering the lift (launching) make sure there is plenty of water under the boat so you can return later in the day and still be able to paddle onto the lift. The craft is lowered by itself (no one in or on it) until it is floating (see *Dealing with tides*) and then you climb down the ladder, get into the craft, untie, and paddle away.

Dealing with tides - The Shallotte River is a tidal river. Changes of 4 to 6+ feet occur daily. You must become aware of the high and low tide cycle. Consult a printed tide chart or use a smartphone app like Tides Near Me. The approximate length of your day on the river will determine when (before, during, or after) high tide you should launch. The longer you plan to paddle, the earlier before high tide you should go. ***Always have the lift lower in the water than you think you'll need to make retrieval possible.*** If others are out (red tag showing), return the lift well into the water. The lift cannot be lowered from a boat in the water.

Parking – after unloading your boat(s), please move your vehicle to one of the 4 parking spots close to the old kayak dock (heading towards the back gate). This will allow others to pull in to load / unload.

Other items to consider wearing or bringing -

- PFD (personal floatation device) - always wear one!
- Water shoes or old sneakers (oyster shells are razor sharp)
- Hat and sunglasses
- Sunscreen
- Water or a sports drink
- Whistle (to summon help)
- Paddle float
- Pump or bailing device
- Phone in a watertight bag