



San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail  
 Site Description for  
**Islais Creek**



**Location, Ownership, and Management:** Islais Creek Park is a small park with a gravel beach and high freeboard dock, located on the corner of 3rd Street and Arthur Avenue in southern San Francisco. The site is managed by the Port of San Francisco, under the stewardship of Kayaks Unlimited. The dock is owned by the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission.

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Boat ramp and dock	Gravel beach launch	Islais Creek Park

**Facility Description:** Islais Creek Park provides access to the creek and San Francisco Bay for small non-motorized boats with a high freeboard dock, gravel beach, and boat storage. The park also contains benches and picnic tables, pathways, trash/recycling receptacles, art sculptures, educational signs, and native landscaping. There are 18 public parking spaces located along Arthur Avenue, including two ADA spaces.

Kayaks Unlimited act as park stewards in exchange for space for their boat storage area in the western portion of the park. Kayaks Unlimited provide public kayak storage for a nominal annual fee and coordinate regular outings for members and community groups, including disadvantaged youth. The Dragon Boat Training Center also store outrigger canoes here for youth training programs.

The site is used primarily by kayakers and outrigger canoes. Most kayakers and outrigger canoes launch from the gravel beach. The dock gangway has a gate and sharp turns that can make carrying boats difficult; however, the dock is frequently used for crew changes during outrigger training. Level of use varies seasonally, but generally the site is used at least five days per week. Dragon boat training (in outrigger canoes) typically occurs four times per week, including twice a day during the summers, and in the afternoons during the school year. Kayaks Unlimited typically host events two times per month, except during the middle of winter.

**Other Identifying or General Information:**

<p>Site ID: <u>SF4</u>                  In WT Plan: <u>Yes</u>                  Existing or Planned: <u>Existing</u>                  Ownership: <u>Public</u>                  County: <u>San Francisco</u>                  Geo-Region: <u>Southern San Francisco Waterfront</u>                  SF Bay Plan Region: <u>Central Bay</u>                  Launch or Destination: <u>Launch</u></p>	<p>Home of a Club: <u>Yes</u>                  Used by a Program that Assists Persons with Disabilities: <u>No</u>                  Appreciated for Windy Conditions: <u>No</u>                  Near Food or Drink: <u>Yes, a variety of restaurants are located along 3<sup>rd</sup> Street to the south of the site. Additionally, the Speakeasy brewery is located less than a mile from the site.</u></p> <p>Proximity to Other Sites: <u>The closest existing site to the north is the Pier 52 Boat Launch (SF7), which has a low-float dock with transfer steps and grab bars and a kayak oriented transfer assist system. A closer potential site to the north is in Crane Cove Park (SF18), which has been identified by the Port of San Francisco for potential future improvements. To the south, India Basin Shoreline Park (SF2) provides a beach entry suitable for use at high tides.</u></p>
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*Islais Creek has a long history of use – from villages along the historic estuary, to the center of San Francisco’s meat packing industry, to military and industrial shipping. Photo: 1938*

**Description of Launch/Landing:**

Fixed Dock/Pier Launch/Landing: No

Float: Yes

Freeboard Level: High (9" and above)

Transfer/Launch Assistance System: Unknown

Gangway: Yes

Gangway Length (feet): 128

Gangway Width (inches): 90

Gangway Slope Description: Slope is gentle, but the gangway contains a 90 degree and a 180 degree turn that can make use difficult when carrying equipment.



*The gangway provides accessible access to the high freeboard dock.*

Boat/Trailer Ramp: No

Mudflats Affect Site Usability: No

Beach Wheelchair Available: No

Stair Water Entry: No

Beach: Yes

Firm-Surface Beach Crossing: No

Fee for Launch or Parking: No

Other Launch/Landing Notes: A well worn dirt path runs from the main paved walkway down to a sandy beach. The beach substrate is hard sand/small gravel leading to rocky mud. This launch is most often used by Kayaks Unlimited members and Dragon Boat Training Center teams.



*A gentle unpaved path to the gravel beach provides the most used water entry to Islais Creek.*


Restrictions: The gate on the gangway is unlocked at all times, but the gate can prohibit larger boats from being carried to the dock, such as outrigger canoes.

Water Entry Path: No

**Site Appears to be Suitable For:**

Kayak: <u>Yes</u> Windsurfer: <u>No</u> Kiteboard: <u>No</u> Whaleboat: <u>No</u> Stand Up Paddleboard: <u>Yes</u>	Canoe: <u>Yes</u> Outrigger Canoe: <u>Yes</u> Sculling: <u>No</u> Rowboat/Dinghy: <u>Yes</u> Dragonboat: <u>No</u> Other: <u>No</u>
Notes:	

**Transportation and Parking:**

<p>General Spaces (number): <u>1-25</u>                  ADA Parking Spaces (number): <u>2</u></p> <p>ADA Parking Description: Two marked ADA spaces are located near the entrance to the park.</p> <p>Duration (hours): Some spaces near the SFPUC building have 2 hour time limits; nearby spaces have no parking time limits.</p> <p>Overnight Parking Possibly Allowed: <u>Yes</u></p> <p>Overnight Parking Description: Some spots say 2 hour parking from 8-5, except Sunday. Others do not have restrictions. Nothing restricting overnight parking.</p>	<p>Bay Trail: <u>Yes</u></p> <p>Loading/Unloading Area: <u>Yes</u></p>  <p><i>A loading and unloading area is marked with a red curb and no parking signs at the entrance to the park.</i></p> <p>Public Transportation: The site is located near the KT Muni line, which stops at 3rd Street and Marin Street, approximately 0.2 miles from the site. A segment of the Bay Trail runs across a bridge over Islais Creek south of the site. Sidewalks and crosswalks are available between the Bay Trail and the Park.</p>
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**Path of Travel:**

Distance to Launch from Parking Area (feet): 125

Distance to Launch from ADA Parking (feet): 280

Distance to Launch from ADA Restrooms (feet): (No restrooms)

Distance from ADA Restrooms to ADA Parking (feet): (No restrooms)


Path of Travel Exists: Yes

Path of Travel Description: An accessible path of travel exists between the ADA spaces, through the park and to the dock. The gangway has handrails and a gentle slope, but makes a 90 degree turn and a 180 degree turn that can make carrying equipment down the gangway difficult.



*An accessible path of travel runs from the marked parking area, through the park, to the accessible dock. The gate is unlocked at all times.*

**Other Site Amenities:**

<p>Total Restrooms: <u>0</u>                  Total ADA Restrooms: <u>0</u>                  Restroom Description: Port of San Francisco is considering applying for a Water Trail grant to install a compost toilet onsite.</p> <p>Boat Washing: <u>Yes</u>                  Rigging/Staging Area: <u>No</u>                  Picnic Tables: <u>Yes</u>                  Benches: <u>Yes</u>                  BBQ: <u>No</u>                  Boat Storage: <u>Yes</u></p>  <p><i>Kayaks Unlimited provides kayak storage for a nominal fee within a fenced area of the site.</i></p>	<p>Boat Storage Description: Kayaks Unlimited provides boat storage through a cooperative membership model. Boats are stored within a chain-link fence enclosed portion of the site that has a modified shipping container and small sheds for boat storage. Several outriggers used by the Dragon Boat Training Center are also stored here.</p> <p>The Dragon Boat Training Center also stores several outriggers within this area, which are used to train primarily high school and college-age dragon boat teams. Outriggers are used because they provide a similar team paddling experience, but are easier to transport and store than dragon boats.</p> <p>Basic Membership for Kayaks Unlimited is \$30/year. Members can join to have Cooperative Storage for \$40/year, meaning other members can use their gear with permission; or, members can join to have Private Storage for \$70/year, meaning the community can not use their gear.</p>
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**Overnight Accommodations:**

Hotel: <u>No</u>	Hostel: <u>No</u>	Ship: <u>No</u>	Camping: <u>No</u>	Other: <u>No</u>
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**Additional Notes Related to Accessibility:**

<p>This site provides two ADA parking spaces and a paved path of travel. The gangway has a gentle slope and handrails. A 90 degree and an 180 degree turn can make navigation difficult, particularly with equipment. The dock has transition plates and the surface is smooth. No guardrails or assist components are located on the dock.</p> <p>Kayaks Unlimited has expressed an interest in working with programs for people with disabilities to get them on the water.</p>
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**Additional Notes on Use of Site (Boating and Non-Boating) and Existing and Planned Management:**

The site is used predominantly by kayakers and outrigger canoes. Level of use varies seasonally, but generally the site is used at least 5 days per week. Dragon Boat training (in outrigger canoes) typically occurs four times per week, including twice a day during the summers, and in the afternoons during the school year. Kayaks Unlimited typically host events two times per month, except during the middle of winter.

To the west of the launch site, Islais Creek is a cove that provides a sheltered experience for novice paddlers to learn in a protected environment. Following the river to the east, the creek opens into the San Francisco Bay approximately 0.7 miles from the launch site. Here boaters can explore the San Francisco waterfront and get a unique view of the historic shipyards and industrial operations.

**Safety and Security, including Parking:**

Islais Creek to the east of the 3rd Street Bridge is an active commercial shipping channel, so boaters need to be cautious to avoid the barges and other large ships that frequent the area.

Aluminum parts of the dock were previously stolen; however, since the dock was repaired with wooden pieces no subsequent issues have occurred.

**Wildlife and Habitat Considerations:**

The site is located in a densely urban area of San Francisco with a long history of industrial disturbance. Islais Creek Park has native landscaping, but is surrounded by urban uses so no sensitive terrestrial habitats are known occur within the site. No nesting or roosting locations are known to occur in the vicinity of the site. Water quality is regularly tested within the channel, but no sensitive aquatic habitats are known to occur.

**Education, Outreach, and Stewardship, Including Signage:**

Kayaks Unlimited act as stewards of the site in exchange for use of a portion of the site for their boat storage facility. Kayaks Unlimited regularly performs clean-ups of the site and has substantially improved the cleanliness and aesthetics of the site. They also regularly put on programs for community members and disadvantaged youth, having put over 300 young people on the water through their programs. Many who participate in these programs are from local neighborhoods and had never been on the water of the Bay before. The Dragon Boat Training Center also provides programs to learn dragon boat racing utilizing outrigger canoes. Teams are primarily comprised of local high school and college-age youth.

An educational sign is located at the entrance to the park that describes the history of Islais Creek and the area.

**Other Existing or Anticipated Water Trail-Related Issues and Opportunities:**

Primary site improvements desired are restrooms and a low freeboard dock. The Port of San Francisco is considering applying for a Water Trail grant for a compost toilet onsite. Kayaks Unlimited has been pursuing a low freeboard dock and preliminary discussions with SFPUC suggest they are willing to allow dock modifications.

**Accessibility of Sites within the Southern San Francisco Waterfront Geo-Region:**

There are six potential Water Trail sites identified within this geo-region: South Beach Harbor, Pier 52 Boat Launch, Mission Creek, Islais Creek, India Basin Shoreline Park, and Candlestick Point State Recreation Area. Of these, only India Basin and Candlestick Point do not have some sort of accessible launch/landing facilities.

The experiences that are available in the Southern San Francisco Waterfront Geo-Region are urban. Several sites have benefitted from the commitment of the Port of San Francisco to improved access to the public along the waterfront. As a result, there are several sites that offer a variety of accessible features. Pier 52 Boat Launch offers a low-freeboard dock, transfer system, accessible parking, and a loading and unloading area. Mission Creek provides an accessible gangway to a low-freeboard dock, as well as accessible restrooms. South Beach Harbor has ADA compliant ramps and high-freeboard dock, as well as accessible parking. The Bay Area Association of Disabled Sailors (BAADS) serves approximately 50 participants each weekend at the South Beach Harbor. BAADS provide lessons and/or equipment for dinghy sailing, keelboat sailing, and Veterans sailing for people with disabilities.