



Scout takes to the board

## On balance, stand-up paddleboarding is great fun

Story & photos by  
**GRETCHEN AMMERMAN**  
*For the TODAY*

It had started out so well. A few successful short trips up and down the Siletz River on a 10-foot stand-up paddle (SUP) board had given me the confidence to set up my camera on a dock, strap my remote shutter release to my wrist and try to take a few selfies.

It only took the arrival of a few spectators, a nice family who were curious about my activity, to make me overconfident. Paddling strongly toward the camera, I misjudged my timing and ran full speed into the dock.

My audience, to their credit, did not laugh as I landed hard on my knees and worked with all my might to stay on the board and act as if I had planned the whole thing.

The board I was using was a rental from ZuhG Life Surf Shop in Lincoln City. I'm a huge fan of trying something out instead of investing capital before I know if it's going

to "take," so this arrangement was ideal and affordable. I have my own wetsuit, but they rent those as well as other equipment you might need for a day of water play.

SUPs are generally so stable on the water that some people actually do yoga on them, and many dog owners have trained their canine companions to ride on the boards with them, too. One of the reasons I was interested in trying SUPing is that I'm always on the lookout for activities where I can include my very athletic dog, Scout.

I used treats to help Scout get more comfortable on the board but limited our first training day to on-land activity. A joyful and confident swimmer, I think she would eventually take to it, but for my first time out I thought it best not to try putting her on a board that I wasn't sure I would be able to handle.

I enjoyed it enough to decide to invest in equipment and add this to my outdoor repertoire so Scout and I can continue to work on making her a SUP dog.

When she moved to the Central Oregon Coast roughly 10 years ago, Angie Wright began SUPing as a way to meet both physical and social needs.

"I was really out of shape so fitness was a big reason I got into it," she said. "But also,



The author, moments before the fall

all my new friends SUPed at that time and if I wanted to hang out with them, I had to learn."

Though that original group have all moved away or stopped SUPing, Angie keeps on paddling.

"There is no other feeling like it," she said. "I just get so much serenity when I'm out there, especially early in the morning when it's really quiet."

Having no background in board sports made it a bit tricky for Angie at first but she knew it was something that would be worth the effort.

"I wasn't one that would jump on and go," she said. "It took me a solid summer to get my balance down; I was awkward. But now I can stop and turn on a dime."

Looking for a watersport she could handle when no companions were available also helped Angie fall for SUPing.

"Compared to kayaking, for example, it's easier because I can carry my board with one hand and it's easy to get on a car," she said. "Also, I am not afraid to go by myself, which is huge."

There are a few rules to know before you go: you will need an invasive species permit, a light, a whistle and a life preserving jacket on you while you are in the water; failure to

on the cover

do so could result in a fine of up to \$250.

"You can get the license at ODF online or BiMart," Angie said. "I really like to promote being safe out on the water on a SUP, but people need to know the rules, too. I see people getting tickets for not having all of the safety gear all the time."

After managing to remain on the board during my encounter with the dock, I got a bit cocky and during a turn I pushed too hard on the side of the board and predictably ended up, as the saying goes, in the drink.

It was quite easy to haul myself back onto the board, probably looking in my shiny black wetsuit like one of the sea lions on Newport's Bayfront hauling themselves onto a big rock.

My admittedly clumsy foray proved that SUP boards are stable enough that you can run them into a dock without ending up in the water, and if you do fall in it's pretty easy to get back out. So, if you were hesitating to try this sport, I hope you find this a reassuring tale.

In Lincoln City, you can rent a SUP board and equipment from ZuhG Life Surf Shop, [www.zuhglifesurfshop.com](http://www.zuhglifesurfshop.com). Safari Town Surf Shop rents equipment and also offers lessons, [safari townsurf.com](http://safari townsurf.com).