

Pura Vida: Get on board, surf, skate or skim

Last summer saw a huge surge of popularity in all kinds of surfing and skim boarding camps, as well as every possible form of outdoor activity. Even at the height of the pandemic, water-based sports went on unrestricted. As people's pandemic fears ease, there will be an even bigger increase in outdoor activities, especially on the ocean.

Expect to see a continuation of the current biking, running, kayak and paddleboard madness that has driven those industries to record profits. We can expect another year of product shortage in the outdoor sporting goods industry. Consumer demands exceed the inventory of manufacturers by a mile.



Photo courtesy of Peter Pan

A good indicator of how big this summer will be is how the season went at **Yawgoo Valley Ski Area** this winter. Aided by the extra good snow making and natural snowfall, the ski area had its biggest season of all time. Season passes, private and group lessons and daily day passes were sold out. Ski and snowboard shops that suffered during the past few years recorded not only a huge increase in retail sales, but also in rental packages.

Most state and town beaches are open and charging both parking and admission fees. Many of the town beaches are holding to the patterns of last summer, limiting non-resident parking and passes. State beaches have changed last season's rules and regulations, and opened up both parking and beach admission capacity so the public can finally enjoy the shore.



Photo courtesy of Jamie Kelley

For area surfers, the most popular beach is not only Rhode Island, but the entire northeast, is still the **Narragansett Town Beach**. Blessed with shallow sand bars and a versatile swell magnet, it remains the surfing mecca of New England. Surf camps run by **Narragansett Surf and Skate** and the Town of South Kingstown Recreation Department at both the Narragansett Town Beach and **Matunuck Point** are still available. Some weeks are already full.



Photo courtesy of Peter Pan

A big item this summer is the skim boarding camps at the **South Kingstown Town Beach**, which is one of the very few ideal skim boarding beaches in the northeast. Pro skimmer **Drew Plourde** runs the camp, which has expanded to three weeks this summer. Campers ride only the best foamie skim boards made during the sessions.



Photo by Andrew Fisher

Rhode Island's premier skateboard park, **Old Mountain Field**, is again offering nine weeks of skateboarding camp, led by top area skaters **Christian Clark** and **Hunter Barbosa**. This setting offers probably the best combination of ramps, obstacles and riding surfaces in the New England area.

Almost all of the kayak, paddle board, boat, and surfboard rental businesses anticipate continuing the reservation system the pandemic required, so don't expect to rent any outdoor product without calling first.

All I can hope for now is that everyone gets vaccinated and students go back to school in the fall. Then I can enjoy an uncrowded line-up for a change, instead of fighting for waves at Point Judith.