Press Release

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Fort Drum Public Affairs

Fort Drum Natural Resources Branch makes kayaking more accessible on post

FORT DRUM, N.Y. -- When every other car you pass has a kayak strapped to the roof or a boat hitched on a trailer, it’s a clear sign of summer and the promise of fun times ahead.

The Fort Drum Natural Resources Branch team has worked to make kayaking on post enjoyable for more community members, after recently installing a new wheelchair-accessible launch in Remington Park.

“The setup is simple enough that anyone can safely go from wheelchair to kayak and into the water in no time at all,” said Jason Wagner, Fort Drum Natural Resources Branch manager. “It’s easy to use and it is super stable.”

This is the first wheelchair-accessible launch on post, but Wagner said that they will consider adding more if it is put to good use.

“It’s an awful lot to ask for somebody who is mobility challenged to get into a kayak,” he said. “But there are success stories everyday about people who do just that. Well, I want to give community members here that opportunity, and show that they can do it themselves.”

The launch is located near the Cranberry Lake Pavilion, which is a popular fishing and kayaking site.

“I think of Remington Pond as a gateway to a new recreational opportunity,” he said. “If you go kayaking at one of the launches in the training area, you might be all alone and maybe that will discourage you from trying it. But on a nice day, there’s typically always someone here at Remington Park. If you needed to call for help, there’s somebody here to give you a hand.”

Last June, kayak launches were installed at Indian Lake, Indian Pond, and Mud Lake in the training areas.

“Those are the more basic ones, but I am hoping to get some feedback from the public,” Wagner said. “Because if people are using the wheelchair accessible launch, we will install another one like these in the big waters out in the training areas.”

Using the launches in the training area requires a recreational pass, available for free at <https://fortdrum.isportsman.net/>. Community members also can download maps from the website and confirm which portions of the training areas are open for recreation.

“There is a lot to explore out there,” Wagner said. “You can paddle from Mud Lake into Lake Bonaparte, which is five times the size of Mud Lake, and it’s all connected. If a family wants to go on a great kayaking trip, I recommend launching from Alpena Dam and paddle out to Mud Lake. It’s a nice little bay, so if you’ve got little ones paddling and it gets to be too much, it is a short way back. But if everyone is happy, keep going out to Sand Bay (Military Bay). Park your boat, take a swim and enjoy the sunshine. It’s a great day on the water.”

Community members interested in getting out on the water can rent kayaks, canoes and paddleboards from Outdoor Recreation, Bldg. 11115 on Iraqi Freedom Drive.

Jessica Guyton, Outdoor Recreation assistant, said that their fleet of kayaks fly off the racks most summer weekends.

“Our tandem kayaks – the two-person kayak – are the most popular,” she said. “They are light and easy to transport. Oftentimes families will rent these out because you can sit a small child in front of the adult. All our rentals come with the paddles and life vests, as well.”

Outdoor Recreation has 30 kayaks, 13 stand-up paddleboards and 15 canoes available, and they also offer kayaking and paddleboarding trips off post.

For more information about rentals or recreational activities, call (315) 772-8222.

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Photo Captions: There are multiple ways to get on the water at Fort Drum, whether it is with a kayak, a canoe, or a paddleboard. The Natural Resources Branch has worked to make it accessible for more community members this summer with a new wheelchair accessible kayak launch. (Photo by Mike Strasser, Fort Drum Garrison Public Affairs)