REI.com blog post

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Published July 13, 2011

**Stand Up Paddleboarding: Growing Sport or Mood-altering Drug?**

It was the moment the back of my head hit the board that it dawned on me: Stand up paddleboarding (SUP) may be a better vehicle for my spirit than it is for my body.

Never heard of SUP? It’s an ancient form of surfing that’s catching on fast outside its native Hawaii. You stand on an oversized (10 feet-plus) board and propel yourself through the water with a long paddle. Unlike surfing, SUP doesn’t require waves, and unlike kayaking, you get to enjoy long vistas from a standing position.

I arrived for Tuesday Night SUP-per at Seattle’s Alki Kayak Rentals (where anyone can try out paddleboarding for free), with a dark cloud over my head. Despite the glorious sunshine of our long-awaited summer, as the Cascades played peek-a-boo with the downtown skyline, while people on the nearby trail strolled, ran and rollerbladed, what was I intent upon?

The fact that something had died in the bushes near the shop and was putting up a powerful stink.

But my foul mood--and the bad odor—was quickly blown away when friends Connie and Jenn arrived, and we got out on the water to test different boards. Any lingering evil was knocked out of me on my first fall off an inflatable paddleboard.

I mean, how can you stay grumpy when you’re trying to walk on water? And, as I discovered, SUP—even when you’re struggling for balance—is a shortcut to a happy place.

Hands-down my favorite board of the evening was a stable, black-and-white craft I dubbed the Urban Orca. Jenn and Connie were both fans of the inflatable model that kept dumping me.

So I’m curious. What does it take for you to shake off a midweek funk and get out for some fresh air and fun? I never would have made it out the door without previously-made plans to meet friends.

How do you make it happen for yourself?

Posted on July 13, 2013 at 02:44 PM

Tagged: paddleboarding, stand up paddleboarding, SUP