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Nicole Hourahine, Special to the Times Sep 06, 2011 - 11:44 AM | [Report a Typo or Correction](#)

Surfing the Grand

Surfing on the Grand River? No way, no waves! But add a paddle and larger board into the equation and you have Stand Up Paddle Boarding (SUP).

SUP is a water sport that is similar to surfing, but due to the fact that you can do it on almost any body of water, with or without waves, by almost anyone, it's quickly gaining popularity all over the world.

Though derived from surfing, SUP is different in that the participant remains kneeling or standing on the surfboard, using a paddle to propel themselves through the water; instead of laying prone and paddling with the arms.

As a sport, SUP originated in the 1960s on the beaches of Hawaii as a method for surfing instructors to keep a better eye on their students, take action shots (which could later be sold on the beach), and to spot waves. Now with the increasing availability of equipment and information, it is easier than ever for people to try this sport, and SUP is being seen more frequently on the beaches of the Great Lakes.

From an outsider's perspective, SUP looks fun and exciting, but challenging. Recently, local sports group Active Cambridge invited SUP instructors Mike Sandusky and Grant Kennedy from Surf Ontario to bring their knowledge to Cambridge and the Grand River.

Eight people, ranging in age from eight to 65, with no previous experience, arrived at the dock at Riverbluffs Park to give it a try.

They were given a beginner's lesson which included safety, board basics (popping-up from knees to feet), and paddling techniques. After the lesson, the participants made their way down to the water, with paddles and surfboards (and life jackets for those not so strong swimmers). Within seconds, boards were mounted, the transition from kneeling to standing was made, and they took off down the river.

Paddling a short distance down the Grand – guided by their instructors – they were able to stop a couple of times to watch some of the wildlife on the riverbank. The group thoroughly enjoyed their SUP adventure, all agreeing



Surfing the Grand. (Left to right) Julia Hourahine, Mike Sandusky, Alex Hourahine, Mike Hourahine, Jack Hourahine, and Grant Kennedy (three generations surfing together) prepare SUP on the Grand River. www.activecambridge.ca

ANDY HOURAHINE, TIMES STAFF

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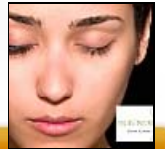
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that it was easy to learn, fun and exciting, a great workout (cardiovascular and strength, especially core), and that it brought them closer to the river. Instead of the usual canoes, kayaks and boats seen paddling by, it may be surfboards floating their way through downtown soon.

For more information on SUP, visit www.surfontario.ca, and for advice on how to become physically active in Cambridge go to www.activecambridge.ca.

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