

Map 8: Sunkhaze Stream – Basin Mill Rapids



(RM 61.3) The river divides into two channels above **Orson Island**. To get to the Ketawamkihtek Campsite, turn right into Stillwater Branch (*Ketawamkihtek, Long sandy stream*). After a 1/4 mile, the campsite will be on the right, upstream of the Twin Islands. You will need to backtrack to the main channel to continue the trail.

The Birch Stream Boat Launch is 1.5 mile past the Long Sandy Campsite, near a small bridge.

(RM 61.7) Proceed between **Orson Island and Indian Island**. This is the safest, most direct route. If you go river left you will encounter ledge drops and rapids at Joe Pease Rips.

(RM 62.4) The **Milford Dam** requires either a short, steep portage or a longer carry, neither of which are signed or developed. The longer portage (0.5 mi.) goes from the Old Town boat launch through town to Binette Park. The shorter, steeper portage (0.3 mi) begins just below the bridge to Indian Island. Follow a rough trail up to a parking lot, walk past a mill building, and put-in at the park.

Below the dam is a series of wide rapids. **Check the USGS Eddington gauge online before paddling.** Less than 3 feet: low water, easier, but may be scratchy. 3-7 feet: medium water, suitable for boats outfitted for whitewater. 7+ feet: high water, **experts only**. For detailed rapid descriptions, check out the **"Bashabaez Penobscot River Race Course and Paddling Route"** on Maine Trail Finder.

(RM 63.6) **French Island** (*Matewanikanok, Place for tanning hides*), is residential.

(RM 63.8) **Shad Rips** are Class II-III at medium water. Start right of center. These rapids are less rocky and better at low water than the **French Island Rips** (Class II-III), where the safest route is far river right. These rapids can be portaged by using the city streets on French Island. Jim Mitchell has established the **SW French Island Campsite** in his backyard at the island's southwest tip.

(RM 65): **Great Works Rapids** (*Macewessis, Bad falls*), are some of the most challenging on the Paddling Trail and are Class III-III+ at medium water. Scout from river left to pick a line, which will vary with different water levels. These rapids were the site of the Great Works Dam, removed by the Penobscot River Restoration Project in 2012. Portaging (300 yards) is possible along a gravel road.

(RM 67) You are paddling along **Marsh Island**, (*Wasahpskek menehan, Slippery ledge island*) named for the stretch of Class I-II rapids along here (*Wasahpskek Rapids, Slippery ledge*) because a slippery ledge gave a bad pole-hold, noting that this stretch of rapids was difficult for the canoeist poling upstream.

(RM 68.7) The **Stillwater River** (*Mskithtek, Place where the water is still*) come in below the Orono Dam, beginning the half-mile **Basin Mills Rapids** (*Nalemsakehekan, Falls where the river forms a channel*) Class II-III in medium water.

