



Wilmette Harbor Practical Boater's Guide

Welcome to the Harbor! We are all here for the fun! This guide is designed to help you and your family make the most of your Harbor experience. Here are tips about where to go, weather links, Clubhouse guidelines and where to ask for help. We are happy to have you here and look forward to seeing you at our amazing little Harbor.



WHC Staff and Volunteer Leadership Contacts	4
Helpful Links and Apps	4
Web Pages and Beach Cams	4
Weather Apps	5
Mooring and the Docking	5
Docking Prep	5
Wind Direction and its Impact	6
Getting Gas	6
Getting Your Friends to Wilmette Harbor	6
Out on the Water	6
Sailboats	7
Sailboat racing	7
Sailboat Cruising	8
Fishing Fleet	9
Power Boating	10
Tubing	10
Skiing and Boards	10
Places to Go	11
Where to Anchor and Relax in Different Conditions	11
SW breeze -	11
SE Breeze -	11
NE Breeze -	11
Anchoring and rafting	12
Wilmette Areas Where You Can Anchor (but not go on the beach)	12
Quick Ride to a Beach Kids Can Sit On (20 Minutes)	14
SHIPWRECK to Snorkel (20 Minutes)	14
Best spot to get away from the city / Ft Sheridan - (40 Minutes)	15
Two Tricks on that trip	16
Going to the City (45 Minutes)	16
Navy Pier Transient Docks	19
Play Pen	19
Air and Water Show (45 Minute – 1 Hour Ride)	20
General Boating and Anchoring	21
Stay Away	21
Coast Guard	21
Swimming Off Shore (BE CAREFUL)	21
Using the Clubhouse	22
Fun Clubhouse Activities	22
Ice	22
Sailing Lessons	24

Sheridan Shore Sailing School at Wilmette Harbor	24
Coast Guard Education and Links	25
Safety Tips	26

WHC Staff and Volunteer Leadership Contacts

- **Executive Director: Hyde Perce** (wilmetteharbor1938@gmail.com) runs the club and marina. He will help you with any questions about billing and moorings. He has a wealth of knowledge about the harbor and boating, having worked here and raced here competitively for decades. **(847) 251-4234**.
- **Club Manager: Jeri Traub** (clubmanager@wilmetteharbor.org) runs the club. See Jeri with any questions about renting the clubhouse, special events, dinners, lunches, deck parties or the Buccaneer bar. **(847) 251-2211**
- **Harbor Master: Katie Traub** (harbormaster@wilmetteharbor.org) runs the marina. Katie handles day to day marina operations. See her with any questions about your mooring, lines, scheduling lifts or other harbor questions. **847) 251-4234**
- **Sailboat Fleet - John Hellmuth** is the Commodore and runs sailboat fleet races. jwhellmuth@aol.com John's cell 630-209-1515
- **Fishing Fleet - Gary Hirschel** is the best contact for information related to the very active WHC Fishing Fleet activities - Gary is at garyhirschel@yahoo.com
- **Matt Bevenour** - President of the Wilmette Harbor board of directors. mbevenour@key.com Matt's cell (847) 999-8198
- **Sheridan Shore Sailing School at Wilmette Harbor** - Sailboat instruction for all ages, Sailboat Rental, Private Lessons, Sailing Camp, Racing
Website: www.sheridanshore.org - **847-251-1110** – Office@SheridanShore.org
Katie Tinder, Program Director – katie@sheridanshore.org

Helpful Links and Apps

Web Pages and Beach Cams

- **Wilmette Harbor Site** - <https://wilmetteharbor.org> includes the social calendar, contact information, weather and photosthis is your 'go to' source for anything related to Wilmette Harbor.
- **Wilmette Buoy Weather Info** - Wilmette Buoy (wave height/ water temperature/photo of the lake taken hourly) - <http://iiseagrant.org/wilmettebuoy/>
- **Chicago Crib Cam** (The prevailing conditions over a mile out which can be useful. If it's blowing 15 SW a mile off shore in Chicago, 99% of the time that's what's blowing in Wilmette) - <https://www.glerl.noaa.gov/metdata/chi/>
- **Dempster Street Evanston Beach Cam** - [Evanston Dempster Beach Cam](#) - Real time Live Cam of the close in shore where many of us spend most of our time.

- **Slip Reservations** - [Dockwa](#) provides reservation services at most Chicago area Harbors.

Weather Apps

- **Rader** - My Radar - free and accurate
- **Weather** - Weather Bug app shows temp / wind direction / cloud cover by the hour and up to 10 days ahead
- **Weather** - Weather Underground provides accurate hourly wind and weather predictions

Mooring and the Docking

- When you are in the harbor, approaching a dock, a mooring buoy or anything, GO SUPER SLOW!!!! Basically drift!!!! And you will look like a master. Never fast, ALWAYS just a touch of engine to steer, then cut it. Just enough throttle to steer your boat and often you don't even need throttle, the water flowing across your engine will steer it. Understand where the wind is coming from and use it accordingly.
- Having a yellow float line from your bow lines to stern lines at your mooring is a life saver. Run one line to tie the front lines to the back when you leave and all you need to do is get someone to grab that one bundle of lines at the stern buoy and you have all of them. You then don't even need to go in at all under power. Just grab the one by the buoy and you can cut the engine and relax.

Docking Prep

- Have your fenders deployed before you enter the harbor.
- Have lines ready and safely in place (not dragging in the water!)
- Have you and your crew practice actually throwing a line.
- Have a couple boat hooks ready as well to fend off other boats or the breakwall.
- Make sure your crew knows what they need to do, which line or boat hook.
- Have an extra fender handy to drop over quickly if needed. This is known as a “rolling fender” and can really help prevent damage to your boat and/or your neighbors.
- Speed kills! If you use high rev's in the harbor, expect an audience...don't worry, we have all done it at first!
- Go steady and use the momentum of your boat to dock, with or against wind and currents as needed. If you go slow and your boat goes awry, the boat hooks, fenders and lines will be there as you get sorted out.

Wind Direction and its Impact

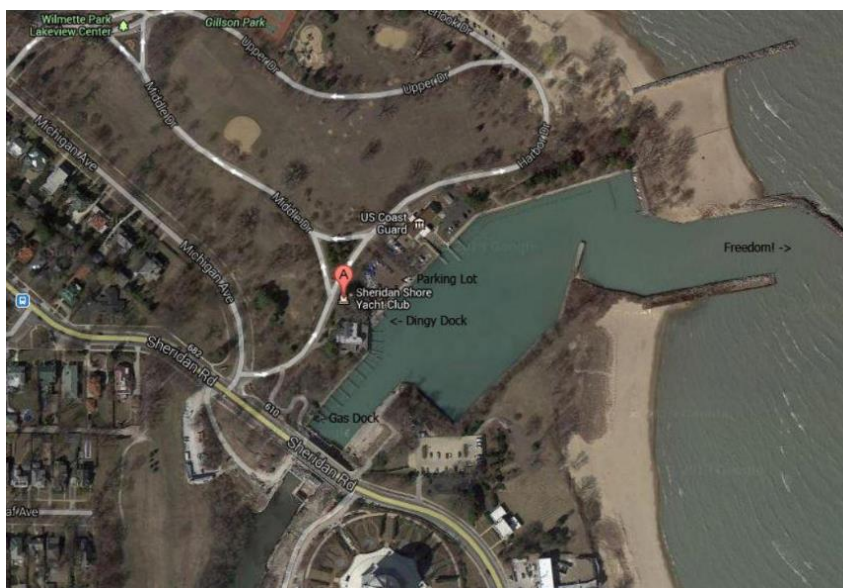
- Winds under 5Kts from any direction are pretty much flat calm
- Winds from the Southwest at any speed are perfect close to shore (but cold water for swimming and tubing)
- Winds from the SE 10 - 15Kts are ok but can be uncomfortable for anyone with motion sickness while anchored. They are however an exciting ride for kids on the tube. Not exactly peaceful evening cruise conditions though.
- Winds from the NE 10 Kts or more are not fun out there but you can hide behind the breakwater at the Bahai beach very peacefully.

Getting Gas

- Our gas dock is located by the bridge, we only have two slips. On the weekends there is usually a line of boats waiting for gas. Please know the gas dock is not a place you can tie up and leave your boat (in and out process). When you get to the gas dock and there is no one there please go find a staff member located at the dinghy dock.

Getting Your Friends to Wilmette Harbor

- The GPS address for the Harbor is [20 Harbor Drive, Wilmette Illinois](#)
- Non-Wilmette residents can park on Michigan Avenue or Middle Drive, not any of the streets east. The attendant at the park entrance will guide you to Middle Drive but it is difficult to find parking there on a busy weekend day.
- Bikes are recommended and there is a bike rack just west of the Clubhouse on the upper lawn.
- Guests should go to the dinghy dock where a staff member can take you to your boat.
- Please don't load/unload at the gas dock as that is where members need to fuel up.



Out on the Water

Sailboats



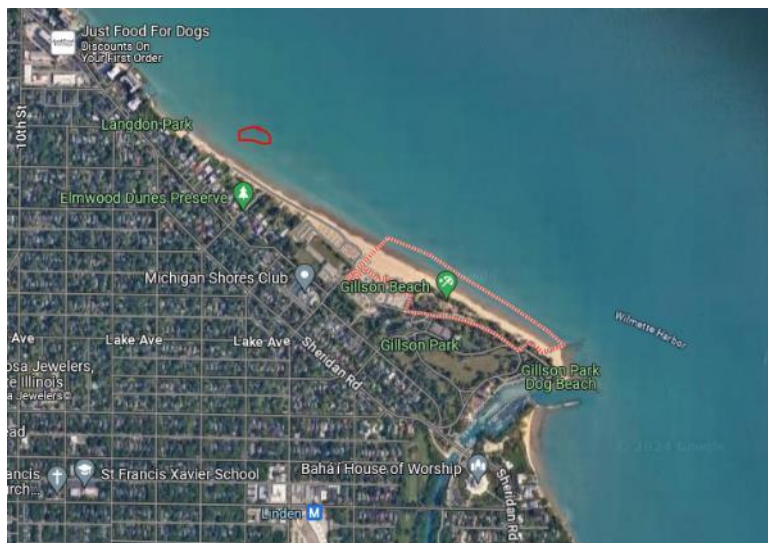
Sailboat racing

- Dolphins (and other Keel Boats) race every weekend through the end of September. Sailboats are always looking for adult crew volunteers. Contact John Hellmuth Jwhellmuth@aol.com 630-209-1515 for more information.
- Race meetings begin at 12 for 1:30 starts).
- Handicapped All Fleet Races run once a month all summer for any size sailboat.
- Information about the Fleets is available at www.wilmetteharbor.org / Groups / Sheridan Shore Yacht Club - <https://www.wilmetteharbor.org/groups/sheridan-shore-yacht-club>
- A full race schedule is available at www.wilmetteharbor.org / Groups / Sheridan Shore Yacht Club or here - <https://www.wilmetteharbor.org/groups/sheridan-shore-yacht-club/racing-fleets>

- The Day after the MAC Event a race is sponsored from WHC to Montrose Harbor that includes lunch.
- Labor Day Weekend a race is sponsored to Waukegan Harbor and back.

Sailboat Cruising

- A cruise on your larger sailboat to Montrose runs 3 hours, Waukegan Harbor 4 hours.
- Smaller boats can take a trip past Northwestern to Evanston's beaches. Dempster Beach also has a close in wreck that is tagged with a marker all season. You cannot bring your boat onto any Evanston Beach other than Dempster.
- Going south the first "Safe Harbor" for refuge is Montrose, there are no Safe Harbor spots heading north.
- Anchoring for a swim at the Bahai area is possible but always very shallow. Many sail boats go north and pull in off shore just north of the Wilmette Sailing Beach at Gilson. Again, watch your depths.



- Be very careful of weather when cruising. A shift from a SW breeze to a NE breeze means an immediate shift from fairly calm seas to rough seas with short intervals.
- When swimming off of your sailboat if not anchored, **ALWAYS toss a floating line** (Float line is any rope that floats on top of the water - an Inflatable Tow Rope works) off to allow swimmers something to grab. In moderate wind a sailboat will drift much faster than swimmers can swim. Give them something to grab and pull themselves in as needed.

Fishing Fleet

Wilmette Harbor is proud to be home to a vibrant community of anglers and the esteemed Wilmette fishing fleet. Situated along the scenic western shoreline of Lake Michigan, our harbor offers unparalleled access to some of the most productive fishing waters in the region.

On any given day, our fleet returns with impressive catches including Coho and King Salmon, Brown Trout, Steelhead, and Lake Trout. This abundance is due in part to the proximity of several key underwater structures—such as the WR2 and R4 buoys, Julian's Reef, and Gumby's Reef—that serve as natural gathering points for game fish and draw anglers from across the region, from Chicago to Waukegan.

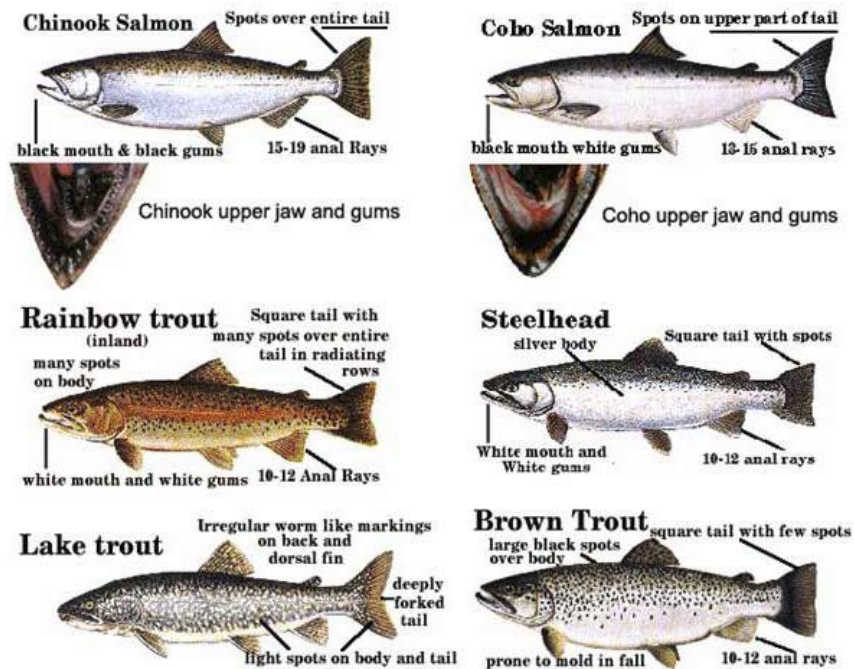
Whether you're a seasoned fisherman or simply seeking a memorable day on the water, Wilmette Harbor offers an exceptional fishing experience just minutes from shore.

For your convenience, the harbor maintains a fully equipped fish cleaning station near the gas dock. This facility includes cutting boards, sinks, a grinder, and waste disposal to help make your fishing trip seamless and enjoyable.

If you have any questions or would like to learn more about joining our fishing community, please don't hesitate to reach out:

- Gary Hirschel – (847) 650-3047
- Mike Oseland – (847) 494-5595

We look forward to seeing you on the water.



Power Boating

Tubing



- With the breeze from the south, it is great tubing going north and an easier ride for everyone on the boat. Heading back south into the wind is going to be rough on the boat and super bouncy for the kids on the tube. Also, close to shore north of Gilson makes for a smoother ride.
- If you want to make time and no one is in the tube, tie the tube very close (about 3-4 feet) and it will hang right off the back of your boat just fine at any speed. When it's out on the rope if you go too fast it gets air and will flip.

Skiing and Boards

- Best conditions for these activities are very early in the morning, winds under 5 MPH or from the SW or West. Sometimes early evening when the rest of the boats head in to dinner can be great too in a breeze coming off of the shore. The water will likely be cold but the conditions will be ideal.

Places to Go

Where to Anchor and Relax in Different Conditions

SW breeze -

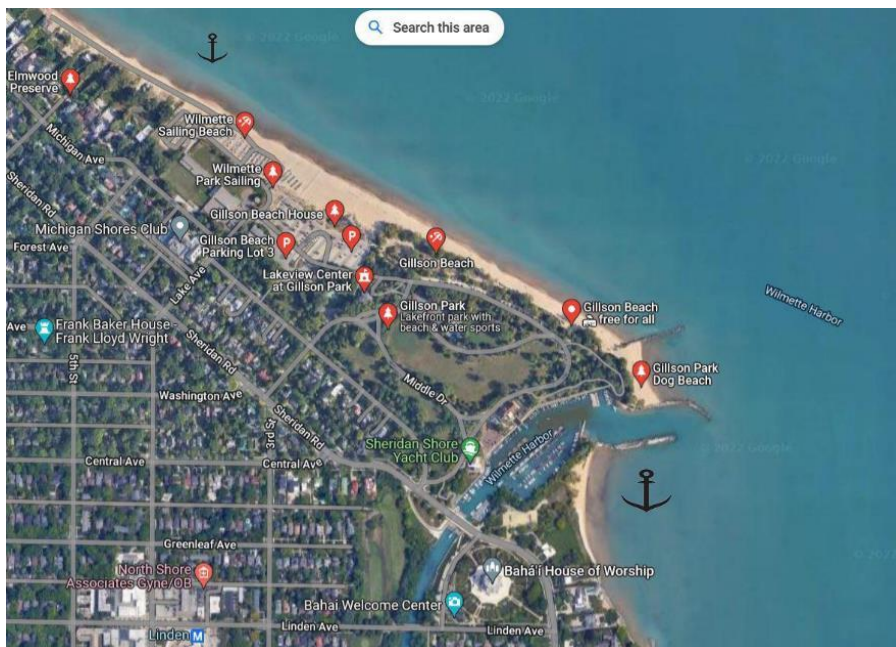
- Go anywhere close to shore and you will be happy but swimming in cold water (the warm water is all being blown to Saugatuck)

SE Breeze -

- Bahai Temple can be rough for anchoring. On Saturdays and Sundays this area by Bahai can be a bit crowded by boats shooting up from the city. Be careful in this area as it is a sandbar.
- Shoot north of Tower Road Beach. Past the tower is the public beach, about 300 yards north of that are a bunch of big houses that never use the beach and don't bother anyone. They are hidden in the trees. Tower Road people also wander up and down strolling the beach and it's sort of accepted practice to be there. This area is hidden from the SE Breeze by the jetty at Tower Road and the Lloyd Beach launch

NE Breeze -

- Take a short ride to Bahai beach area (stay off the beach though) and chill. It's about the only place around that is good in those conditions being protected by the Harbor Jetty

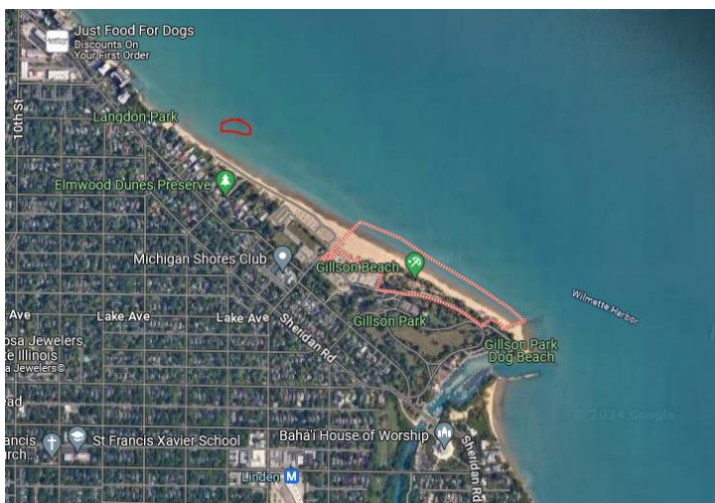


Anchoring and rafting

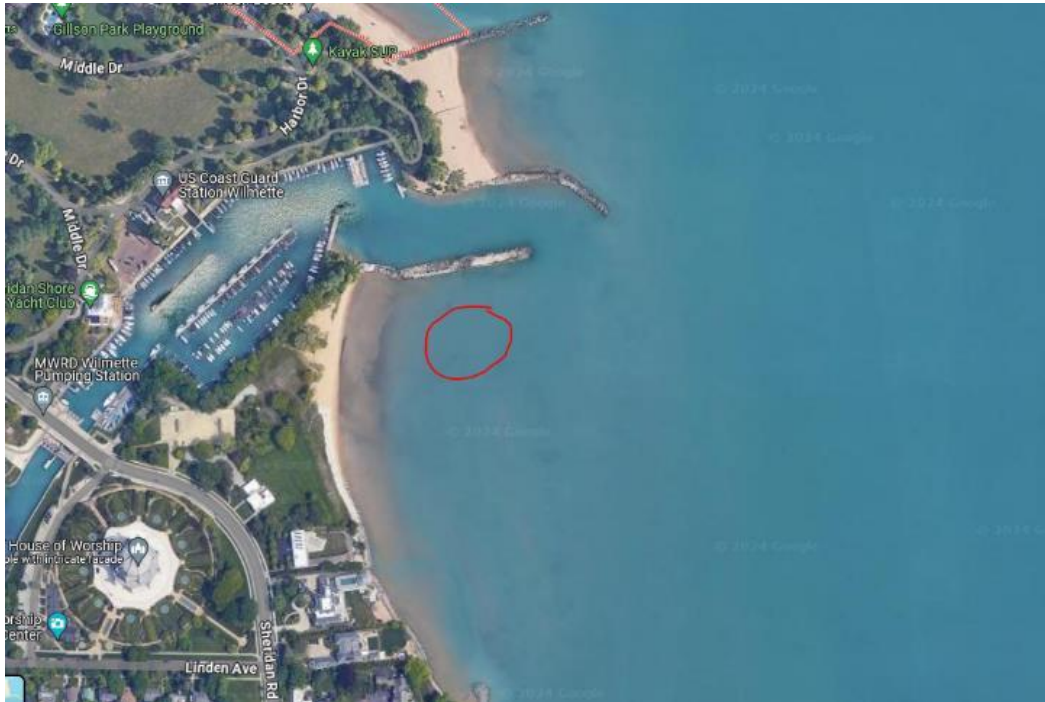
- Pick where you want your boat to be, then go 40' straight into the wind in front of that spot (slowly) and drop the anchor. You will then drift back into the exact spot where you want to be.
- Danforth anchors will be your friend on the north shore's sandy bottom. The Plow anchor provided on most Cobalts is not so good for the sand. If you don't have the Danforth, allow yourself much more chain and rope (40 - 50' is fine with the Danforth, 60' - 70' with the Plow)
- When you go to the city the opposite is true. The bottom there is mostly mud and the Plow is amazing, the Danforth not so much. (reverse the instructions there)
- When rafting up with a friend, position yourself as above and drift back to be lined up with them. Fenders are good, but much more forgiving is to let your tube drifting between the boats. Just tie it to the front of one of the boats and let it sit between both. A nice 4' distance between the boats is good.
- **ANCHORS** – It is not an anchor's weight that holds a boat in place. You need to have enough line out (aka scope) to allow the anchor (and anchor chain) to lie down and take hold. The minimum line to depth is 7:1 which seems like a lot but it is what's needed. In choppy conditions, you need more. Accordingly, make sure you have anchor, anchor chain, and ample anchor line. Make sure your anchor chain is secure...they do come off and that can be a problem!

Wilmette Areas Where You Can Anchor (but not go on the beach)

In a **South Breeze**, you can often escape the swell and anchor just north of the Wilmette Sailing Beach. Stay well off shore but if you are quite and respectful and stay off the beach generally the Wilmette Lifeguards will leave you alone:



In a **North breeze** you will find many boats anchored just south of the Wilmette Jetty in front of Bahai. You are not allowed on the beach but the water is also very shallow there for playing and swimming. This area is well protected from N and NE breeze and swell:



Quick Ride to a Beach Kids Can Sit On (20 Minutes)

- The beach area north of the Tower Road public beach in Winnetka, and south of the rocky jetty about 1/2 mile north that ties into the bottom of the "ravine" where Sheridan Road winds down the hill and back up can be anchored off without being disturbed.

SHIPWRECK to Snorkel (20 Minutes)

There is a shipwreck that lays in 12' - 15' of water in Winnetka about 75 yards off this beach / rock jetty which is 1/4 mile south of Tower Road Beach (the big exhaust tower):



Line your boat up with this home's roof and slowly head 75 yards offshore pointing your bow towards Michigan. On a clear day you will see the wooden 'ribs' of this shipwreck **lying on only 15 feet of water**. Only visible with clear water but amazing when you can see and snorkel it ! **Even a pair of swimming goggles will allow you and your kids to view this sunken wooden schooner.**

Great Lakes shipwreck historian and author Valerie Van Heest has dove the wreck and believes this **1800s vintage wooden schooner** may be **"The Jamaica"**. It's **at least 100 feet long** and has an **iron keel and rail which can still be clearly seen from above**. The sunken **schooner's timber "ribs"** can be seen as well as the long metal keel that runs East-to-West.

It's almost 100 feet long so it's down there! Part of the fun is finding it ! Look on both sides of your boat and comb the area back and forth slowly. Sometimes a buoy marks the spot. It's very cool to go down and touch it and pop back up to the surface!

Be cognizant of throwing an anchor down and getting it caught in the ship's wood timber ribs. You'll be out an anchor and the shipwreck will have been disturbed. Please remember to anchor a good 20 feet away from the wreck and then let the waves drift your boat until you're directly over it. Then secure your anchor line to the cleat with a figure 8 and you will be good to go. Again, please don't drop anchor directly on top of the wreck.

Best spot to get away from the city / Ft Sheridan - (40 Minutes)

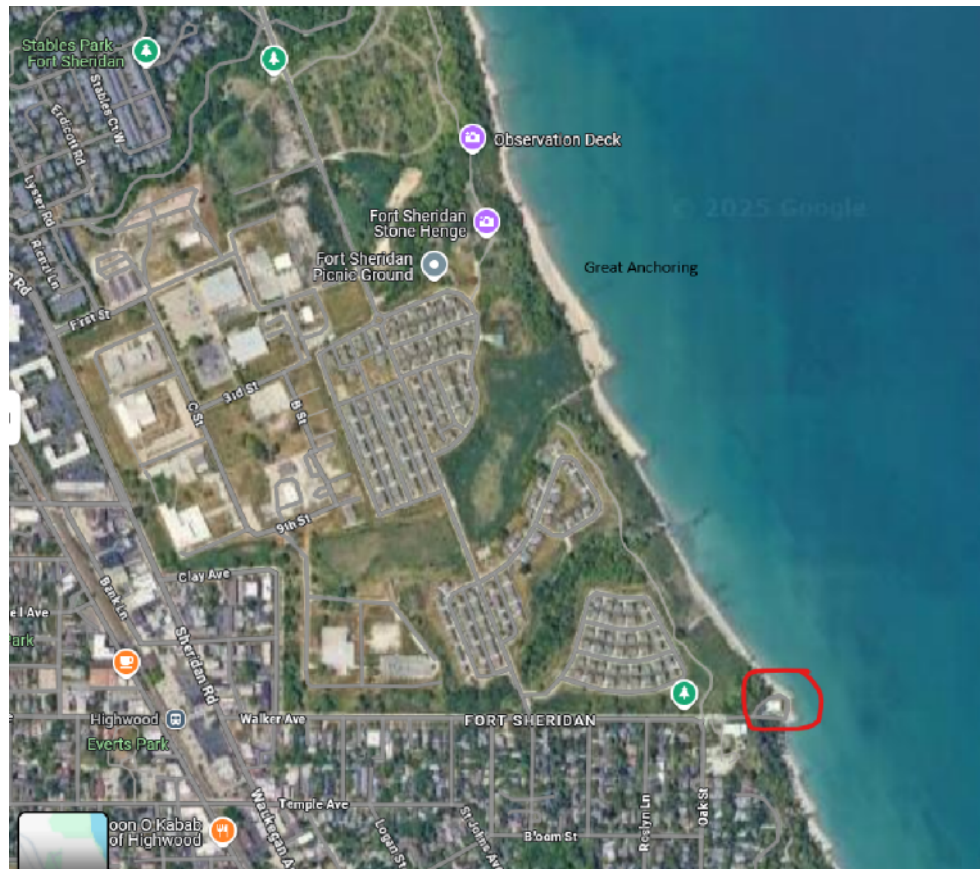
Below is a favorite far away spot at Ft. Sheridan to get away from everyone ...



When there is a SW breeze this little piece of paradise, the Nature Preserve at Ft. Sheridan is great! You usually never run into another boat there and are no issues anchoring. The beaches are not groomed so there is driftwood, sea glass, etc. Like a trip to the northern Great Lakes but only 14 miles north.

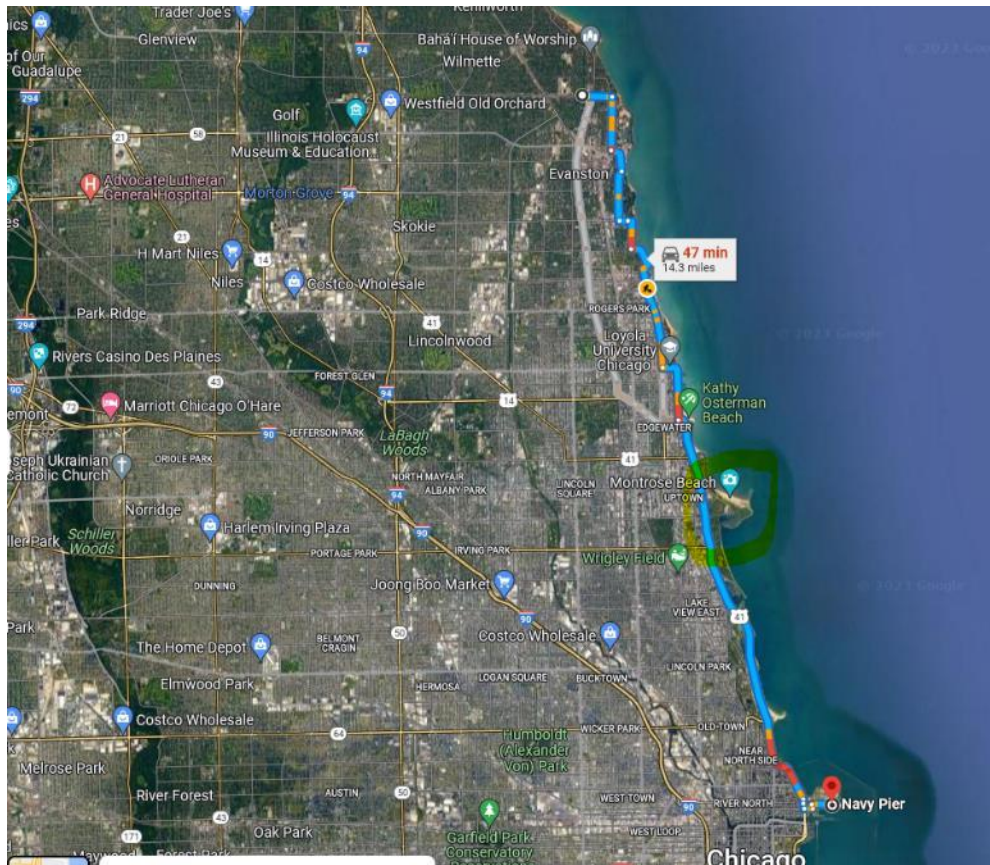
Two Tricks on that trip

- When passing the white, arched synagogue in Glencoe (just north of the Glencoe Public Beach), leave 1/2 mile distance (stay in 14'-15' of water) between you and the shore since **there is a large rocky 1'-3' shoal just off shore**. Just be sure you are well off when you are north of the Public Beach and South of the Synagogue.
- The Ft. Sheridan Preserve starts just north of the building below (and 1/2 mile north of the Highland Park Boat Launch):



Going to the City (45 Minutes)

- About 45 minutes to an hour ride in calm conditions.
- Your first target as you head south will be the point at Foster Beach:



- Heading south past that once you get past Montrose in any wind conditions, on a pretty summer day you will start to have wave action coming from all directions from all the boats roaming around. Nothing you can do about it.
- There are few if any places to get off the boat so make necessary bathroom stops before you leave.
- You can pick up friends at Montrose anywhere. They seem to be allowing pick ups at the north end of Montrose along the break wall where Monroe dead ends into the lake. There is a small turnaround there for taxis to drop people off along with bathrooms.
- Adding a lock pass / river tour makes this a full day project. Anticipate 2-3 hours waiting for locks, going through them, and cruising at No Wake speed once in the river.
- To get to the locks we hug the shore and go into the breakwater by The Drake

Navy Pier Transient Docks

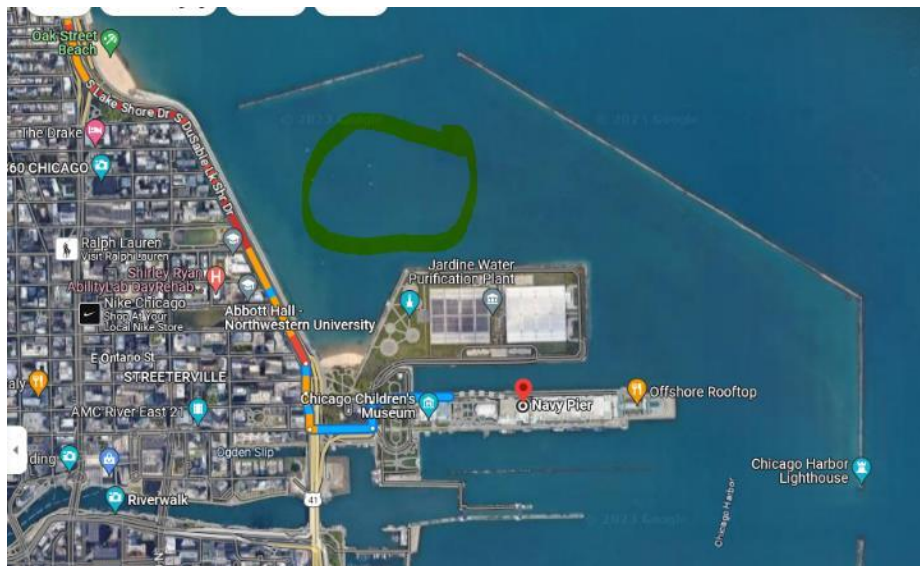
- Opening this summer is the [Navy Pier Marina](#)



- Reservations are on their website through Dockwa

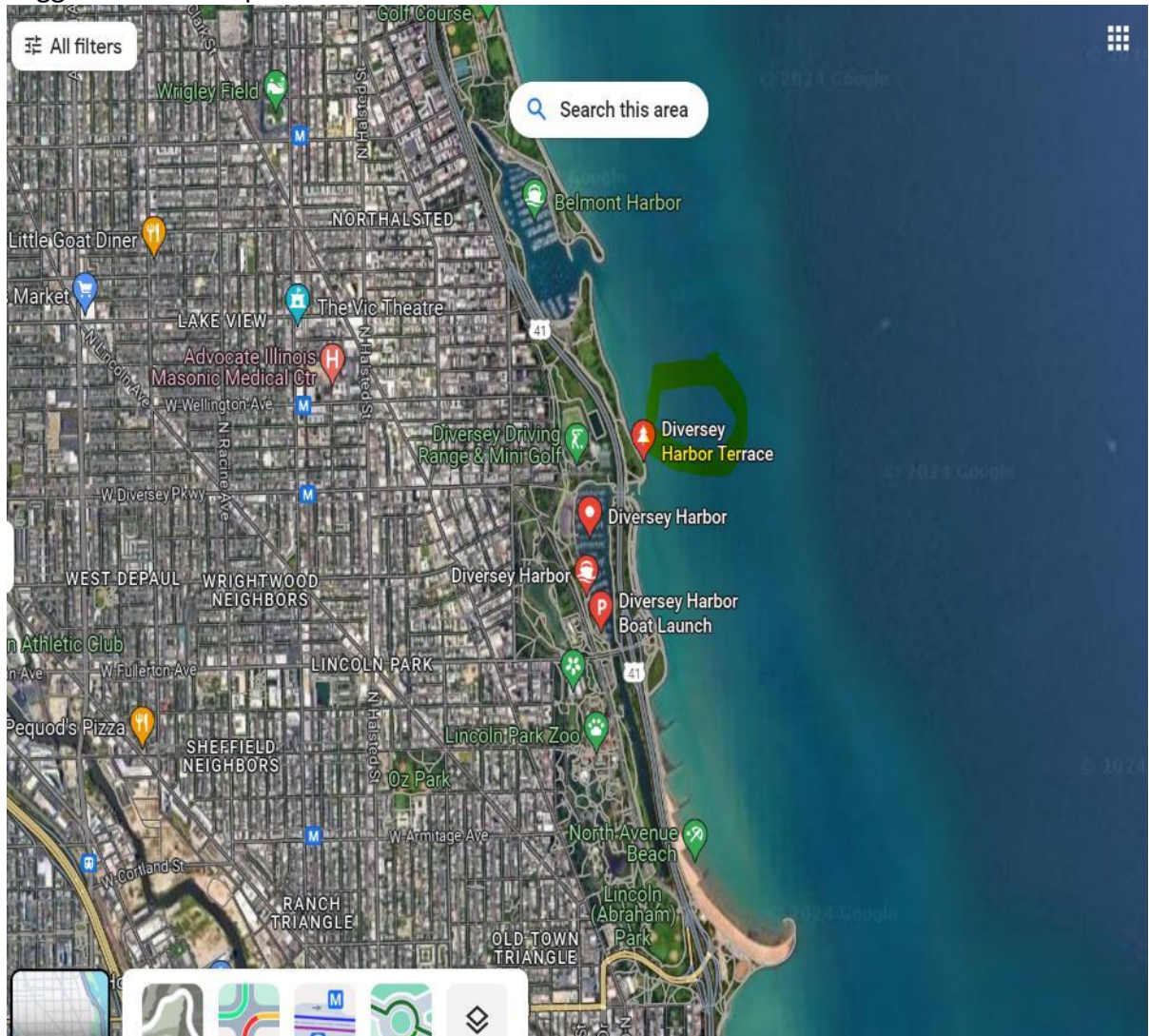
Play Pen

- This is the Play Pen. Lots of noise, people, music, alcohol, Party Jam:



Air and Water Show (45 Minute – 1 Hour Ride)

- Head to the city and if you anchor just off of Belmont the jets will be flying directly over your head at about 30 feet. It's pretty amazing! It's always easy to find a spot to drop your anchor but bring plenty of extra line and expect to have to set it a few times before it finally hits.
- Suggested anchor spot:



General Boating and Anchoring

Stay Away

- Keep well clear of the Evanston, Northwestern and Wilmette swimming beaches and their buoys.

Coast Guard

- The Wilmette Coast Guard Station will be staffed only on the Memorial Day, July 4th and Labor Day Weekends. The rest of the season there will not be staff there. The two boats parked there are the Evanston and Wilmette Police Rescue boats.
- Coast Guard will occasionally board boats anywhere but more often at the Bahai area to do a random spot check. They will want to see current registration, throw-able flotation in the seating area (like those blue cushions with handles designed for that), life jackets for everyone on board, a working horn, working flares or Coast Guard approved flare. If something is missing you will get a warning.
- U.S. Coast Guard requires each vessel to have certain equipment on board in good working order. And with regards to safety devices such as flares, they must have current expiration dates. A virtual list of required equipment can be found in the following link: <http://www.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=V-DEPT&category=virtual-safety-check> THIS IS CRITICAL EQUIPMENT – MAKE SURE YOU HAVE ALL OF THE REQUIRED ITEMS AND KNOW HOW TO USE IT! ADD THIS TO YOUR SPRING CHECK LIST EACH SEASON BEFORE YOU HEAD OUT ON THE WATER!
- U.S. Coast Guard does pull boats over on a regular basis to check for current registration and safety equipment. They also do sobriety tests on the water as well. This can and does occur on Lake Michigan and on related rivers such as the Chicago River.
- Water skiing and towables are not allowed after the sun goes down.

Swimming Off Shore (BE CAREFUL)

- ALWAYS drag a floating line (Inflatable Tow Rope is Great) off of the back of your boat if anyone is jumping off to swim in the middle of the lake. A light breeze will blow a boat away from a swimmer very quickly. There are many tragic stories of people jumping into the lake for a swim and drowning because they cannot catch their boat as it is blown away.
- Life Jackets – They only work if people have them on. Get nice ones and use them, same with your crew, particularly if underway OR swimming off the boat.
- Lake Michigan Water Temperature and Hypothermia – Even on hot days, Lake Michigan Water temps can cause a gasp that can result in drowning. Check water temps before you go out in the spring and fall especially. Make sure anyone in the water has a life jacket on just in case! If the breeze is from the SW or West, the water will be cold near

shore, when it blows from the East or NE it is warm near shore (the warm surface water is blown in for your swimming pleasure!)

Using the Clubhouse

- Ice is available in the member area next to the bar(going into the mens locker room). Be kind and take just enough for your cooler. There are a lot of boat owners and only one ice machine.
- Mooring holders are welcome to use the deck anytime. That means you can show up any night with a picnic basket and cooler, grill your steaks on the harbor grills there, enjoy the beautiful space, breeze and view, and it's all part of your mooring. Nice and amazing perk.
- Catered dinners will be one Friday each month and will require a reservation. We ask on those nights you reserve with the club manager and refrain from bringing your own food. Reservations are made online and details will appear in the weekly newsletter.

Fun Clubhouse Activities

- Paddle board storage is available at the end of east end of the harbor by the dog beach.
- July 3rd Fireworks – On the night of the Wilmette Fireworks Show, the best seats in town are in the parking lot filled with “bring your own” tables and chairs. Best to drop tables on the 2nd and stack in the corner, come on the morning of the 3rd to set up.
- Deck parties – One Saturday per month with food, live music and a theme on the deck.
- Race Weekend – In late July from Friday – Sunday with a beer truck all weekend. Friday is a food truck with live music, Saturday is (Harborfest Party) in the parking lot and deck with food, live music and fun.
- Friday night grill – Last Friday of each month June-Sept. Catered dinner with live music.
- Come enjoy the deck with your own food, use the grills or order in at anytime. You are always welcome to bring your own food, beverages except when there is a scheduled deck party or dinner.
- The firepit area to the east of the clubhouse at the top of the hill is a great spot to gather and enjoy the harbor activities.
- The Buccaneer Bar is staffed by club member volunteers and open Friday, Saturday and Sundays, Memorial weekend through October.

Ice

- The ice machine is located in the Clubhouse next to the club member area on the lower level. Please be considerate to the other members and use just what you need to ice

down the cooler! Pre-packed ice bags can also be purchased for \$2 and put on your harbor charge down by the dinghy dock, just find a staff member to get you a bag.

Sailing Lessons

Sheridan Shore Sailing School at Wilmette Harbor



Sheridan Shore Sailing School is the North Shore's premier sailing school and one of the nation's largest sailing programs with 74 boats and activities for ages 5-95. The school is a 501(c) non-profit offering classes and scholarships. See the website www.sheridanshore.org and contact office@www.sheridanshore.org.

- Sailboat Rental of J22s and a J70 are available through Sheridan Shore Sailing School.
- Take the family sailing, ride with an instructor
- Sail a dingy – Laser or Club 420 with jib and mainsail.
- Take private lessons. From learn to sail to race team preparation. Ages 5-95.
- Join High School Race Teams. Spring & Fall.
- Summer sailing camps ages 5-18, Summer Sailing Race team for more experienced or focused sailors. From a few hours to 6+ hours per day. Adult and child sailing classes and boat rentals are available. Contact Sheridan Shore Sailing school at www.sheridanshore.org (847-251-1110)

Coast Guard Education and Links

The more information you have when you head out onto the big lake, the better equipped you will be to manage the unexpected scenarios which come up and to also improve the ability to handle your boat and conditions. This helps both in the open water and in the harbor.

Take the time to get to know your boat and your engine. Read the manuals, explore the boat.

Make sure you know how things work and make sure they are working. Time spent in advance will save you a lot of potential headaches on the water.

There are several organizations which offer enjoyable and comprehensive classes on boat handling skills, safety, and communication. These include but are not limited to:

U.S Coast Guard Auxiliary

U.S. Power Squadron

HIGHLY SUGGEST READING – **Chapman Piloting and Seamanship** (68th Edition)

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/1618372432?tag=duckduckgo-ffnt-20&linkCode=osi&th=1&psc=1>

This book is a must and is extremely comprehensive about all things boating.

U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary – This is the volunteer arm of the Coast Guard; they offer formal training which is super helpful and enjoyable for any new or even experienced boater.

TOPICS INCLUDE

- **Introduction to Boating** – Types of power boats; sailboats; outboards; paddle boats; houseboats; different uses of boats; various power boating engines; jet drives; family boating basics.
- **Boating Law** – Boat registration; boating regulation; hull identification number; required boat safety equipment; operating safely and reporting accidents; protecting the marine environment; Federal boat law; state boating laws; personal watercraft requirements.
- **Boat Safety Equipment** – Personal flotation devices ("life jackets"); fire extinguishers; sound-producing devices; visual-distress signals; dock lines and rope; first aid kit; anchors and anchor lines; other boating safety equipment.
- **Safe Boating** – Bow riding; alcohol and drug abuse; entering, loading, and trimming a boat; fueling portable and permanent tanks; steering with a tiller and a wheel; docking, undocking and mooring; knots; filing a float plan; checking

equipment, fuel, weather and tides; using charts; choosing and using an anchor; safe PWC handling; general water safety.

- **Navigation** – The U.S. Aids to Navigation system; types of buoys and beacons; navigation rules (sometimes referred to as right-of-way rules); avoiding collisions; sound signals; PWC "tunnel vision."
- **Boating Problems** – Hypothermia; boating accidents and rescues; man overboard recovery; capsizing; running aground; river hazards; strainers: emergency radio calls; engine problems; equipment failures; carbon monoxide (CO); other boating and PWC problems.
- **Trailing, Storing and Protecting Your Boat** – Types of trailers; trailer brakes, lights, hitches, tires, and bearings; loading, balancing, and towing a trailer; towing (and backing) a trailer; boat launching and retrieving; boat storage and theft protection; launching, retrieving and storing a PWC.
- **Hunting and Fishing, Water-skiing and River Boating** – Carrying hunting gear and weapons in a boat; fishing from a boat; water-skiing safety guidelines and hand signals; water-skiing with a PWC; navigating rivers, and other boating tips.

The U.S Coast Guard Auxiliary are organized as Flotilla's. There are several Flotilla's which and operate out of Wilmette Harbor. The Auxiliary Flotilla's are purely focused on boating safety, not enforcement.

Here is a link to Wilmette Harbor Flotilla 39-6 which offer both boating safety classes as well as boat Safety Inspections upon request.

<http://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=095-39-06&category=1328066879>

U.S. Power Squadron - Safety Classes are offered, the information is very similar to the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Courses. A good approach is to check with both groups and find the one that best fits your calendar and location.

Here is a link to the Skokie Valley Power Squadron to learn more and investigate Class Schedule(s). <http://www.skokievalleypowersquadron.org/>

Safety Tips

Man Overboard Drills – Boating is fun, but tragedy on the water can and has happened quickly with no warning. If someone falls in, have one person point their finger at them and don't stop until you get the boat near them for boarding. In choppy waters, a person's head is very tough to see above the water line in chop, waves, and mist etc. Communicate this to your crew before you shove off each time, you never know. Also, good proactive to throw a flotation cushion in the water by surprise and practice the drill. Do this in choppy conditions and you will see how important the pointing is.

Marine Radio – Your boat might have one below deck, but that will not do much good if you are in waves, having trouble controlling your boat, have a man overboard, etc. Buy and quality handheld, waterproof marine radio and know how to use it!! This is invaluable if you lose power, or have any other issues. Also, fun to chat with other boats or when entering other harbors/fuel docks etc.

GPS(Global Position System) – is a MUST HAVE. GPS can help you find your way to a harbor, or an open break wall entry in darkness or fog. With the “Tracking” function on, your route essentially leaves a line on the chart where your boat has been. This makes return trips much easier in challenging conditions. A key to this, however, is to ZOOM in on the track to ensure you are following previous tracks as closely as possible.

There are hazards in the area, find them and mark them on your charts. Evanston wreck(s), Glencoe Rock Pile which you should learn about if you don’t know it. It’s offshore and has ruined a fair number of boats.

Fenders(aka bumpers to landlubbers) – make sure you have enough, no less than four, make sure they are large enough to do the job AND be prepared to adjust the height of the fender in new slips, neighboring boats, or changing water levels/tides.

LINES (aka ropes to landlubbers) – Make sure you have enough lines and lines that are long enough. Have an extra-long set if you travel to other harbors. Generally, those that have a loop in one end are best. ALWAYS have a tow line as well.

Flares, smoke, and horns – Lake Michigan is huge, if you have an issue, these devices can help people find you. Spend the extra money and get the good ones such as SOLAS (Safety Of Life At Sea) rated. This flares and devices go higher, are brighter, and burn longer!

Fire Extinguisher – Make sure it is charged. Make sure it is a marine extinguisher. Go on YouTube to see how best to use it!

Engine Maintenance – Use good gas! Treat gas for storage with Sta-bil. Have a spare spark plugs gapped correctly. Have fresh oil and fuel/water separators(if applicable). Make sure your battery(s) are in good shape pre-season. Know how to use the blower!!!

Have fun, enjoy and be safe!