

# Map 8: Sunkhaze Stream – Basin Mill Rapids



**1** (RM 61.3) The river divides into two channels above **Orson Island**. To get to **Ketawamkihtek Campsite**, turn right into the westerly 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. Paddling the western branch into the Stillwater River is not recommended due to presence of three dams.

The **Birch Stream Boat Launch** is 1.5 mile past Ketawamkihtek Campsite, near a small bridge.

**2** (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 rapids at Joe Pease Rips that are challenging in high water.

**3** (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 (0.8 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 a detailed description see the *Maine Trail Finder*, search on Old Town.

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

**5** (RM 63.8) East of French Island, **Shad Rips** are Class II-III at medium water. These rapids are less rocky and better at low water than the **French Island Rips** (Class II-III) west of the island. There the easiest route is far river right. **South West French Island Campsite** is on the island's southwest tip.

**6** (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, river left.

**7** (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.

**8** (RM 68.7) The **Stillwater River** (*Mskithtek, Place where the water is still*) comes 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.

