Stillwater River Water Trail

Our rivers and streams offer wonderful opportunities for recreation, from kayaking and canoeing to fishing and wildlife watching. But it’s important to learn how to enjoy them safely. Review the information on the reverse side to make sure your next outing on the Stillwater River Water Trail is a safe and fun adventure.
Low Damms and Waterfalls

Low dams—like natural waterfalls—are descriptively calm and can be incredibly dangerous. Low dams may range from a 2½-foot drop-off on a newly-cut stand of aspen to falls over 80 feet. Water flowing over the dam forms currents that cut like a knife and can pull you under. Before boating, it's absolutely critical to study the path of water around the back of the dam before you enter the water. If you are pulled against the back of the dam, you are likely to be incinerated. Plan to stay out of river sections with several low dams in a row.

Safety tips to follow

• Know the location of all low dams and waterfalls in the river that you plan to boating.
• Never attempt to boat over a low dam or waterfall.
• If you hit a low dam, try to stay calm and slow down to a walk, so that you can analyze the situation. Only attempt to paddle through the dam if you are confident you can do so without capsizing over the falls.

Floods and Other High, Swift Water

Paddlers should approach a stream with caution, even if this is your second or third trip. High damms can create an artificial river that may be calm on the surface but extremely dangerous beneath.

Cold Water Immersion

The body's core temperature can drop 30°F in minutes. Symptoms of hypothermia may be deadly. The paddler should always be aware of the water temperature and be prepared to deal with it.

Strainers

River structures that allow water to flow through them by trapping debris, trash, and other objects. They can pose a significant danger to paddlers as the current can push you under the water and hold you down. The key to surviving a strainer is to try to paddle your way through as quickly as possible.

Foot Entrapments

If your feet become caught, do not attempt to stand up or walk away. If you are in high, swift water, the waves can unbalance you, causing you to fall into the stream. If your feet become caught, immediately try to pull yourself away from the current.

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