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 Great Miami River Water Trail is a safe and fun adventure.
Playing It Safe

Hazards Found on Streams

Recreation on rivers and streams can be relaxing or thrilling, but it should always be safe. Water offers several real dangers, but with proper training, these hazards are easily managed. Boating safety tips that can teach you to handle water hazards are available around the state of Ohio. Contact the Ohio Department of Natural Resources at 1-877-4BOATER or www.watercraft.ohiodnr.gov for more information.

Low Dams and Waterfalls

Low dams – like natural waterfalls – are depressingly common and can be incredibly dangerous. Low dams may range from a 25-foot drop over rocks to a mere trickle. Water flowing over these low dams can cause tremendous force. The currents can be so strong that even an expert swimmer can be swept away. Additional currents can be even more treacherous. The backwash currents may even suck you in if you approach too closely downstream from the dam.

Water levels are monitored on rivers and streams as floating logs or submerged trees may also threaten a Bridge. Swift Water for more information.

1-877-4BOATER or www.watercraft.ohiodnr.gov

Ohio Department of Natural Resources

Watercraft and Boater Responsibility

All watercraft, including canoes, kayaks, stand-up paddles, and longboards, can be registered with the US COAST GUARD. A current US COAST GUARD personal flotation device (PFD) is required for every boater 12 years of age and older. Children under the age of 12 who are able to swim must wear a properly fitted, US COAST GUARD approved PFD at all times while on or near the water. It’s illegal to operate any watercraft – boat, canoe, kayak, stand-up paddle board – without a life jacket.

Boating Etiquette

Group size and paddling skills are an important consideration in choosing a waterway for your trip. The recommended maximum in any boat is 5 people. No one can paddle alone.

Camping tips to follow

• Know the location of all low dams and waterfalls on the river that you plan to use.

• Never attempt to swim in a waterfall.

• Bring safety items with you and launch a safety distance, well downstream of the backwash dam.

• Swim to calm water before standing.

• Look for other runners, responsible boaters and learn from them.

• Watch for a smooth line connecting the banks. This may be the top of the LTO dam.

• Look for the spilling turbines of the dam and the current changes at dam.

• Look for the remaining waterfalls, which some dams have at each bank, making the dam easier to spot.

It is nearly impossible to escape the force of a low dam's current. Unlike you are trained to low dams, never enter the water in an attempt to cross someone trapped by a low dam. Immediately call for help, then throw a line from the shore to the trapped person. Untrained persons should never attempt the top of the dam or the backwash dam. You cannot free the dam. The current can kill you at the water surface in low or shallow water. All boaters must be aware of Strainers

River strainers that allow water to flow through them but block trash or “stray” people and objects are common on streams. Strainers are commonly found on the form of branches and limet, logs and flooded foliage. Because the water flow through strainers, river currents may carry you and your boat right into the strainer. These same currents will wash over the side of your boat and cause it to tip. If you should fall into the water, the current will wash over you and drag you down snags and trees with tremendous force. The current may hold you at the water surface in low or shallow water. All boaters must be aware of Foot Entrapments

Foot entrapments can occur when you attempt to stand on a rock or if you are in high, swift-moving water. You may get a foot stuck in mud, gravel, rocks or other debris. Foot entrapments can occur if the current carries you past the water hazard. Always keep your feet up, parked downstream, and wear a cuffed wading boot. Safety information provided by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division of Wildlife and The Miami Conservancy District.

New Dam Registration is one of a site's FERC flood protection dams.

Miami Conservancy District Dams

The Miami Conservancy District operates and maintains five large flood protection dams from the Great Miami River Watershed. These dams hold back water only when necessary to pass through the large concrete intake channels to the channel. The dams are not intended to pass through the dam. You can’t turn your river trip downstream from these dams and you don’t want to.

Personal Flotation Devices/ Life Vests

More than 80 percent of all boating fatalities occur because the victim wasn’t wearing a life vest. Many people think a personal flotation device (PFD) is the best way to ensure that you are wearing a life vest. Many people think a personal flotation device (PFD) is the best way to ensure that you are wearing a life vest. Many people think a personal flotation device (PFD) is the best way to ensure that you are wearing a life vest. Many people think a personal flotation device (PFD) is the best way to ensure that you are wearing a life vest. Many people think a personal flotation device (PFD) is the best way to ensure that you are wearing a life vest. Many people think a personal flotation device (PFD) is the best way to ensure that you are wearing a life vest. Many people think a personal flotation device (PFD) is the best way to ensure that you are wearing a life vest. Many people think a personal flotation device (PFD) is the best way to ensure that you are wearing a life vest. Many people think a personal flotation device (PFD) is the best way to ensure that you are wearing a life vest. Many people think a personal flotation device (PFD) is the best way to ensure that you are wearing a life vest. Many people think a personal flotation device (PFD) is the best way to ensure that you are wearing a life vest. Many people think a personal flotation device (PFD) is the best way to ensure that you are wearing a life vest. Many people think a personal flotation device (PFD) is the best way to ensure that you are wearing a life vest. Many people think a personal flotation device (PFD) is the best way to ensure that you are wearing a life vest. Many people think a personal flotation device (PFD) is the best way to ensure that you are wearing a life vest. Many people think a personal flotation device (PFD) is the best way to ensure that you are wearing a life vest. Many people think a personal flotation device (PFD) is the best way to ensure that you are wearing a life vest. Many people think a personal flotation device (PFD) is the best way to ensure that you are wearing a life vest. Many people think a personal flotation device (PFD) is the best way to ensure that you are wearing a life vest. Many people think a personal flotation device (PFD) is the best way to ensure that you are wearing a life vest. Many people think a personal flotation device (PFD) is the best way to ensure that you are wearing a life vest.