Playing It Safe

SAFETY TIPS

Recreation on rivers and streams can be relaxing or thrilling, but steps should always be taken to ensure safety. Water offers several real dangers, but with proper training, these hazards are easilymanaged. These safety tips can help you stay safe while having fun.

Wear a Life Vest

More than 80 percent of all boat ing fatalities occur because the person wasn't wearing a life vest. Many people think a personal flotation device (PFD) or life vest



says "non-swimmer," but the truth is no boating expert would be without one. And PFDs have come a long way since the bright orange, uncomfortable life jackets of the past. From inflatable PFDs worn around the waist – that open only if they hit water – to lightweight life vests, everyone can find a comfortable PFD to insure a safe trip.

Watercraft Laws and **Boater Responsibility**

- All watercraft, including canoes, kayaks, motorboats and most inflatable rafts, must be registered with Ohio DNR
- United States Coast Guard approved (USCG) personal flotation devices (PFDs) are required for every boater.
- Children under the age of 10 are required to wear a properly fitted, USCG-approved PFD at all times while on a watercraft less than 18 feet in length.
- It is illegal to operate any watercraft boats, canoes, kayaks, jet skis, etc.– under the influence of alcohol.
- It is illegal to litter in any ditch, stream, river, lake, pond or other water area.
- Children under the age of 12 operating a watercraft must be directly supervised by an adult and may not operate personal watercraft such as jet skis.

Plan Your Trip

- Scout the land area and stream prior to boating it.
- File a "float plan" with a reliable person, indicating
- where you are going and when you will leave and return. Check river water levels and flow information for any
- river warning and flood information. • Dress properly. Wear appropriate footwear.
- Know the location of all dams and other hazards, and carry your boat around these hazards.
- The streambed may be privately owned. Be sure to put in and take out only at public access points.
- Carry adequate drinking water.
- Be prepared for the worst. Know how to get to roads if you must "walk out."
- Display courtesy and respect to other stream users

You can plan your river trip at **greatmiamiriverway.com** or download the Riverway App from the Apple App Store or Google Play, and create an account. Features include an interactive map, trail and river conditions, top things to do and places to visit.



RIVER OBSTRUCTIONS

Low dams – like natural waterfalls – are deceptively calm and can be incredibly dangerous. Low dams may range from a 25-foot drop-off to a mere 6-inch drop-off. Water flowing over the dam forms currents that can trap objects and you. Backwash and re-circulating current can trap you back against the dam then underwater be fore you are pushed along the bottom only to be sucked back to the dam as you rise to the surface. This circulat ing motion repeats over and over again. The backwash currents may even suck you in if you approach too closely from downstream of the dam. The Great Miami River has many dams, with several more low dams on its tributaries.



Low dams can be deadly and should always be avoided.

Safety For Low Dams

- Know the location of all low dams and waterfalls on the river that you plan to boat. Low dams are identified on the map.
- NEVER attempt to boat over a dam or waterfall.
- Portage (carry) your boat around a low dam and launch a safe distance, well downstream of the backwash of the low dam.
- Scout the river and know the location of hazards. Talk with boaters who are familiar with the river to gain additional knowledge.
- Boat with experienced, responsible boaters and learn from them.
- Watch for a smooth line connecting the banks. This may be the top of a low dam.
- Listen for the splashing sounds of turbulence and the dangerous currents at dams.
- Look for concrete retaining walls, which some dams have at each bank, making the dams easier to spot.

It is nearly impossible to escape the force of a low dam's currents. Unless you are trained in low dam rescues, never enter the water in an attempt to rescue someone trapped by a low dam. Immediately call for help, then throw a line from shore to the trapped person. Untrained rescuers should never approach the top of the dam or the backwash below the dam, even in a boat. The turbulence at the dam will easily capsize a boat.



Strainers

River obstructions that allow water to flow through them but that block or "strain" people and boats are known as "strainers." They are frequently found in the form of branches and limbs, log jams and flooded islands. Because the water flows through strainers, river currents may carry you and your boat right into the strainer. Those same currents will press against the side of your boat and cause it to tip. If you should fall into the water, the current will push you against the strainer and hold you in place with tremendous force. The current may hold you at the water surface or below the water. All strainers should be avoided.

Foot Entrapments

If your boat capsizes, do not attempt to stand or walk if you are in high, swift-moving water. You may pin a foot between submerged rocks or debris. Once pinned, the force of the current can push you under the water and hold you there. Always keep your feet up, pointed downstream, and swim to calm water before standing.

WATER CONDITIONS

To safely engage in water sports, river users should know water conditions before entering the water. Rain events can cause water to become too high or too swift for recreation. Rain events can cause bacteria levels in river water to become unsafe for human contact. IF IN DOUBT, DON'T GO OUT.

River Water Bacteria

Bacteria can get into the river water from a variety of sources including pet waste, storm sewers, septic tanks, and farm fields. Bacteria can make people sick if they swallow the water.MCD helped create a web app that estimates

the concentration of E. coli bacteria, an indicator of fecal pollution, during different weather conditions. Use this QR code to view current conditions.



Good Condition: Estimated Low Bacteria Levels

Advisory Condition: Estimated High Bacteria Levels

Off Line

River Levels and High Water



High water causes hazards such as low dams and strainers to become even more dangerous. Swift currents are more likely to overcome a paddler's ability to avoid hazards and may make it more difficult to reach shore once in the water. MCD helped create a web app that uses color-coded symbols like a traffic signal, making it easy to understand if conditions are safe/unsafe. Use this QR code to view current conditions:



Green and Yellow Zones: You must still judge safety based on today's combination of wind, weather, water temperature, flotsam, current, boat size, skill and presence of a safety launch.

Offline

- Great Miami River Ideal Height Great Miami River Cautionary Height
- Great Miami River Too High
- 🙈 Great Miami River Too Low

Cold Water Immersion

Sudden immersion in cold water can be deadly. The initial "cold shock" can cause immediate, involuntary gasping, hyperventilation, panic and vertigo all of which can result in inhaling water and drowning. It also can cause sudden changes in blood

pressure, heart rate and heart rhythm that also may result in death. The longer you are immersed in cold water, the harder it is to control your body. Manual dexterity and coordination deteriorate rapidly, and within 30 minutes, hypothermia (cooling of the body's core temperature) can begin. Loss of consciousness and death with or without drowning can result.

To prevent cold water immersion, take all measures necessary to avoid capsizing your boat. Keep your life jacket securely fastened to help keep your head above water if you fall into the water.

You don't have to be submerged to become hypothermic. Wind chill, rain and perspiration can contribute to the condition. Uncontrollable shivering, slurred speech and lack of coordination are early symptoms. To guard against hypothermia, dress in layers using materials that wick moisture away and retain heat, such as silk, polypropylene, fleece and wool. Every boater should be able to recognize and know how to treat hypothermia.



Leave what you find

Safety information provided by the Ohio DNR Division of Watercraft and MCD.

PHOTOS: Dusty Hall, Jordan Hart, Sarah Hippensteel and Shaun Taiter



route to follow.

The remaining boats have a responsibility to stay in between the lead and sweep boats. (If a boat inadvertently passes the lead boat, it should immediately stop and wait for the lead boat to pass.)

- The remaining boats: as a group.

Communicate boating instructions.



OUTDOOR ETHIC

- bottom are privately owned.
- would want.

Group size and paddling skills are an important consideration in choosing a waterway for your trip. The recommended minimum is three boats. No one should paddle alone. Each person has specific responsibilities in the overall group organization. The safety of the group is dependent upon everyone carrying out these responsibilities.

The lead boat is the first boat and should carry an experienced river runner. The lead boat: • Sets the pace and continually evaluates the pace for the

rest of the boats. • Selects and communicates to the rest of the group the

• Scouts the route when a clear section isn't visible.

• Carries first-aid and rescue equipment. The sweep boat is the last boat and should carry an experienced rescuer. The sweep boat will only pass other

boats in the event of an emergency and: Carries first-aid and rescue equipment. Assists with keeping the group together.

Maintain space to avoid collisions, but still stay compact

• Always keep the next boat upstream and downstream in sight; stop if the downstream boat isn't visible.

Dispose of litter properly – pack it out • Repackage food to minimize waste.

 Never throw garbage into the water. • Plastics are dangerous to wildlife – plastic bags, six-pack rings, and other clear plastics float on the water.

Display courtesy and respect to riverfront landowners

• The access points highlighted in this guide are located on public property, but most of the shoreline and river

• Many landowners enjoy the stream's peace and solitude from their property. Share the same courtesy that you

• Leave artifacts and natural objects undisturbed. Avoid introducing non-native species, including live bait, by cleaning equipment between trips.

Report Spills

Report spills, abandoned drums, and other environmental emergencies 24 hours a day at 1-800-282-9378.

MCD is all about water. Protecting. Preserving. Promoting.

Vision

Thriving communities, a healthy watershed and a higher quality of life, sustained by well-managed water resources throughout the watershed.

Mission

Protecting lives, property and economic vitality within the Great Miami River Watershed through an integrated and balanced system that provides unfailing flood protection, preserves water resources, and promotes enjoyment of our waterways.

Flood Protection

People and businesses along the Great Miami River in southwest Ohio enjoy life without flooding concerns. MCD's system of five dry dams, retarding basins, 55 miles of levees, and preserved floodplain provide a nearly unparalleled level of protection.

The Miami Conservancy District operates and maintains five large flood-protection dams (not low dams), in the Great Miami River Watershed. These dams hold back water only when river levels are too high to pass through the large concrete tubes (conduits) that pass through the dams. Plan to start your river trip downstream from these dams or end your trip upstream from these dams.

Water & Land Stewardship

Water is the key to healthy people and healthy communities. MCD monitors and protects our region's water.

River Fun

And water isn't just for drinking. Rivers are outdoor playgrounds. MCD is working to bring more people to the

GREAT MIAMI RIVERWAY

The Great Miami Riverway is more than just a river. This regional destination in southwest Ohio includes more than 99 miles of paved trails and connected communities where you can surf the river, cycle the bike trail, and find your way through charming downtowns.

The Great Miami Riverway is a program of the Miami Conservancy District, convened with local communities, to support and encourage people to live, work, and play safely along the Great Miami River.

What Stands Out Along The Riverway?



Learn more at GreatMiamiRiverway.com

WATER TRAIL PARTNERS

All of the access point information is provided by The Miami Conservancy District and the following water trail partners. Please contact them for more information.

Ohio Department of

Natural Resources

1-877-4BOATER or

watercraft.ohiodnr.gov

(614) 265-6480

Division of Watercraft

2045 Morse Road, Building A

Columbus, Ohio 43229-6693

Five Rivers MetroParks Logan County 409 E. Monument Avenue Indian Lake State Park 12774 State Route 235 N Third Floor Lakeview, Ohio 43331 Dayton, Ohio 45402 (937) 275-PARK (7275) 937-843-2717 www.metroparks.org

City of Sidney Parks 201 W. Poplar Street Sidney, Ohio 45365 (937) 498-2335 www.sidneyoh.com

Miami County Park District 2645 East State Route 41 Troy, Ohio 45373 Phone: (937) 335-6273 Fax: (937) 335-6221 www.miamicountyparks.com

Thanks to our local first responders for helping to keep people safe on the rivers.

Warren County Park District 300 East Silver Street Lebanon, Ohio 45036 Lebanon: 513-695-1109 Cincinnati: 513-925-1109 www.co.warren.oh.us/parks

MetroParks of Butler County 2051 Timberman Road Hamilton, Ohio 45013 513-867-5835

www.yourmetroparks.net Great Parks of **Hamilton County** 10245 Winton Road Cincinnati, Ohio 45231 513-521-7275 www.greatparks.org



The Great **Miami River** Watershed



Learn more at MCDWater.org



Taylorsville Dam, on the Great Miami River, is one of MCD's five flood protection dams.



We'd love to hear from

you. Use this QR Code

to give us your feedback.

TRAIL

The Secretary of the U.S.

Department of the Interior

designated the Great Miami

River and its tributaries as

National Water Trails in 2016.

Designated by Ohio DNR in

2010, the Great Miami River

and its tributaries are Ohio

Water Trails.

.pointer bass fishing. upper Great Miami River contains some of Ohio's best tarmland and high-quality streams. The middle and its water supply, recreation, industries, productive Great Miami, Stillwater, and Mad rivers; and is known for River, west of Cincinnati. The watershed includes the Lake and flows southwest to its confluence with the Ohio The Great Miami River originates upstream from Indian & Play It Safe! Enjoy the Great Miami River



the Great Miami River Water Trail. Watch for this sign to help you find access to





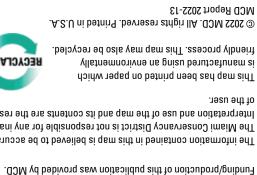
www.mcdwater.org Phone: (937) 223-1271

Interpretation and use of the map and its contents are the responsibility The Miami Conservancy District is not responsible for any inaccuracies. I he information contained in this map is believed to be accurate.

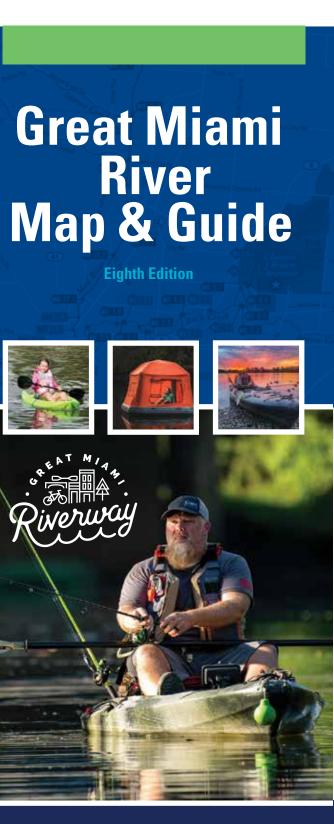


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friendly process. This map may also be recycled









Great Miami River







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 is a safe and fun adventure.



