



Scouts SA

Canoeing Action Newsletter

(Organisation and Events)

CANOE –no. 2 for October



Swift Water Warning!

Please take note of the information below and modify programs where necessary

High Water Flows

Over the past few months South Australia and indeed Australia have faced several major storm events with abnormally high rainfalls. These events have affected most of our river and water storage systems. I wish to remind all Scouts that paddling in flood waters should be considered very carefully as floodwaters may contain contaminants from many sources including raw sewage, debris and rapidly changing water levels.

The other issue is moving water (swift water). People underestimate the power of water, to put it in perspective, twice as many people die in flood water each year in Australia compared with bushfires. There would be very few people that would run through a bush fire for the thrill of it and then expect 6 youth members to follow them.

In South Australia Scouts (SA) only issue Canoe endorsements for Flat and Undemanding Water. This has a maximum implied flow rate of 1 Knot (1.8 K/H). So if a river or stream has a flow rate greater than 1 Knot then your SA based training does not cover this situation. Remember that doubling the flow rate quadruples the force applied to the craft in a trapped environment.

In most cases the river flows more quickly in the centre, this is normally a laminar flow but can change very quickly if there are obstacles in the water (especially under the water). When travelling on the sides of the river it may seem that the water is slower, however this water may be in a helix form and become more unpredictable forcing craft to behave in a hazardous manner. Another issue with travelling to the side is that there are generally far more strainers (fallen trees, fence lines and jetties) to negotiate.

Generally we travel in close touring groups during Scouting activities, this can also cause issues as if one craft gets caught up then it is very likely that more craft will be caught by the same hazard. Who is going for help if we are all caught up; also remember the response time might be quite long, that's if we can get to help. In these conditions the trapped paddlers will be caught in the relentless pressure in less than favourable conditions.

At the present moment there will be no total ban on paddling in the Murray as there are many areas that are not affected. Endorsed Canoe Kayak Leaders are reminded of their level of training and should choose the appropriate action. Risk management plans should be thorough and dynamic risk assessments carried out. Consider planned road escape routes, jetties, campsites and boat ramps that have been used in the past may not be usable.

In the words of the song "The Gambler":-

"You've got to know when to hold 'em
Know when to fold 'em
Know when to walk away
And know when to run"

Jeff Playfair
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Previous Newsletters

Previous Canoe Newsletters can now be found at
<http://www.adventurousactivities.sa.scouts.com.au/pages/759758>

Remember our youth are always looking for adventurous activities in which to participate.

Contact: Jeff Playfair bc.canoeing@sa.scouts.com.au
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