



Important Safety Information in Case of Unsafe Conditions during the 2009 Delaware River Sojourn

Water levels are a critical safety issue in river paddling for two reasons:

1. High water increases the speed of the river's flow and can inundate the riverbanks and islands where flooded trees and vegetation can create what are known as "strainers." Strainers are very, very dangerous and can trap boats and people under water.
2. High water changes the characteristics of the rapids on the river. Some "wash out" while others become more dangerous with higher waves.

Please note that high water rescues endanger the people making the rescue. While Sojourn Safety personnel are well trained in rescue techniques, the person nearest to a boat or boater in trouble could be another Sojourner. High water makes the river more dangerous for everyone.

Equally important to be aware of is the chance and occurrence of storms or other adverse weather conditions, as it is very dangerous to be on the water during periods of lightning and high winds.

In times of high water and/or severe weather, the Sojourn Safety Team will determine whether it is safe to paddle at any time on any given Sojourn Day. If deemed too dangerous to paddle, meals, programs, and camping will still be provided and alternate activities will be offered.

An example of the Sojourn's high water policy is the following for the Upper Delaware River:

1. At **average water levels: 2.5-4 ft** - Everyone may take the trip in canoes or kayaks, even if it is raining.
2. At **moderate water levels: 4 - 6 ft** - We will take the trip even if it is raining. Rafts are recommended for less skilled boaters. The Sojourn Safety Staff will have the final word in determining who is a skilled boater and who should be in a raft.
3. At **high water levels: 6-8 ft** - Take the trip even if it is raining and the river is not expected to go above 8 feet. Rafts will be required for all people renting watercraft and for less skilled private boaters. High water waivers will be required for people using private boats; the Sojourn Safety Staff will have the final word in determining who is a highly skilled boater and who should be in a raft.
4. At **very high water: 8-feet and above** - There will be No Sojourn River Trip - Alternate Land Activities will be offered.