

## **CRUISING WITH CW**

### **THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW**

#### **General Information**

For those interested in meeting up with other paddlers, the CW offers cruises arranged by volunteer trip coordinators. These trips facilitate interaction among paddlers of similar skill levels. The trips are not a teaching or training exercise, and members who participate in the trips will be responsible for their own conduct and safety.

To maximize boaters' understanding and make the trips more pleasant, participants should carefully read the following CW trip policy statement. If you do not understand any part of this policy statement or the CW's release of liability / liability waiver form, please ask your trip coordinator before signing the waiver form. Trips are open to CW members only.

#### **General Policy**

CW outings are cooperative adventures among participants. The group is collectively responsible for the conduct on the outing, and each participant is individually responsible for judging his or her qualifications and for his or her safety on the river. By participating in a CW outing, you release the CW and its representatives, agents, directors, officers, members, trip coordinators, and fellow paddlers from any liabilities for any accidents or injuries due to any negligent act or omission, or any intentional act intended to promote your safety or well-being.

#### **River Hazards**

You must understand and accept that whitewater boating exposes you to various hazards, for example, boulders, and other obstacles, bridge pilings, strainers, undercut or entrapping formations, changing conditions, cold, high water, and others, mostly in remote locations. Injuries and deaths occasionally occur due to these hazards, among other things. You alone must accept the responsibility for your safety.

You are responsible for learning to recognize river hazards and for learning and practicing the techniques for avoiding these hazards prior to participating in a CW trip. You are responsible for acquiring boating safety and rescue skills commensurate with the level of difficulty of the river you are paddling prior to participating in a CW trip. Two excellent sources are the book *River Rescue* (Bechdel and Ray), and the video *Whitewater Self Defense* (Performance Video & Instruction).

Don't endanger your life and the lives of others by trying to boat on water beyond your ability. Remember—most good paddlers develop by very gradually increasing the difficulty of rivers they run over a period of several years.

You are solely responsible for the following decisions at all times:

1. The decision to go on any trip.
2. The decision of whether or not you are ready to boat a particular river.
3. The decision to put on the selected river (which may not be the scheduled river) under the conditions existing at the time of the put-in.
4. The decision as to what equipment to take with you.
5. The decision whether to scout any rapid.
6. The decision whether to run any rapid.
7. The decision whether to participate in any rescue or recovery of equipment.
8. The decision to pass up any walk-out or take-out opportunity.
9. The decision to end the trip at any time.

#### **River Rescue**

Trip participants usually assist each other when someone appears to need assistance, but only as long as they can do so, in their own judgment, without risk to themselves. Some participants may choose to accept greater hazards to rescue a fellow paddler. However, trip participants and the trip

coordinator are under no legal duty to assist anyone. In other words, although you are not legally obligated to assist anyone, no one is obligated to assist you either. You alone are responsible for your own safety.

### **Other Responsibilities of Participants**

1. Contact the trip coordinator well in advance of the trip you are planning to go on.
2. Sign a membership form, an annual liability waiver, and additional liability waiver forms before participating in any CW trip.
3. Ask the trip coordinator about his or her training experience if these considerations are significant to you.
4. Inform the participants in your trip of your skills, experience, training, and rivers run.
5. Do not bring unexpected guests to the trip.
6. Bring appropriate equipment and make sure it is in good repair, including, but not limited to, life jacket, helmet, protective footwear, knife, whistle, throw bag, extra clothing, first aid supplies, and float bags.
7. Observe good safety practices on the river.
8. Inform yourself of the difficulty of the river under existing conditions.
9. Share optional group responsibilities.
10. Inform the trip coordinator immediately if your plans change and you are unable to go on the trip.

### **About Your Trip Coordinator**

Trip coordinators are volunteers and they receive no pay. Their functions are to get the group to the same river at the same time, to coordinate the shuttles, and to respond to inquiries to the best of their knowledge. However, your trip coordinator may have never run the scheduled river under the conditions encountered on the trip day, and the trip may be switched to an unfamiliar river.

Your trip coordinator may not have had any organized or formal training in whitewater boating skills, boating safety skills, first aid, or CPR. If you prefer to go on a trip with a trip coordinator who has had organized or formal training in these areas, or who has had a lot of experience, it is your responsibility to ask him or her about his or her training and experience. It is solely your decision whether the trip coordinator's qualifications are satisfactory to you. The coordinator is under no legal duty to perform any of the tasks for which he or she is qualified, and the coordinator is not liable for any negligence in performance.

The trip coordinator is not responsible for, among other things, your training or safety, or for judging you qualifications. Bear in mind that the purpose of the trip is to provide an opportunity for paddlers of similar skill to meet and boat together. It is not a teaching or training exercise.

### **Trip Coordinator Discretion**

Although the trip coordinator has discretion to perform the tasks listed below, he or she is not responsible if any of these tasks are not performed, or if they are performed negligently:

1. Finding a substitute coordinator if unable to go on the trip and notifying the Cruise Chairman of the change.
2. Determining the rendezvous place and time.
3. Responding to participant inquiries to the best of his or her knowledge about the river and experience, and the participants training and experience. Trip coordinators may refuse to allow any participant to participate in a trip, but it is not the trip coordinator's responsibility to determine whether a participant is qualified for the trip. **Trip coordinators are also not responsible for any participant's safety or training.**
4. Familiarization with the put-in, take-out, shuttle, and major obstacles and rapids on the scheduled river.

### **Optional Group Responsibilities**

The group may wish to consider the following suggestions. Which of these suggestions is adopted on the trip is solely a group decision, and is not the responsibility of any particular person.

1. Obtain river stage or flow data.

2. Obtain knowledge of the difficult parts of the run, emergency take-out routes, and nearby medical facilities.
3. Equipment: throw rope in each boat, first aid kit, extra paddle, flashlight, fire starter and matches, extra clothing, carabineers, prusik loops, map, guide book.
4. Keep boaters grouped close enough for communication, but not so compact as to interfere with each other.
5. Consider dividing a large group into smaller groups, or having buddy boats.
6. Learn swift water rescue techniques: consult River Rescue by Bechdel and Ray, or Whitewater Self Defense from Performance Video & Instruction, or take a swift water rescue course.

### **Insurance**

1. Trip insurance is not provided for participants.
2. Personal insurance is recommended.
3. Release of liability waivers are required.

### **Suggested Equipment List for Day Trips:**

Boat, boat flotation, paddle, spray skirt  
 Whitewater helmet, USCG-approved life vest with whistle and knife  
 Paddle jacket, wet (dry) suit, booties or river shoes, pogies/gloves  
 Food and drinking water  
 Throw rope, carabineers, prussic loops  
 First aid kit, fire starters and matches/lighter  
 Sunscreen, sunglasses or visor  
 Clothes/layers appropriate to the weather, space blanket, flashlight  
 Breakdown paddle  
 Toilet kit

**All items should be adjusted to fit you BEFORE you come to the put-in!**

### **Special Considerations for Minors:**

Minors (those under 18 years of age) may participate in CW cruises only with the permission of the cruise director. At the time of registering for the cruise, the minor should clearly tell the cruise coordinator his/her age. A signed parental waiver must be on file. In addition, the trip waiver form must be printed and signed by the parent; this may need to be done before the cruise, if the parent/guardian will not accompany the minor.

Parents/guardians should carefully consider whether participation in CW events is appropriate for minors. The responsibilities and decisions listed above apply to all participants. Minors who are not capable of making these decisions themselves should be accompanied by a parent or other responsible adult. If the parent/guardian is not certain of the minor's capabilities, they are responsible for obtaining adequate information to ensure that the minor can safely participate in the trip. Trip coordinators and other CW volunteers are not responsible for the safety, training, or supervision of any participant.

## **BOATER SKILL LEVEL RATINGS**

If you have not run a particular section before, ask for information about how it compares with other rivers on which you have paddled, so that you have a basis for judging if it is within your capability. Remember that weather and water conditions can drastically alter the nature and difficulty of any river. Most important, you must be the judge as to whether you will attempt to run a particular rapid. The trip coordinator will be glad to help you scout and analyze the problems or help you walk around a rapid if you do not wish to run it. However, you are responsible for your own decisions and actions. Use the following guidelines to determine whether you are prepared for a particular trip.

**Novice:** You have never been in a kayak, or you have had 6 hours or less of flat water instruction including pool sessions. You are only comfortable doing a wet exit in flat water. You have never been and/or are not comfortable in moving water.

**Beginner:** You have been in a kayak on moving water. You have had 6+ hours of instruction on flat water and some instruction on moving water. You have performed at wet exit on moving water and are comfortable with T-rescues. You can maneuver your boat with control on flat water. You know what a ferry, peel-out, and eddy are.

**Advanced Beginner:** You have a solid flatwater roll, and are comfortable attempting rolls in moving water before doing a wet exit. You are comfortable doing ferries, peel-outs, and catching eddies on moving water. You are comfortable on moving water and want to improve your skills on Class II.

**Intermediate:** You have successfully done multiple rolls in Class II+ and possibly Class III water. You are comfortable on Class II and want to move on to Class III. You are comfortable bracing and are often successful in preventing flips. You can perform controlled ferries, peel-outs, and eddy turns on Class II water.

**Advanced:** You have several years experience and a reliable combat roll. You are comfortable in Class III and higher.

**Expert:** Bombproof combat roll which fails only in the most extreme situations, comfortable on Class IV and higher with several years experience.

## RIVER DIFFICULTY RATINGS

This chart is provided for beginners and boaters who are new to Colorado as an overview of the more popular river runs along the Front Range and in Western Colorado. It is by no means a complete listing. While the difficulty of a run generally increases as the flow rate increases, personal judgment of a river's difficulty varies with the skill and experience of each individual boater. Any rating system, therefore, inherently reflects the bias of the writer. Please use this list as a rough guide, not a bible. (All flows are given in cubic feet per second).

For detailed information about most of these runs, including put-in and takeout locations, consult *Colorado Rivers and Creeks 2*, by Gordon Banks and Dave Eckardt.

	Length (miles)	Water Level (cfs)		
		Low	Average	High
<b>Upper Colorado</b>		<b>500-1000</b>	<b>1000-2500</b>	<b>2500+</b>
Gore Canyon	11	Expert	Expert	Expert
Pumphouse	11	Beginner	Beg./Adv. Beg.	Low Int.
Rancho/Bond	8	Beginner	Beginner	Adv. Beg.
Eddie's Garage	6	Novice	Novice	Beginner
<b>Middle Colorado</b>		<b>1000-3000</b>	<b>3000-6000</b>	<b>6000+</b>
Sweet Water/ Hanging Lake	14	Novice	Novice	Beginner
Shoshone	3	Intermediate	Int./Advanced	High Int./Adv.
Grizzly Creek/New Castle	17	Beginner	Adv. Beg./Low Int.	Low Int.
Westwater, UT	17	High Int.	High Int./Adv.	Advanced
<b>Cache La Poudre</b>		<b>500-800</b>	<b>800-1200</b>	<b>1200+</b>
Rustic	4	Intermediate	Intermediate	Intermediate
Narrows	2	Expert	Expert	Expert
Mishawaka	5	High Int.	Advanced	Adv./Expert
Bridges	3	Intermediate	Intermediate	Int./High Int.

	<b>Length (miles)</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Water Level (cfs)</b>	
			<b>Average</b>	<b>High</b>
Filter Plant	3	Beginner	Beg./Adv. Beg.	Beg./Adv. Beg.

	Length (miles)	Water Level (cfs)		
		Low	Average	High
<b>South Platte</b>		<b>200-400</b>	<b>400-600</b>	<b>600+</b>
Scraggy View/ Willow Bend	2	Beginner	Beginner	Beginner
Willow Bend/ Above Chutes	3	Novice	Novice	Beginner
Chutes/Confluence	3	Beginner	Beginner	Adv. Beg.
Waterton Canyon	1	Intermediate	Int./High Int.	High Int.
<b>North Fork of S. Platte</b>		<b>200-400</b>	<b>400-600</b>	<b>600+</b>
Bailey Canyon		Expert	Expert	Expert
Rock Garden/Foxton	2.5	Intermediate	Intermediate	High Int.
Foxton/Confluence	2	Intermediate	Intermediate	High Int.
<b>Blue River</b>		<b>400-600</b>	<b>600-1200</b>	<b>1200+</b>
Above Campground	2	Novice	Novice	Beginner
Blue River Gorge		Intermediate	Intermediate	High Int.
Below Gorge	8	Beginner	Beginner	Adv. Beg./Low Int.
Below Green Mtn Res.	4	Adv. Beginner	Low Int.	Intermediate
<b>Arkansas River</b>		<b>500-1000</b>	<b>1000-2500</b>	<b>2500+</b>
Granite Canyon	4	Intermediate	Intermediate	High Int.
Pine Creek Rapid	1/8	Expert	Expert	Expert
Numbers	5	High Int./Adv.	Advanced	Adv./Expert
Fractions	4	Intermediate	Int./High Int.	High Int.
Frog Rock	4	Low Int.	Intermediate	Int./High Int.
Milk Run	4	Beginner	Adv. Beg.	Adv. Beg.
Ruby Mountain	1	Adv. Beg.	Low Int.	Low Int.
Brown's Canyon	10	Intermediate	Int./High Int.	High Int./Adv.
Texas Crk/Parkdale	12	Intermediate	Intermediate	High Int./Adv.
Royal Gorge	7	High Int.	High Int./Adv.	Adv./Expert