

Topic:

River Trip Planning

QC-1202

Resource:

[River
Etiquette](#)

Basics: Trip planning is key to a safe and successful time on the water. Knowing the regulations governing access and use are key to avoiding problems. Checking the weather forecast and the river flow rate can help you avoid dangerous surprises. It helps to know basic rules of river safety and etiquette.

Question: *How do I know how fast and high my river is today?*

Answer: The [US Geological Survey](#) gauges collect river data every 15 to 60 minutes and upload in 1-4 hours. If you know the location of the gauge and what normal flow levels are, then this data can be very helpful. Often the best information is “local knowledge” gained from those who paddle the river regularly.

Question: *How can I find a river that is safe for me to paddle?*

Answer: One place to start is the [National Water Trail database](#) maintained by the American Canoe Association for its members. Another is the [National Whitewater Inventory](#) maintained by American Whitewater. They provide technical ratings by river and section. They also give advice on flow rate as a function of gauge level and whether this makes the section “runnable” based normal flows.

Advanced Concepts: You may want to get more information on the following:

- What kind of training should I have to run a river?
- What safety equipment should I take on the river?
- What is the optimum group size for safety?
- How can I ascertain safe take-out points?

For more information contact

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