

Stevens Outdoor Adventure – Kayaking

Kayaking Terminology

Aft - Toward the rear or stern of water craft.

Back Paddle - Paddling backward as a means of slowing or reversing the forward motion of a kayak.

Blade - The wide, flat end of a paddle.

Bow -- The front or forward end of the kayak.

Broaching - A point when the kayak is oriented broadside to waves, currents, or an obstacle. The result of an uncontrolled broach is often a capsize.

Eddy - A current, usually behind a large rock or other obstruction in a stream or river, which is at variance with the main current. Water flow in eddies either stops or reverses and runs upstream from the main current. Eddies can be used as rest stops or to maneuver upstream or downstream in a technique known as "eddy hopping."

Face - The side of a paddle blade that is pushing against the water.

Feather - To turn the paddle so that the blade is parallel to the current or wind and the resistance is reduced.

Forward Ferry - A maneuver whereby the kayak angles downstream to the current and crosses laterally to the opposite side of the river.

Heavy Water - High velocity, turbulent water, usually through rapids and other constricted waterways.

High Brace - A strong, supportive bracing stroke normally used when entering or leaving an eddy and a kayaker's best defense against an in ad verdant capsize.

Low Brace - A supportive stroke where the arms are low and close to the body, and the back face of the paddle is braced against the water.

Hole - A dangerous and turbulent river feature usually formed behind large rocks or other obstructions. Normally to be avoided, a hole can suck a kayak beneath the water and hold it there.

Hydraulic - On a river where water backflows at the base of a ledge or rock and otherwise reverses itself.

Hypothermia - A condition where the body's core temperature drops to a dangerous level, normally in wet and cold conditions. The victim can become drowsy or disoriented. If not treated quickly, hypothermia can lead to death due to exposure.

Leeward -- Moving away from the wind (downwind).

Outside Bank -- The outside of a bend in a stream or river.

PFD - Personal Flotation Device.

Pillow Rock - A deceptive river feature where water flows gently over an underwater obstruction.

Rapids - A fast, turbulent stretch of whitewater normally accompanied by rocks and a steep gradient.

Riffles -- Light, shallow rapids found in Class I whitewater.

Standing Wave - A whitewater feature where a wave remains stationary in one place.

Starboard - The right side of the kayak when facing the bow.

Stern - The rear of the kayak or other water craft.

Strainer - Brush or trees which have fallen into a river, usually on the outside of a bend. Current may sweep through, but the obstruction will stop a craft.

Trough - The depression between two waves.

Wave Crest - The summit of a wave, opposite of the trough.

Whitewater - Also known as rapids. A stretch of turbulent, fast moving water that flows through rocks, over falls, and around other obstructions.

Windward - The direction from which the wind blows. The opposite of leeward.