



Welcome to The Wild and Scenic Upper Clackamas River

— MT. HOOD NATIONAL FOREST —

Whitewater Recreation Map

Rating the Rapids

If you have ever considered whitewater boating, then you've probably seen the terms Class I, II, III, IV, V, and VI. But what do they mean?

The "International Scale of River Difficulty" is used to categorize river rapids on a scale of I to VI — with Class I being the easiest.

The system is not exact. Rivers do not always fit neatly into one category and people interpret the classes differently. Variables in water and weather can also change a river's difficulty. So, a class rating is only a guide. If you're headed out, check several sources beforehand and stay alert.



Whitewater Safety

- Wear a personal flotation device and helmet
- Dress for hypothermic conditions
- Never boat under the influence
- Know the river
- Scout ahead for river hazards
- Never go paddling alone
- Avoid extremes of water and weather
- Know your limits
- Pack out litter

Your safety is your responsibility.



Rapid Classifications

Class I: Easy

Fast moving water with a few riffles and small waves. Few or no obstructions.

Class II: Novice

Rapids with waves up to three feet. Wide, clear channels that are obvious without scouting. Some maneuvering is required.

Class III: Intermediate

Rapids with high, irregular waves often capable of swamping an open boat. Narrow passages that often require complex maneuvering. May require some scouting from shore.

Class IV: Advanced

Long, difficult rapids and constricted passages that often require precise maneuvering in very turbulent waters. Scouting from shore is often necessary, and conditions make rescue difficult. Paddlers should have a reliable roll.

Class V: Expert

Extremely difficult. Long, very violent rapids with highly congested routes, which nearly always must be scouted from shore. Rescue conditions are difficult, and there is a significant hazard to life in the event of a mishap. Ability to roll is essential.

Class VI: Extreme and Exploratory Rapids

Difficulties of Class V carried to the extreme of navigability. Nearly impossible and very dangerous. For teams of experts only, after close study has been made and all precautions have been taken.

Source: American Canoe Association, Know Your Limits

