

# Orientation Talk

Paddling commands are used because everyone must use a paddle to help maneuver the raft to prevent hitting anyone else with the ends of your paddle, keep one hand over the plastic tee on the end of the paddle.

Your guide will use the following commands:

- All forward; everyone paddles forward.
- Right turn; everyone on the right side paddles backward; left side continues to paddle forward
- Left turn; everyone on the left side paddles backward; right side continues to paddle forward.
- All back; everyone paddles backwards.
- Draw right; paddler in the right front paddles sideways.
- Draw left; paddler in the left front paddles sideways.
- Stop; everyone stops paddling.

Your guide cannot control the raft by him/herself so pay close attention to the commands!

- Highside is when the raft is carried into a boulder or a large wave and starts to flip. If this happens the guide will yell "highside" and everyone should lean into the high side of the raft to prevent flipping.
- Brush and tree limbs. The current may sweep the raft into low hanging tree limbs or brush along or near the river bank. Use your paddle to deflect the brush away from you

If you fall out of the raft stay calm! It is easy to become disoriented in the river. If you are under the raft, feel your way to the edge until you are clear of the raft

- Your body position in the water is important. Keep your feet in front of you and at the surface of the water so that your feet don't drag or hang up on rocks. Hold onto your paddle keeping it at the water's surface. A paddle too deep in the water may hang up on rocks. The force of the water may then fold you over the paddle, trapping you in a dangerous situation.
- Getting back into the raft after you fallout should be done from the upstream side of the raft. If there are other people still in the raft they will try to help you back in. If you are on the down current side of the raft move along the side of the raft until it is downstream from you.
- If a fellow rafter falls out try to extend your paddle to help him/her back to the upstream side of the boat.
- Grab the person by the life jacket and try to pull him/her into the raft.
- Back washes or reverses may catch the raft and/or swimmers. The most common mistake people make is to stop paddling before the raft passes through the backwash. Remember keep paddling until the guide says "stop". If the raft gets caught in the backwash. Continue paddling vigorously until the raft escapes or flips. If the raft flips and the waterfall pushes you under, attempt to push off the bottom or swim at an angle downstream where you will resurface.
- Strainers are any branch, tree or debris that allows water to flow through it but not a person. If you fallout of the raft and can't get back to the raft you will have to swim to the shore. If there is brush on the river bank: you should either wait until you move past the brush or swim to the opposite side. Do not try to get out where you suspect a strainer. If you can't avoid a strainer try to go over the top of it if you do get caught in the strainer try to pull yourself over it, if you can't and you are underwater, stick your arm up so you can be seen.
- Foot entrapment is when a foot or another appendage is wedged in a rock on the bottom of the river. When this occurs the force of the water pushes you under and pins you down. Try pulling yourself upstream using the rocks on the bottom and unhook your foot. If that doesn't work put your arm up so you can be seen.
- In an emergency your guide will blow a whistle; if you hear it pay attention! You may be asked to help in a rescue situation. Your assistance is voluntary; you have the right to say yes or no.
- On shore be aware of slippery rocks, snakes, and poison oak. You will have to watch for these hazards anytime we are on shore, including lunch and water breaks, and when carrying the rafts (especially over rough terrain). If we have you help carry a raft, please walk slowly and attentively and carry the raft on your shoulders, not on your head!

