



Big Thicket Water Safety

Don't ruin a great day! Take a minute to read this — ***it may save your life.***

SWIMMING & WADING

If you choose to swim or wade—SAFETY FIRST! Big Thicket National Preserve is natural and wild. Water hazards, such as currents, underwater debris, shifting sandbars and steep drop-offs, are common and change with floods.

- * Choose quiet areas away from currents
- * Wear a life jacket or Personal Flotation Device (PFD)
- * Never dive into the water

BOATING

Following a few simple rules can make boating fun and safe. Know the capacity of your boat and don't exceed it. Be sure to have a PFD for each passenger. Learn boating rules and standards. Don't drink and operate a boat.

CANOEING

Stay off the river during periods of high water! Flood water canoeing is dangerous even for experienced canoeists. Always wear your PFD. If you are inexperienced, get some instruction in canoeing techniques and try an easy stretch of quiet water before venturing out into moving water. If you tip over in fast water, stay with the canoe until you reach a quiet spot. Stay on the upstream side of the canoe so you aren't pinned between the canoe and a tree.

WEATHER CAN KILL

Thunderstorms — Don't make yourself a target for lightning. Leave the water during storms. Seek shelter, but not under a lone tall tree. Avoid high exposed places.

Hypothermia — a reduced body temperature caused by exposure to cold weather or water. It can strike in warm weather if the water is cold enough, as it is in early Spring. Dress appropriately for the weather. Carry extra clothes in a waterproof container. If you fall into cold water, get into dry, warm clothes as soon as possible. Build a fire to get warm. **Hint:** shivering is the first sign of hypothermia.