

# Indiana Dunes National Park

## Job Hazard Analysis



<b>1. Work Project/Activity</b> <i>River Restoration Crew and River Scouts</i>	<b>2. Location</b>	<b>3. Originator</b> <i>Jim Whitenack</i>	<b>4. Job Title</b> <i>Volunteer Program Manager</i>
<b>5. Name of Reviewer</b>	<b>6. Job Title</b>	<b>7. Date Prepared/Revised</b> <i>12/2022</i>	<b>8. Number of Pages in this JHA</b> <i>2</i>

### General Safety Topics & Hazards

While the East Branch of the Little Calumet River is relatively shallow, it does have some potentially serious safety issues that must be considered before planning a trip. The East Branch of the Little Calumet River Water Trail for canoes and kayaks is in the early stages of development. Some access points have steep grades and muddy conditions. There are only a few support facilities such as washrooms, fresh water, and fully developed put in locations along the water trail. Several improvements will develop in the upcoming years.

Use extreme caution if you attempt to paddle to Portage or go over log jams. Do not attempt to remove log jams on your own. They require a special permit to modify. The East Branch of the Little Calumet River should never be paddled at or near flood stage. Many bridges become impassable; log jams present a major hazard. There are many standing dead trees along the river due to the Emerald Ash Borer die off. Avoid paddling on extremely windy days. Additionally, at times of low water, paddlers often will have to walk their boats through shallows that cannot be paddled. Finally, there is an extremely dangerous low head dam adjacent to the Praxair facility in Burns Harbor just past SR 149. Paddlers need to use extreme caution at this location and never attempt to go over the dam. The park does not maintain the river channel on a regular basis and river conditions are ever changing. Paddlers assume complete responsibility for their own safety.

Review safety protocols and follow the River Crew procedures to ensure a safe trip. Maintenance concerns, including hazardous log jams and woody debris, on the river should be reported.

Useful Links:

- Tips for safe paddling <https://paddling.com/learn/river-hazards/>

Boating on the Little Calumet River can be dangerous, and accidents can happen. You or others may need additional help to aid in any given situation that may happen on the river. Indiana Dunes National Park Staff and local rescue teams are available to help. If you need help, you need to know who to call, when to call and how to describe your location.

When boating on the river take a cell phone. Program the Communication Center’s phone number (800 Park Tip) into your phone or dial 911 for emergency assistance. Either the Communication Center or a 911 dispatch center will need to know your location. While paddling the river, make it a point to know where you are. Remember the last bridge you went under, remember the last access point you passed, give a good description of some landmarks to help rangers or local emergency personnel get to your location. If possible, send one person out to a road or some point to meet emergency personnel. Don’t boat alone and know your location. Be prepared before you boat.

<b>Job Tasks/Steps/Procedures:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cutting with hand saws</li> <li>• Carrying branches and logs</li> <li>• Assisting with the capstan puller tool</li> <li>• Water trail monitoring work</li> <li>• Cutting log jams out using a chainsaw (only can be done with trained volunteers or staff)</li> <li>• Paddling and water trail maintenance</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Risks/Hazards:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cuts</li> <li>• Tripping</li> <li>• Muscle strain, getting caught in the rope, injury due to moving heavy logs</li> <li>• Drowning, being caught in strainers, hypothermia</li> <li>• Being cut by the blade</li> <li>• Falling limbs and trees</li> <li>• Being caught in strainers</li> </ul>
<b>Tools and Equipment: Safe Job Procedures:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carry hand saws in the sheath. Use hand saws for 1" - 6" thick branches.</li> <li>• Carry branches away by holding the bottom end and watch out for coworkers. Roll or float heavy logs and position them so they stay in place above the ordinary high-water mark. Use proper lifting techniques to avoid injury.</li> <li>• Always keep clear of the capstan puller when in use, watch for where the rope is wrapped, make sure that the log is fastened properly to the rope, avoid getting near the logs when they are being lifted or slid up the banks.</li> <li>• Avoid being on the river under high water conditions, always wear a personal flotation device (PFD), wear cold water paddling gear when water and air temps drop below 68 F.</li> <li>• Crew members cutting with power saws need to follow NPS chainsaw certification procedures found in NCSP-S-v2.2017. All sawyers must wear all chainsaw safety equipment.</li> <li>• Maintain space between other workers. Do not try to move or throw too much material. Avoid paddling on excessively windy days. Avoiding paddling under high water conditions. Always wear a PFD.</li> <li>• Do not attempt water rescues without proper training. Call Park Communication Center 1-800-PARKTIP for help immediately. Know your location.</li> <li>• Get off the water if lightning is present or the weather unexpectedly turns hazardous.</li> <li>• Multiple tributaries flow into the river. During severe storms, these may cause the river to quickly rise. If paddling during a thunderstorm, seek safe shelter off the river.</li> </ul>

**Required Personal Protective Equipment:**

- It is recommended that one method of communications be carried and kept in a waterproof container
- Drinking water - drink periodically to avoid dehydration
- Non-perishable food or snacks - eat periodically to keep your energy levels high
- Sunglasses
- Eyeglass retainers - if you wear glasses or sunglasses
- Sunscreen
- Insect repellent - use as needed.

Pre-Trip Checklist: Before going on the river please go over river checklist.

- River flow is safe for paddling
- Communication device is functional
- Equipment all in working order
- PFD
- Kayak/Canoe
- Paddle
- First Aid Kit