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.

Rapid Classifications
Class I: Easy
- Fast moving water with a few ripples 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.

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.

Source: American Canoe Association, Know Your Limits

Overview Map

MT. HOOD NATIONAL FOREST

CITY OF ESTACADA
Whitewater Management Authority