

The Kid's Guide to

Playing it Safe,

Playing it

Cool!



**What you need to know about
safety around waterways and dams.**



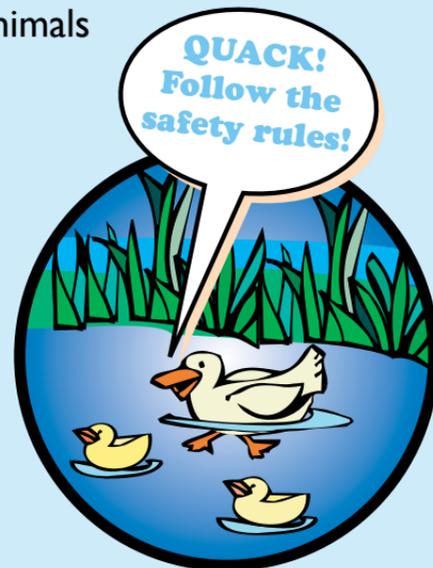
GO WITH THE FLOW, BE IN THE KNOW!

Rivers are fun places to visit and are important to us and the environment in many ways. They:

1. Provide drinking water for people and animals
2. Provide important habitat for a variety of fish and animals
3. Provide a place for fun recreational activities

Rivers can also be very **dangerous**, and many people have been hurt or have drowned because they did not follow the safety rules.

Check out the rest of this booklet to learn how to **play it safe, play it cool!**



PLAY IT SAFE, PLAY IT COOL!

It's a beautiful summer day and your family decides to go for a canoe trip down the Grand River. You should make sure you:

- A) follow boating safety regulations and always wear a life jacket
- B) check the river conditions at www.grandriver.ca before leaving (*postpone the trip if the river is too high or too cold)
- C) avoid boating near dams or other dangerous places
- D) all of the above

*Average summer flows are posted on the website. Use the river only when these conditions are present. The river temperatures are also posted on the website.

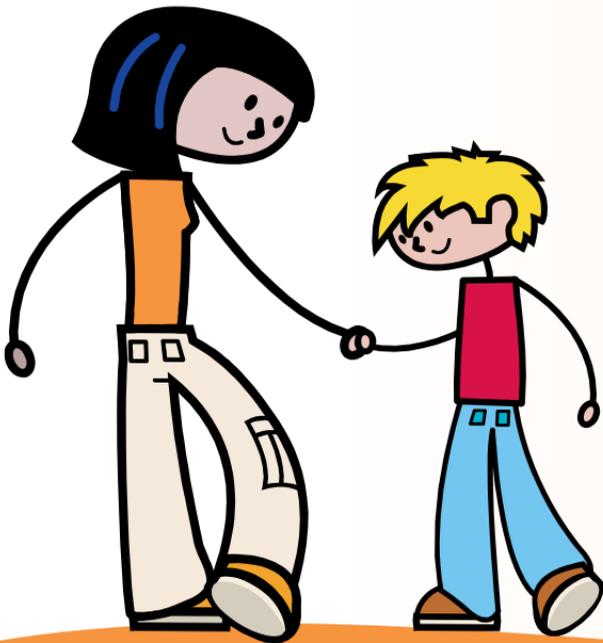


If you picked D, give yourself an A-plus!

Rivers are a fun place, but can be very dangerous if the current is too fast and strong. You should always be familiar with the area in which you are swimming, fishing or boating.

USE THE

BUDDY SYSTEM!



Never visit the river alone.

Go with a group or older buddy, even if you are a strong swimmer. Make sure to let your parents know where you are going.

If you are swimming or fishing:

- 1) Swim only at marked beaches or pools with a buddy.
- 2) Obey all warning signs. Stay away from dangerous dams and other water structures.
- 3) Know the depth of the swimming or fishing area before you dive. Never dive from bridges. When fishing, wade only where you can see the bottom and be extra careful on slippery or loose stone banks.

DANGER - ICE!

Ice is nice, but only in skating rinks or cold drinks. Winter is an especially dangerous time around the river.

Even though the ice on rivers or near dams may look thick, there can be thin patches where the current is fast. Skate on ice rinks or shallow, well-frozen ponds. Leave the rivers for the fish!

Spring can be dangerous too! As ice melts it leaves banks slippery, which can make it easy to fall into the very cold river. Stay clear of the river banks.

Which of the following should be avoided on rivers or near dams in the winter?

- A. Snowmobiling
- B. Cross-country skiing
- C. Skating
- D. All of the above

The answer is D!
That's right!
These activities can be very dangerous on rivers or near dams.

Play it safe, play it cool!



DAMS ARE DANGER ZONES!

There are openings in the dam which you can't see. If you get too close to these, the current can be very strong and pull you over the dam, trapping you under the water.

Water surges through gates or over the dam creating strong undertows and backwash below the dam, where you can be pinned below the water.



The downstream flow is so strong that it can move large debris like rocks and trees, which can pile up. Strong flows can pin you against them.

The grass or concrete areas beside the dam can be wet or icy and become very slippery.



OBEY THE SIGNS...

GRCA dams are marked by red and white danger signs. There are also fences, buoys and booms warning you to keep out. You should always:

1. Stay a safe distance outside of the marked danger areas when fishing, boating and swimming.
2. Stay off all dams. Use approved walkways or observation areas instead.

Buoys look like this....

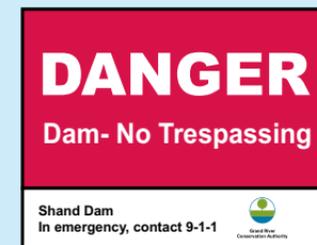


Booms look like this....



DANGER DANGER DANGER DANGER DANGER DANGER DANGER DANGER DANGER

Watch for, and obey, these danger signs:



IF DAMS ARE SO DANGEROUS, WHY DO WE HAVE THEM?

The main purpose of the Grand River Conservation Authority's dams is to make sure there is always enough water in the rivers. When it rains or the snow melts, we hold some of this water behind the dam (called a reservoir) until it's really dry, like in the summer. Then we slowly release the water from the reservoir into the river so there is enough flow for fish and plants to survive.

Did you know some cities get their drinking water from the river? We have to make sure there is enough water in the rivers – not only for the fish and plants – but for us, too!

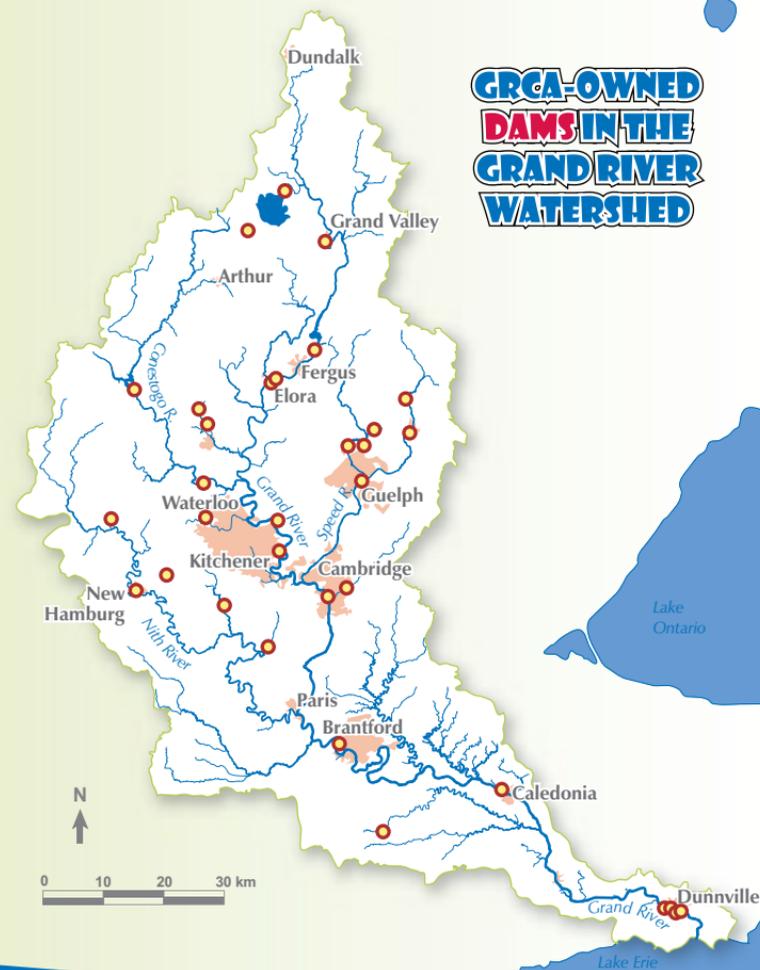


WHERE ARE THESE DAMS LOCATED SO I CAN STAY AWAY?

The Grand River Conservation Authority owns 33 dams in the watershed.* Some are much larger than others. The larger ones can be seen from a distance, but if you are on the river, many smaller dams are not visible until you are almost on top of them!

*There are another 100 dams owned by other individuals and organizations.

Be sure to watch for the red and white warning signs and keep away!



ARE YOU RIVER WISE?

SOLVE THIS WORD DISGUISE!

1

Unscramble the 4 words below.

N A O C E

___ ___ o ___

W R A E T

w r ___ ___

R E R V I

___ r ___ i

A D G E N R

___ ___ a d ___



2

Unscramble the circled letters to fill in the blank!

Always obey the _____ signs!

REMEMBER...

Areas around dams are dangerous and are **NOT** suitable for the following activities:

- Fishing
- Skating
- Boating
- Swimming
- Snowmobiling
- Cross-country skiing



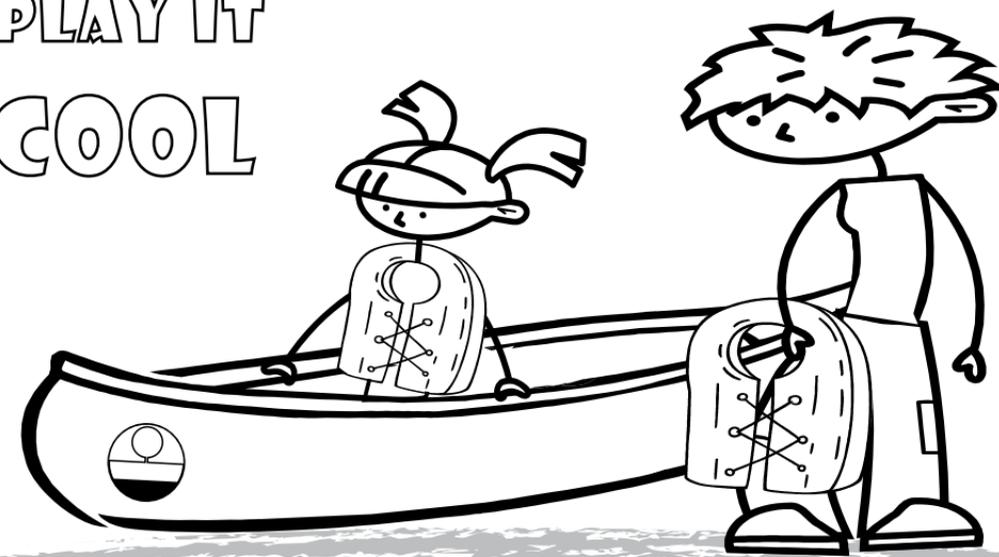
**GIVE YOURSELF
A THUMB'S UP!**

COLOUR ME!

PLAY IT SAFE,

PLAY IT

COOL



**FOR MORE INFORMATION
ON SAFETY AROUND
WATERWAYS AND
DAMS, VISIT OUR
WEBSITE:**

www.grandriver.ca



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