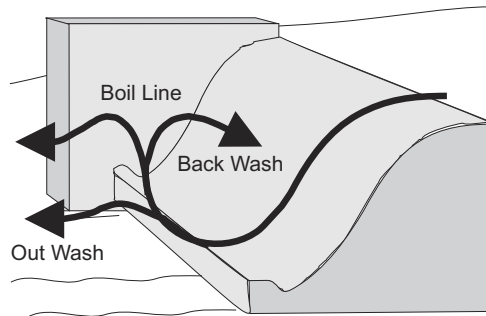


THE TROUBLE WITH DAMS

The popularity of river sports such as fishing, canoeing, kayaking, and rafting is increasing annually. Many rivers present a threat to an unwary water recreationist: low-head dams. These structures claim lives each year. Of all the things on a river that are dangerous, the low-head dam may present the highest level of danger.

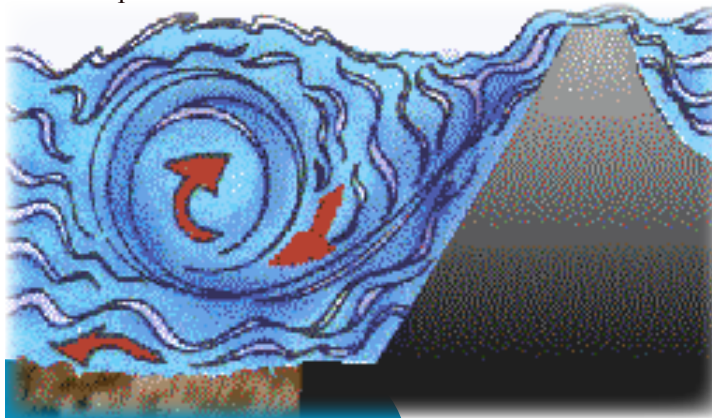
Hazards exist not only from going over the dam, an obvious source of danger, but also below the dam in the backwash, where the power of the water is frequently overlooked.



Water falling over a dam, even a very low dam, recirculates back on itself and forms a deadly trap.

Anything caught in the backwash below the dam is trapped and recirculated round and round, making escape or rescue most difficult. A person caught in the backwash of a dam will be carried to the face of the dam, where water pouring over it will wash the person down under and back beneath the boil. When the victim struggles to the surface, the backwash again carries him to the face of the dam, thus continuing the cycle. Escape is very difficult, and few have done it.

Dams do not have to have a deep drop to create a dangerous backwash. During periods of high water and heavy rains, the backwash current problems get worse, and the reach of the backwash current is extended downstream. Small low-head dams that may have provided a refreshing wading spot at low water can become a monstrous drowning machine when river levels are up.



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LOW HEAD DAM SAFETY

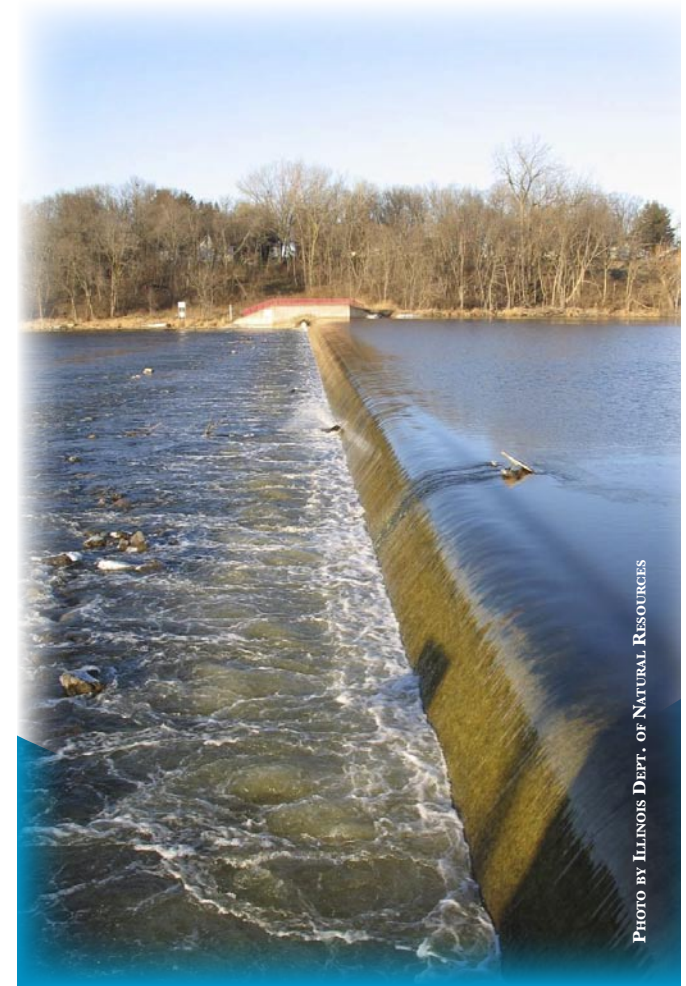


PHOTO BY ILLINOIS DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES

DAMS ARE DANGEROUS

Water falling over a dam, even a very low dam, recirculates back on itself and forms a deadly trap.

You can spot such traps from shore by watching debris being tumbled about like clothes in a washing machine. Every year people fall victim to the manmade drowning machines found below dams.

When boating, inner tubing or swimming in a river, be sure to obey any **DAM WARNING SIGNS** you see and get off the river.



NOTE: Not all dams are marked! Learn to recognize horizon lines indicating a dam: when trees or houses or other objects look like they are cut off or grow straight out of the water, you may be looking at a horizon line.

LOW HEAD DAM SAFETY VIDEO

FEATURING
THE ACRYLIC DAM SIMULATOR



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