

# LOW HEAD DAM SAFETY CAMPAIGN

*Partner Media Kit*



**THE MIAMI  
CONSERVANCY  
DISTRICT**

## About the Campaign

Though it may look calm and harmless, the water flowing over a dam creates a powerful recirculating current that can trap people underwater.

The campaign helps paddlers, anglers, and river visitors recognize low head dams and avoid them safely.

**The campaign focuses on education, awareness, and simple actions that prevent tragedy.**

Campaign Name

**Low Head Dams are Drowning Machines.**

Campaign Slogan

**Take the Portage. Live to Paddle Again.**

Secondary Tagline

**Low Dams Look Safe. They Aren't.**

## Campaign Goals

- Reduce approach behavior within 300 feet upstream of low dams
- Increase portage compliance
- Increase life jacket use
- Improve hazard recognition
- Promote safe river recreation

## How Partners Can Help

**Organizations can support the campaign by:**

1. Sharing social media posts (Sample posts below)
2. Displaying safety graphics (**link to access graphics here: [Google Share Drive](#)**)
3. Including safety messaging in newsletters (Sample language below)
4. Posting signage at river access (we can help with standard sign design and best practices, please contact us. Signs are most effective when they are consistent across the region.)
5. Promoting safe recreation education

**Even a single post can help prevent an accident.**

## Key Safety Messages

### 1. Recognize the Danger

If you see a **smooth line across the river**, you're likely looking at a dam. Low dams create a powerful circulating current that traps people underwater. Escape is extremely difficult.

### 2. Avoid the Hazard

**Never attempt to go over a low dam.**

Always:

- Exit the river upstream
- Portage around the dam
- Re-enter well downstream of the backwash

### 3. Watch Conditions

River conditions can change quickly. Always check conditions before launching. <https://www.mcdwater.org/river-safety>

- High water makes dams more dangerous
- After heavy rain, stay off the river
- Cold water can cause shock and drowning

### 4. Wear a Life Jacket

More than **80% of boating fatalities involve someone not wearing a life jacket.**

Wear it. Every trip.

## Suggested Timing for Posts

Best times to share safety messages:

### Early Season

March–May (before peak recreation)

### High Use Period

Memorial Day through Labor Day

### After Heavy Rain

Remind users high water increases danger.

### Holiday Weekends

Memorial Day

July 4

Labor Day

## Suggested Hashtags

Use all or any of the following:

[#CalmWaterCanKill](#)

[#SafeBoating](#)

[#WearIt](#)

## Newsletter/Website Blurb Example

Low head dams may appear calm, but the circulating current they create can trap people underwater. This powerful current can hold boats, swimmers, and debris in a repeating cycle that is extremely difficult to escape.

When recreating on rivers, always watch for warning signs and buoys that indicate a dam ahead. Exit the river upstream and portage safely around the hazard before continuing downstream.

Learn the warning signs and plan ahead before launching. Check conditions before launching:

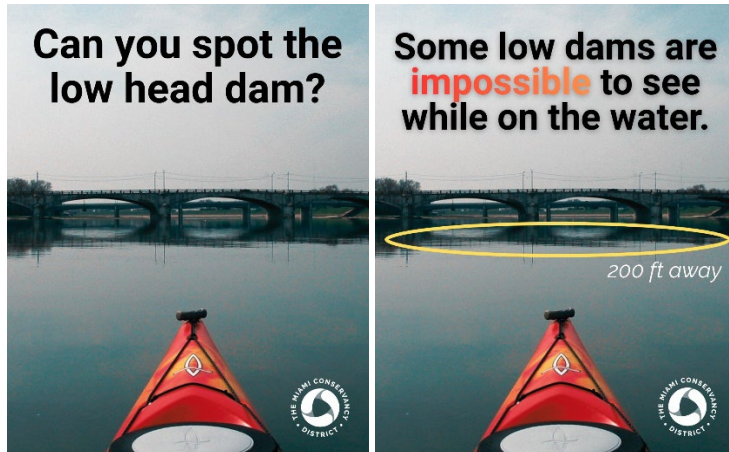
<https://www.mcdwater.org/river-safety>

## Social Media Posts (Ready to Use)

<p><b>Post Option 1</b></p> <p>Looks calm.</p> <p>But it can trap you underwater.</p> <p>Low head dams create powerful circulating currents that are nearly impossible to escape.</p> <p><b>Take the portage. Live to paddle again.</b></p> <p>#CalmWaterCanKill #RiverSafety</p>	<p><b>Post Option 3</b></p> <p>Planning a river trip?</p> <p>Remember:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Know dam locations</li> <li>• Stay off the river during high water</li> <li>• Always wear a life jacket</li> </ul> <p><b>Take the Portage. Live to Paddle Again.</b></p>
<p><b>Post Option 2</b></p> <p>If you see a <b>smooth line across the river</b>, it may be a dam.</p> <p>Low dams can trap boats and swimmers in a deadly circulating current.</p> <p>Never paddle over a dam.</p> <p>Exit upstream and portage safely around it.</p> <p><b>Calm Water Can Kill</b></p>	<p><b>Post Option 4</b></p> <p>Low head dams are sometimes called “<b>drowning machines.</b>”</p> <p>They may look calm, but the currents below them can hold people underwater.</p> <p>If you see the warning signs or buoys – <b>exit the river immediately.</b></p> <p>#CalmWaterCanKill</p>
<p><b>Post Option 5</b></p> <p>More than <b>80% of boating fatalities happen when someone isn’t wearing a life jacket.</b></p> <p>Wear it.</p> <p>Every trip.</p> <p>No exceptions.</p> <p>River safety starts with you.</p>	<p><b>Short Caption Versions (For Instagram, Bluesky, or X)</b></p> <p><b>Option 1</b></p> <p>Calm water can hide deadly currents.</p> <p>Know where they are. Portage around dams.</p> <p><b>Option 2</b></p> <p>See the line across the river?</p> <p>That’s a dam. Exit upstream.</p> <p><b>Option 3</b></p> <p>Low dams look safe. They aren’t.</p>

## Suggestions for Graphic Use

The seven different images provided in the [Google Share Drive](#) can be used all together, selectively, or one-on-one in a series of posts. However, we recommend using the two images shown below as a pair, especially in a carousel (multiple-image post that a user swipes through):



### Media Contact

For more information about river safety or the campaign, contact:

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