

Paddle Difficulty Rating Schedule

The Lowcountry Paddlers has developed a skill level requirement for each trip. Club members and visitors can use this to determine if they should paddle on a certain trip.

The skill level of each paddler is self determined. If the trip leader does not believe the paddler is qualified for the trip, she/he may turn back paddlers who rate their skill level above their actual experience.

The Trip Leader may require paddlers who have not previously paddled with the club to demonstrate their paddling skills before allowing them to join the trip.

The purpose of the rating schedule is to ensure that everyone on a trip has a safe and good time. As always, any paddler who is concerned about their safety on a trip needs to turn away from the trip at the beginning.

Example: Due to wind and tide conditions, the harbor may be rough and a *** level paddler wanting to participate on a *** level trip might determine at that time that they are uncomfortable with the conditions for themselves for the trip. They need to exercise their own judgment and not take the trip, even though they might feel qualified based on the rating schedule. (In other words, it is always possible for a *** level trip to change to a **** level trip due to weather conditions).

*** Novice Paddler:** Any adult with access to a kayak is welcome on * trips. These are good trips to learn paddling techniques, to determine if a new paddler wants to participate in club trips etc.

**** Paddler:** Adults who know they can paddle 10 miles or more and generally keep up with the group. New people to paddling should not attempt a ** trip until they have done several trips with the club. The club experience is that many beginners who take ** trips do not enjoy a good paddle, either for themselves or those who need to paddle with them.

***** Intermediate Paddler:** Paddlers who know they can paddle against the tide, know they can keep up with club paddlers from past experience, and who have done several paddles over 10 miles.

****** Equipped Intermediate Paddler:** These trips are not appropriate for recreational kayaks under 13 feet in length, skirts may be necessary on the trip.

******* Experienced paddler:** Club trips will not be in this category. This is for show and go leaders to set the tone of the trip. Recreational kayaks are not appropriate. Skirts may be required. Trips may be in open water, subject to waves and wind. Leaders may require the ability to roll as a qualification for such a trip.