

Cold Water Kills

Cold water immersion related drowning accounts for the majority of boating fatalities in Alaska. Cold shock response, incapacitation, and eventually, immersion hypothermia all greatly increase the risk of drowning, regardless of swimming ability.



Photo courtesy of Damon Hampel

WEARING A LIFE JACKET COULD BE THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR IN SURVIVING A COLD WATER IMMERSION EVENT.

Changing River

The Little Su is a dynamic and ever-changing river whose water level and flow speed can change quickly and dramatically—plan accordingly. Beware of stretches of shallow water and the potential for sweepers and logjams, especially in early spring and summer. Power boaters, paddlers, and anglers all share this river, so please be respectful and considerate of others and be prepared for surprise encounters when coming around bends.

For more information:

Alaska Office of Boating Safety
550 W. 7th Avenue, Suite 1380
Anchorage, AK 99501-3561
(907) 269-8706

Alaska State Parks
Mat-Su/Copper Basin Area Office
7278 E. Bogard Road
Wasilla, AK 99654
(907) 745-3975

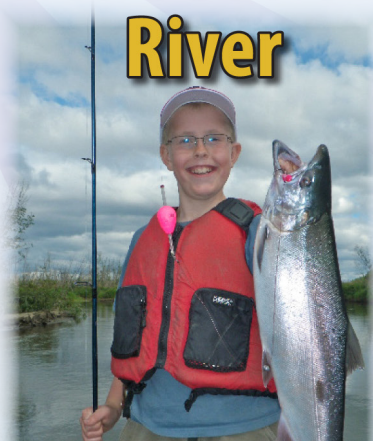
www.alaskaboatingsafety.org



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Cover photo courtesy of Andrew Couch

Your Guide to the Little Susitna River



A Supplement to the Alaska Boater's Handbook

Little Susitna River

The Little Susitna River, fondly known as the Little Su, winds approximately 110 miles from its source in Hatcher Pass through the Talkeetna Mountains and the Susitna Flats State Game Refuge to its mouth at Cook Inlet. This river is popular with all kinds of boaters and anglers and hosts runs of all five species of Pacific salmon. Whatever your activity of choice, please respect the river's unpredictability.



Photo courtesy of Travis Shinabarger

Navigating the Little Su

The International Navigation Rules on Steering and Sailing apply on the Little Su regardless of the type of vessel. Boaters must be constantly vigilant of their circumstances. All boaters at all times should:

- Maintain a proper lookout
- Proceed at a safe speed, so that proper and effective action to avoid collision can be taken
- Be prepared to depart from the "Rules," if necessary to avoid a collision

The "Rules" confer responsibilities to all boaters, never entitlements. For more details on the navigation rules and other boating laws, see www.alaskaboatingsafety.org.



Photo courtesy of Travis Shinabarger

Prepare For the Unexpected



ON YOUR PERSON- Carry a means of emergency communication (i.e. a VHF radio, cell phone*, satellite phone*) and signaling (i.e. emergency locator beacon, whistle, visual distress signals).

*Note: A satellite phone is more dependable than a cellular phone along many stretches of the Little Su.

Wear a Life Jacket

—ALWAYS—

By law, children under the age of 13 must wear a U.S. Coast Guard approved life jacket in an open boat or on the deck of a boat.



ALASKA REQUIREMENTS SUMMARY

Requirements	Boats under 16 feet	Boats 16 feet to less than 26 feet	Boats 26 feet to less than 40 feet	Boats 40 feet to less than 66 feet
Personal Flotation Devices (PFD)	One USCG-approved Type I, II, III or V PFD for each person on board. Must be in serviceable condition. Persons under 13 must wear a PFD when in an open boat, on the deck of a boat or when waterskiing.			
Throwable Devices (Type IV)	Recommended but not mandatory.	Except for canoes and kayaks, one USCG-approved Type IV (seat cushion or throw ring) device must be carried.		
Sound Producing Devices	Boats less than 39.4 feet (12 meters) in length must be able to make an efficient sound signal (such as that made with a whistle or horn) to signal intentions and to signal position in periods of reduced visibility.			Boats 39.4 feet (12 meters) or more in length must carry on board a whistle or horn.
Visual Distress Signals	USCG-approved night signals required between sunset and sunrise.	USCG-approved visual distress signals for both day and night time use must be carried. Exception: boats and open sailboats not equipped with mechanical propulsion and under 26 feet in length are not required to carry day signals. <i>Note: Pyrotechnic devices, if used to meet this requirement, must be current, serviceable and readily accessible. At the minimum, a total of three day/night combination devices or three day and three night devices must be carried.</i>		
Fire Extinguishers	At least one USCG-approved B-I required for boats with inboard engines, living spaces, permanent fuel tanks or enclosed storage areas or hull voids not sealed or filled with flotation material.		At least two B-I or one B-II USCG-approved fire extinguishers.	At least three B-I or one B-I and one B-II USCG-approved fire extinguishers.
Navigation Lights	Display required between sunset and sunrise and during periods of restricted visibility. International configuration required (varies with length and mode of operation). See the International Navigation Rules.			
Backfire Flame Arrestors	One USCG-approved backfire control device on each carburetor of all inboard gasoline engines.			
Ventilation	Boats with permanently installed engines, closed compartments or permanent fuel tanks must have efficient natural or mechanical ventilation.			
Registration	Undocumented boats equipped with mechanical propulsion (gas, diesel or steam engines, and electric motors) and any undocumented vessel used in sport fishing charter activities must be registered with the Division of Motor Vehicles. Certificate of Number must be carried onboard. Registration numbers and validation decals must be properly displayed on hull of boat.			

File a Float Plan

Describe the boat and list equipment, names of persons on the boat, planned destination and route, expected date and time of return, when and who to contact if overdue. Leave it with a responsible party. Visit pledgetolive.org to file an electronic float plan.



At the Pledge to Live website you can also

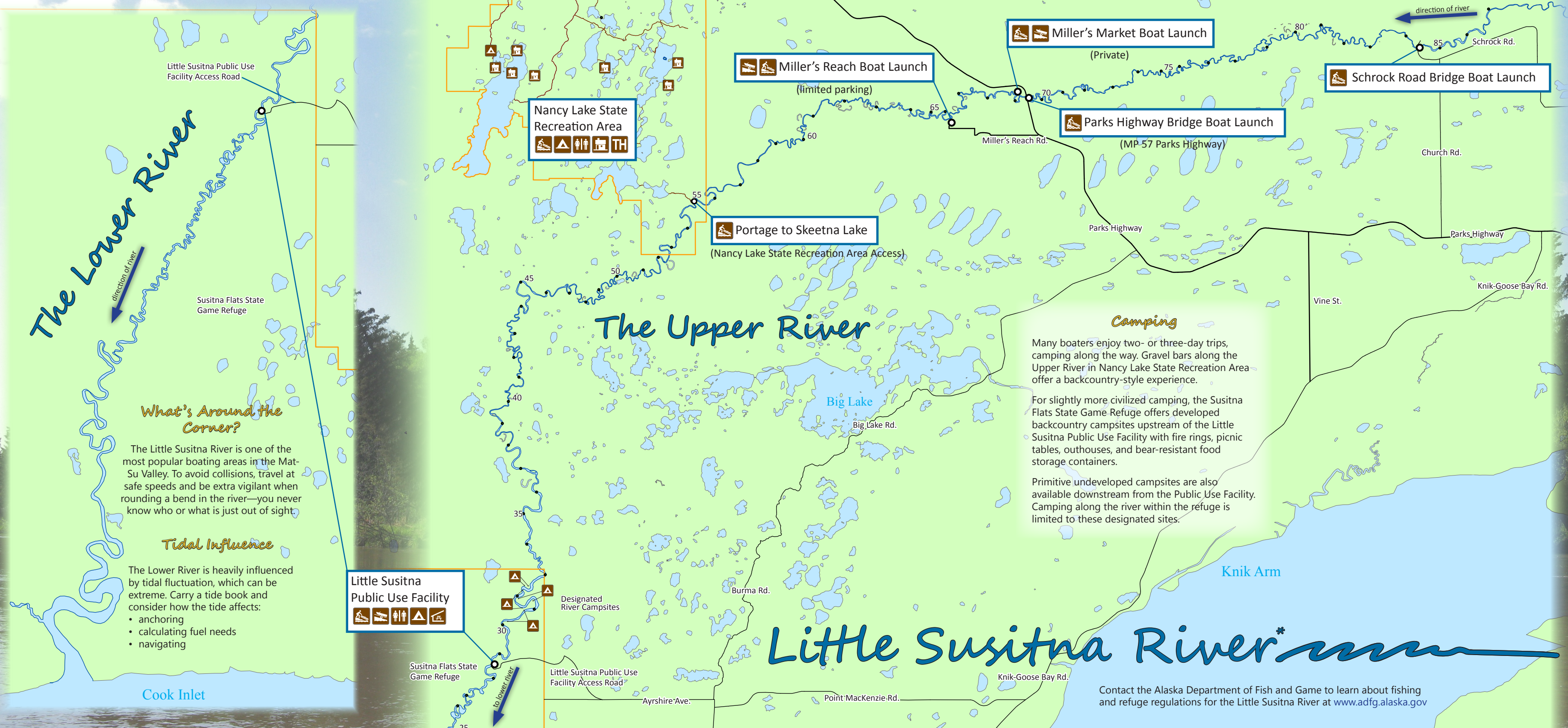
- Check the weather, tide tables and more
- Access NOAA Nautical charts
- Use the predeparture checklist
- Check out types and uses of life jackets
- Pledge! Make a pledge to always wear your life jacket

NEVER Drink and Operate a Boat

There is **NO** safe threshold for drinking and operating a boat, especially on the Little Su where constant vigilance and quick reactions can make all the difference.

In Alaska, the laws that define driving while intoxicated and the penalties upon conviction apply to boat operators too.





The Lower River

The Upper River

Little Susitna River*

What's Around the Corner?

The Little Susitna River is one of the most popular boating areas in the Mat-Su Valley. To avoid collisions, travel at safe speeds and be extra vigilant when rounding a bend in the river—you never know who or what is just out of sight.

Tidal Influence

The Lower River is heavily influenced by tidal fluctuation, which can be extreme. Carry a tide book and consider how the tide affects:

- anchoring
- calculating fuel needs
- navigating

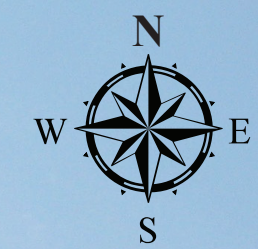
Camping

Many boaters enjoy two- or three-day trips, camping along the way. Gravel bars along the Upper River in Nancy Lake State Recreation Area offer a backcountry-style experience.

For slightly more civilized camping, the Susitna Flats State Game Refuge offers developed backcountry campsites upstream of the Little Susitna Public Use Facility with fire rings, picnic tables, outhouses, and bear-resistant food storage containers.

Primitive undeveloped campsites are also available downstream from the Public Use Facility. Camping along the river within the refuge is limited to these designated sites.

Contact the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to learn about fishing and refuge regulations for the Little Susitna River at www.adfg.alaska.gov



Legend	
	Camping
	Non-Motorized Launch
	Motorized Launch
	Restrooms
	Picnic Shelter
	Trailhead
	Public-Use Cabin
	River
	Road
	River Access
	River Mile Markers

Smart Power Boating

A little preparation could ensure a safe return from a memorable adventure. Consider the following:

- Overloading is a major cause of capsizing and swamping
- Carry a spare means of propulsion
- Carry an anchor
- Constantly watch for logjams and floating debris
- Use the "rule of thirds" for fuel management. 1/3 to go out, 1/3 to get home, and 1/3 for reserve

These considerations are especially important if boating downstream from the Little Susitna Public Use Facility.

Boater's Toolbox



Go to www.alaskaboatingsafety.org to file a float plan, reference the navigation rules, check the marine weather, plan a trip, and much more.

*Map not intended as a reference for navigation. Please respect private property along the river.