

Common River Hazards & Obstacles

EDDY

Eddies form behind a rock, obstruction, island, or bend in the river. Water flows past the object but creates a circular upstream current behind the object.

If your boat crosses into an eddy, your boat may turn suddenly and unexpectedly.

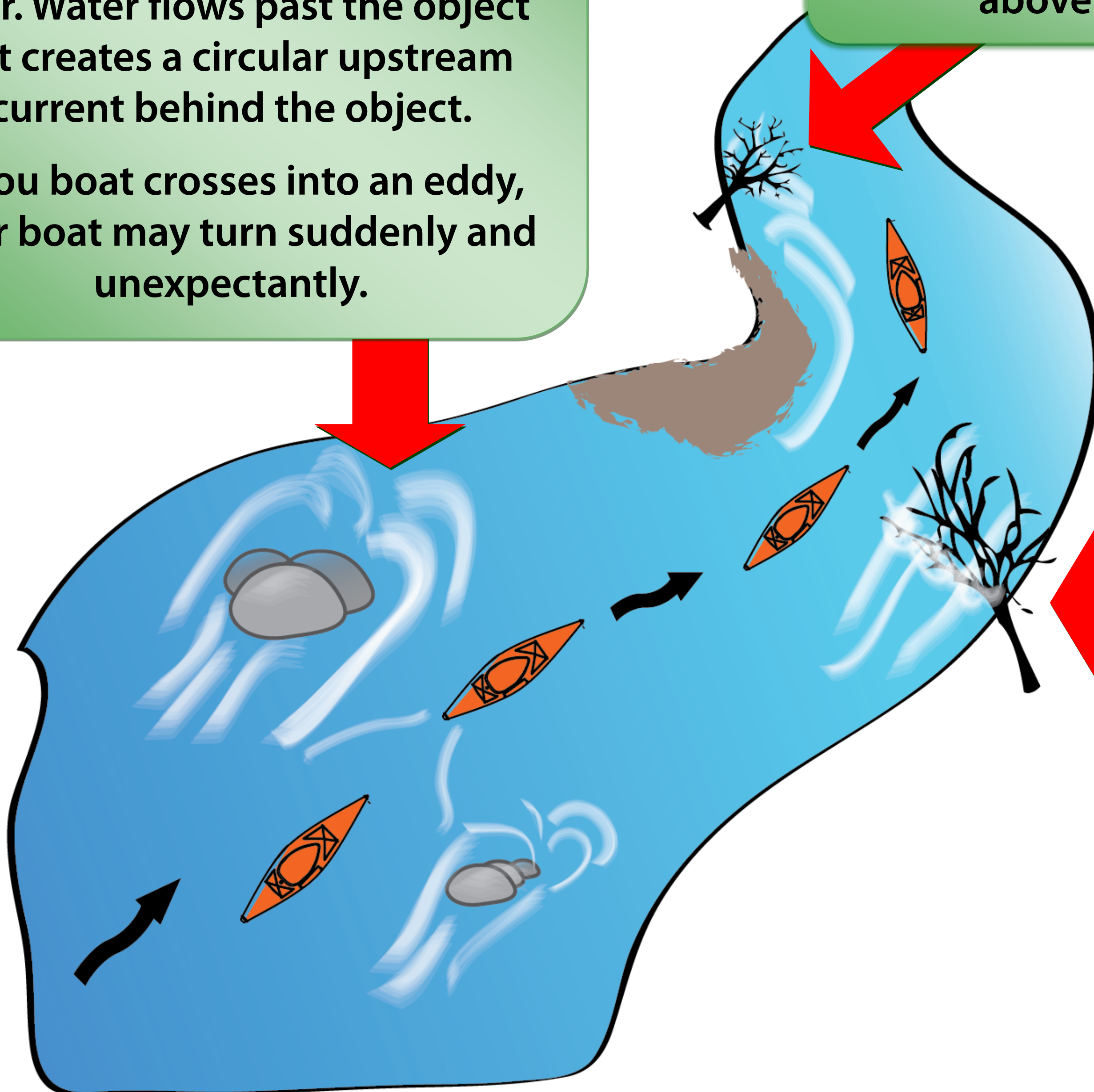
SWEEPER

Branches hanging low over or into water that can sweep a paddler from the boat. A sweeper is just above the water. Avoid sweepers.

STRAINER

A Strainer is a tree or other object that allows water to pass through but stops and holds objects such as boats and people.

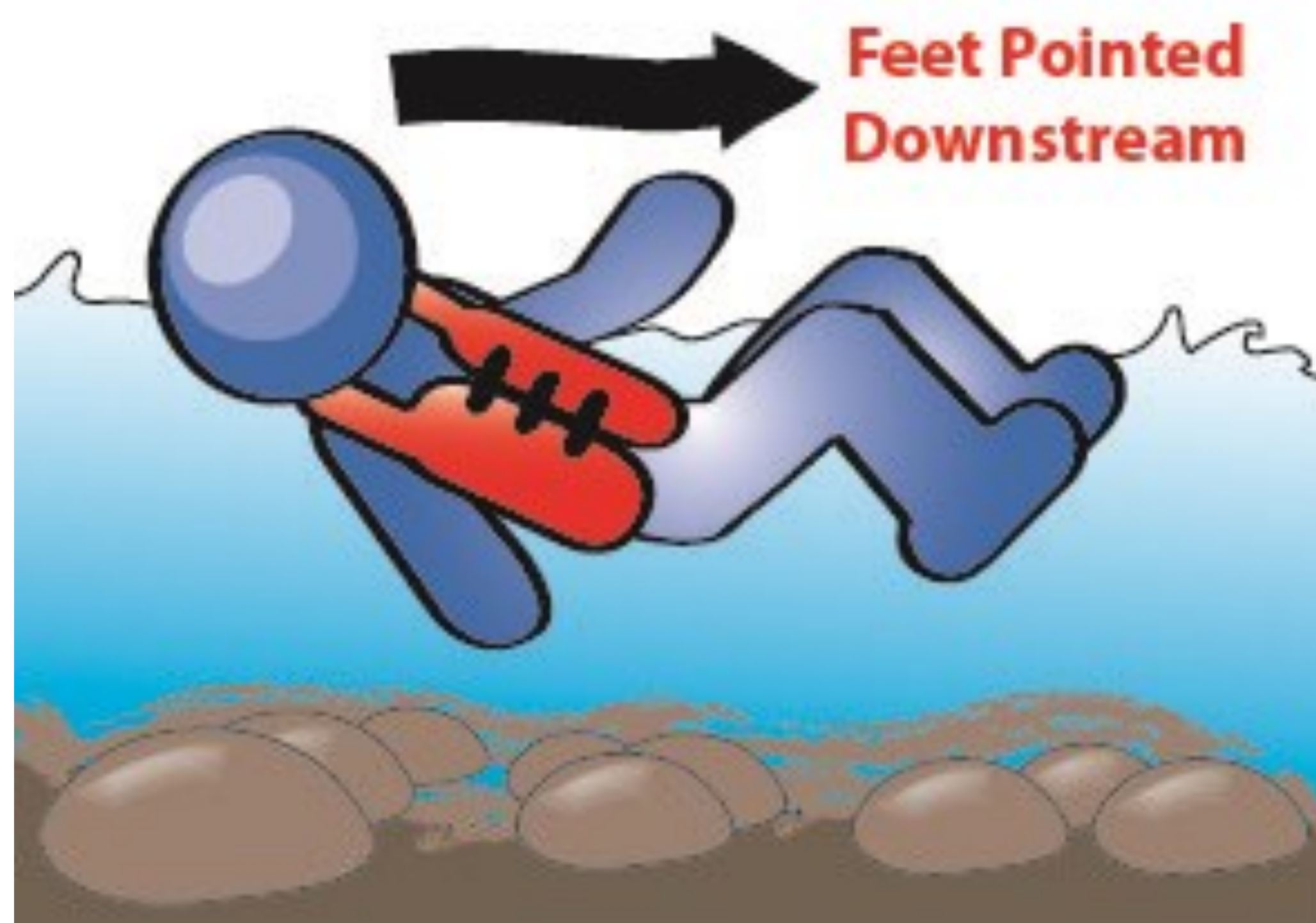
You should avoid strainers, but if you cannot and your boat flips climb on top of the strainer to avoid being caught under the water.



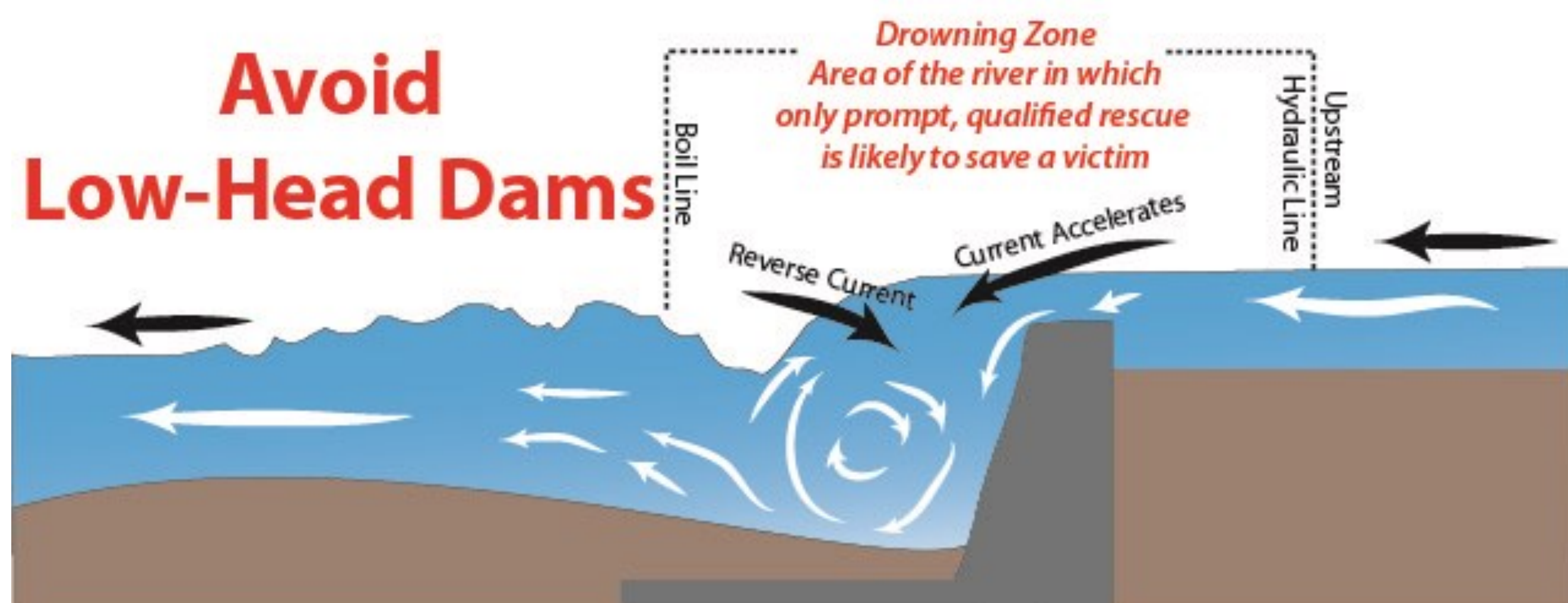
Defensive Swimming Position

If you go overboard in fast moving water, roll onto your back and float with your legs downstream, feet out of the water. This position lets you fend off rocks with your feet, and is much safer than floating or swimming head first. Never stand up in fast water that is knee-deep or deeper. Your feet can be entrapped in rocks and the current can knock you over and hold you under.

"Basic Canoeing" Stackpole Books 2003, Jon Rounds, Wayne Dickert



Avoid Low-Head Dams



LOW-HEAD DAMS

Low-head dams are dams that the water flows over. The straight drop of water over the edge creates dangerous recirculation current at the base of the dam that can trap people and boats. This recirculation of water is often called a "drowning machine." (www.americancanoe.org—"Low Head Dam Safety")