

## River Quest 2014

# *It floats, you don't. Wear your life jacket.*

### Synopsis, Resource Links, and Vocabulary List

MN Standard 6.2.2.2.2

Physical Science

Contact: Lance R. Olson, Commander, Duluth Sail & Power Squadron

Phone: 218-340-3598 Email: Lance\_R\_Olson@hotmail.com

#### Synopsis:

Ten people drown every day in the United States. 88% of these were not wearing life jackets. Life jackets are now much different than the orange vests commonly envisioned and they are collectively known as Personal Flotation Devices or PFD's. Life jackets save lives because they are more buoyant in water than people are – *they float, you don't*. Buoyancy is the force that counteracts the force of gravity that wants to make you sink. The buoyant force is due to the difference in density between the water and the life jacket.

There are different types of life jackets and they make use of different materials such as foam or air but they all have the same characteristic of having a lower density than water. The different life jackets also are designed for different uses and different weather or survival conditions. For example, a life jacket designed to help a person survive in the open ocean has a greater buoyant force than a life jacket which will be used primarily in small inland lakes. The reason for this is that the person may be in the water for a longer period of time before rescue and the waves will likely be higher and the greater buoyancy will hold the person higher in the water. Life jackets are also designed different for different activities. For activities that require a large degree of motion such as windsurfing, jet skiing, or fishing, a bulky life jacket will not work as well so specialty life jackets are available for these sports but each person must be aware of the tradeoffs between convenience and safety if they choose to use these life jackets.

#### Reference Material Links:

PFDMA: <http://www.pfdma.org/local/downloads/documents/pfdmabrochure.pdf>

US CDC: <http://www.cdc.gov/homeandrecreationalafety/water-safety/waterinjuries-factsheet.html>

MN DNR: [http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/safety/boatwater/pfd\\_selecting.html](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/safety/boatwater/pfd_selecting.html)

WI DNR: <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/boat/pfd.html>

#### Vocabulary List:

Personal Flotation Device: A personal flotation device (abbreviated as PFD; also referred to as a lifejacket, life preserver, Mae West, life vest, life saver, cork jacket, buoyancy aid or flotation suit) is piece of equipment designed to assist a wearer, who may be either conscious or unconscious, to keep afloat.

Buoyancy: the ability or tendency to float in water or air or some other fluid.

Gravity: the force that attracts a body toward the center of the earth, or toward any other physical body having mass

Density: the state or quality of being dense; compactness; closely set or crowded condition.

