River Quest 2015

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

Synopsis, Resource Links, and Vocabulary List

Contact: Tom Linderholm, Executive Officer, Duluth Sail & Power Squadron
Phone: 218-349-2728  Email: tlinderholm1@hotmail.com

**Synopsis:**
Ten people drown every day in the United States. 88% of these were not wearing life jackets. Life jackets have changed since the old 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 counteracting the 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 several types of life jackets and they made of a variety of materials such as foam or air. However, they all have the same characteristic of providing 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 requiring 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:**


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](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 a 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.