

BASIS AND PURPOSE STATEMENT

FOR THE MODIFICATION OF EXISTING REGULATIONS REGARDING PERSONAL FLOTATION DEVICES AND THROWBAGS ON REGULATED RIVER TRIPS

In 2010, the Colorado Legislature completed a Sunset Review of the Colorado River Outfitter Licensing Program, managed by Colorado State Parks. In addition to the continuation of the program, several other changes were instituted, including establishment of an Advisory Committee to examine regulation changes. The Committee was put in place in early 2011 and includes two outfitters and one member from the Division.

The Committee reviewed a number of proposed regulation changes that were brought forward by both the industry & the Division. Two of these were unanimously agreed upon; allowing a suitable type III Personal Flotation Device (PFD) to be worn by passengers and elimination of the diameter requirement of throwbag line.

Current regulations state that passengers on regulated trips must wear a type I or V PFD unless they're in a canoe or kayak, in which case they can wear a type III. Guides, guides in training, trip leaders & guide instructors are allowed to wear a type III. Type V pfd's do provide more flotation than a type III and have a "pillow" that may right a person in still water. Due to better design & materials, the Committee feels that allowing type III pfd's to be worn by passengers would not negatively affect the safety of the passengers. Type III pfd's are typically more comfortable than type V's and we anticipate passengers being less likely to unbuckle or remove the pfd during a trip. A number of outfitters have told us that regardless of what was allowed, they would continue to put passengers in type V pfd's in stronger whitewater.

The required diameter of throwbag line has been 3/8 inch for a long time. This diameter has been accepted because of its ease of handling & use in technical rescue systems. Because of vast material improvements, there are currently many more options of line than in the past; all of which have pro's and con's (weight, stretch, strength, durability, floatability, etc). The Committee feels that maintaining the requirement to carry at least one throwbag per regulated trip but eliminating the diameter requirement would not negatively the safety of passengers.