



Fresno County Sheriff - Coroner's Office

Margaret Mims, Sheriff - Coroner

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News Release

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Kings River Closed to Recreational Users

Effective immediately, the Fresno County Sheriff's Office is closing the Kings River from Pine Flat Dam to the Tulare and Kings County lines. Sheriff Margaret Mims has made this order in the best interest of public safety. This closure is permitted under the authority of Penal Code 409.5(a) and Fresno County Ordinance 13.32.080.

Due to a large amount of melting snow in the Sierra, Pine Flat Dam is currently taking in water at a rate of 16,300 cubic feet per second (cfs). This amount of water coming into the lake is nearly twice as much as what was flowing in at this time last week. The dam is pushing 8,373 cfs into the Kings River, as of Wednesday morning.

1 cfs = 7 ½ gallons per second

This amounts to 449 gallons per minute and 646,272 gallons per day

Members of the Sheriff's Boating Enforcement Unit (BEU) recently surveyed the Kings River and the temperature registered 50°. Exposure to the cold water can cause hypothermia, which can quickly lead to exhaustion or unconsciousness. During the survey, deputies also found numerous public safety hazards and areas of serious concern for floaters and swimmers. Since the river is at its highest level in years, several of its banks have eroded and that has led to many trees falling into the river. Downed trees create strainers, which is where turbulent water flows through the tree. A person caught in a strainer can quickly find

themselves pinned against the tree or even swept underneath it. It is extremely difficult to rescue yourself from a strainer and typically requires emergency help from trained rescue personnel.

It is important for the public to understand that access to the river is denied until further notice. This includes all recreational activity such as: Boating, canoeing, kayaking, swimming, floating, etc. The Sheriff's Office will strictly enforce this closure and violators will be subject to citations. This infraction comes with a fine of \$225.00. It should be noted that both Tulare and Kings County have also closed its portions of the Kings River in the interest of public safety.

The Fresno County Sheriff's Office will be reassessing water levels and river conditions throughout the summer. If deemed safe, access to the river could be reopened to the public.

The public can check the hourly flows from Pine Flat Dam by visiting <http://www.spk-wc.usace.army.mil/fcgi-bin/hourly.py?report=pnf>

As you recreate in other waterways this summer, the Sheriff's Office would like to remind you to be safe while doing your activities. Take simple precautions such as: Wear a life jacket, stay close to shore if you're not an experienced swimmer and do not mix alcohol and swimming. Alcohol causes swimmers to fatigue faster than normal and can create dangerous situations. Also, please keep an eye on your children at all times. In less than a minute they can slip into the water and be put at risk for injury or death.