



Fresno County Sheriff's Office

Margaret Mims, Sheriff

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News Release

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Man Rescued from Kings River

A man in his late 20s is in the hospital after nearly drowning in the Kings River on Friday. His condition is unknown.

Around 1:45 pm, a woman called Fresno Sheriff's Office dispatchers to report a man, who was not wearing a life jacket, was in trouble on the Kings River. He reportedly tried swimming across the river near the Pine Flat Road Bridge, just below the dam. Once he got halfway, the man began to panic and the strong current swept him away. As he floated downstream, he grabbed hold of a bush and held on, waiting for rescuers to reach him. Deputies responded by vehicle, helicopter and boat, but it was Cal Fire firefighters who reached him first. Firefighters tossed throwbags to him, which he was able to grab. Firefighters pulled him to shore where they found him to be semi-conscious and breathing. A SkyLife helicopter arrived and the air ambulance flew the man to the hospital for treatment.

It is important to note that the Kings River from Pine Flat Dam to the Tulare and Kings County lines remains closed. Our office put this order in place on June 4th. This closure is permitted under the authority of Penal Code 409.5(a) and Fresno County Ordinance 13.32.080.

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. During the closure, the Sheriff's Boating Enforcement Unit (BEU) will continue to patrol the Kings River. Deputies will strictly enforce this closure and violators will be subject to citations. This infraction comes with a minimum fine of \$225.00. It has not been determined if the man involved in Friday's incident will receive a citation.

The Kings River water temperature is currently registering between 53° - 55°. Exposure to the cold water can cause hypothermia, which can quickly lead to exhaustion or unconsciousness. Increased water releases can result in numerous public safety hazards and areas of serious concern for floaters and swimmers. Riverbanks can erode and lead to many more 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.

As you recreate in all natural 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 out of the water 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 of injury or death.

The Fresno County Sheriff's Office will be reassessing water levels and river conditions throughout the summer. Once deemed safe, access to the river will be reopened to the public. The Sheriff's Office will notify the community online and via the media.

