



Fresno County Sheriff's Office

Margaret Mims, Sheriff

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News Release

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Sheriff Mims to Reopen Kings River to Recreational Users

Effective Saturday, July 6th, 2019, the Fresno County Sheriff's Office is reopening the Kings River from Pine Flat Dam to the Tulare and Kings County lines.

On June 4th, Sheriff Margaret Mims issued an order to close the river in the best interest of public safety. Due to the large amount of melting snow in the Sierra, an extremely heavy amount of water flowed into and out of Pine Flat Dam. On Friday, our Sheriff's Boating Enforcement Unit (BEU) consulted with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The result is that water releases are now expected to stabilize, creating safe enough conditions for the public to access the Kings River.

The Sheriff's Office is extremely pleased with how well the public cooperated with the rules set in place during the closure of the river. One rescue did occur on June 28th when a man attempted to swim across the river near the Pine Flat Bridge Road. He was swept downstream and grabbed hold of a bush and held on until firefighters pulled him to shore. He was transported to a hospital for medical treatment. Deputies did not issue any citations during the closure period. Everyone deputies did find to be in the water illegally, acted respectfully and exited without any problems.

Although the river is being reopened, it is important to note several safety hazards still exist for boaters, floaters and swimmers. There are downed trees, which create strainers. A strainer 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. Please use good, safe judgement when entering the water. The temperature of the water is registering about 56°. Exposure to the cold water can cause hypothermia, which can quickly lead to exhaustion or unconsciousness. We ask that you take simple safety precautions while doing water activities 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 for injury or death.

The Boating Enforcement Unit will continue to patrol the river this summer to enforce the law and assist with any safety matters.