



High flows expected on Merced River throughout spring and summer months

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Contact Merced County:

Mike North
209-726-2744
mnorth@countyofmerced.com

Contact MID:

Mike Jensen
209-354-2856
mjensen@mercedid.org

Starting this week, high flows are expected along the Merced River and the public is cautioned to stay out of the fast-moving water.

Melting snow coupled with the potential for future storm runoff will combine to create dangerously-fast currents along the waterway. The flows are expected to remain high throughout the spring and into early summer.

“With the warm weather rapidly approaching, a lot of people might think it’s a good idea to cool down in a river or canal,” said Merced County Fire Chief Nancy Koerperich. “However, these channels are not there for swimming or rafting. Their purpose is to carry high volumes of cold, fast-moving water downstream. We do not want any tragedies this year: Please stay safe and stay out of the River.”

Sheriff Vern Warnke shares Chief Koerperich’s concerns about dangerous flows along the river. Warnke said the River is to be considered off-limits and should not be entered for recreational purposes.

“Despite our efforts to warn people not to go in the river, they do it anyway—and often need to be rescued,” Warnke said. “This is fast moving water that can put a lot of people in danger very quick. Anyone who enters the water and needs to be rescued can be held personally liable for the costs associated with that operation.”

Although it’s been a below-average year in terms of precipitation, late storms have brought significant snowpack and runoff to the central foothills.

“March brought significant storms and fresh snowpack to the Central Sierra Nevada,” said Hicham EITal, Deputy General Manager at MID. “With spring temperatures quickly arriving, the Merced River will experience large volumes of water.”

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