

## Community partners urge Yuba River visitors to be safe

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### KNOW & GO

For more information on river safety, go to <https://yubariver.org/our-work/river-ambassador-program/river-safety/>.

The rains have finally stopped and the temperatures are rising.

And that means the first wave of the approximately 500,000 annual visitors to the South Yuba River State Park is about to hit Nevada County, ready to play in the water.



The message from local river advocates and public safety personnel is pretty simple: Don't.

At least, not yet.

Representatives from South Yuba River Citizens League, Nevada County, State Parks, Consolidated Fire and Cal Fire came together Thursday to hammer that point home. They held a press conference on the old Highway 49 bridge, overlooking an area of the river where there have been multiple drownings over the years, most recently [two last June](#).

“Look at this river,” Nevada County Supervisor Sue Hoek said, gesturing to the Yuba flowing fast and high behind her. “It’s amazing. ... She’s majestic, but definitely not tamed.”

SYRCL Executive Director Melinda Booth noted the river was flowing at about 4,000 cubic feet per second that morning. For reference, she said, a typical summer’s day flow is just 50. And those flows can change substantially throughout the day, emphasized Nevada County Sheriff’s Capt. Mike Walsh.

“This is a big water year,” Booth said. “The Yuba River will be running high, fast and very cold well into June and July.”

Many of the law enforcement entities that count the river as part of their jurisdiction emphasized the rugged and remote nature of much of the river canyon, where lack of phone coverage and distance from trail heads can delay and hamper rescue efforts.



“It’s a challenge,” said Matthew Green, superintendent of the State Parks Sierra Gold district. “We can’t do it alone.”

### **‘NOT SAFE ENOUGH TO SWIM RIGHT NOW’**

Hoek noted some of the programs put in place by the Yuba River Safety Cohort, including a satellite phone call box at Purdon Crossing and six satellite phones earmarked for use by SYRCL’s river ambassadors. New signs warning of the dangers of hypothermia also are going up at popular river spots.

Walsh said sheriff’s deputies, working with the Bureau of Land Management, State Parks, California Highway Patrol and Cal Fire, will be ramping up patrols along the river on the weekend. One big push will be enforcing parking, he said, adding that towing is an option.

“We want you to enjoy the river, we want you to be safe,” said Nevada County Consolidated Fire Battalion Chief Josh Sunde.

His primary message was for parents: Put life jackets on your kids, he said, and make sure you are always within arm’s reach.

“It’s not safe enough to swim right now,” Booth concluded. “It’s just not worth it.”

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