

# Safety on the go: South Yuba River Citizens League to pass out safety bandanas this weekend, summer

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Pamphlets weren't working so bandanas will replace them.

That was the decision made around February by the South Yuba River Citizens League and other government agencies to keep Yuba River visitors safe and knowledgeable about possible danger.

The yellow bandanas were printed Tuesday, and will be first distributed Saturday and then throughout the summer until early September, according to Daniel Belshe, community engagement manager for SYRCL.

"It's not like a flyer that someone's going to pick up and throw on the ground," said Belshe.

Matthew Green, chief ranger for the Sierra District of the California Department of Parks and Recreation, agreed.

"Whether it's visual pollution or physical pollution" safety signs often goes unheeded and becomes environmental waste, he said.

The nonprofit plans to pass out a few thousand bandanas with a map of the Yuba River in addition to some warnings they regularly issue to the public regarding park rules prohibiting alcohol, the use of glass and the lack of cell service in the area.

Belshe, who coordinated with government agencies like California State Parks, the Bureau of Land Management California and Ready Nevada County on this project, said the bandanas can be used as bright flags to wave down emergency services in a moment of crisis.

The initiative comes at a time of concern for SYRCL and other public safety officials, as much of the public mistakenly believes the river levels are lower than they are, said Belshe. With this year's large snowpack in the Sierra, the water is still dangerous.

"Those currents are still really fast and strong," said Belshe, particularly for nonresidents unfamiliar with how best to navigate the area.

Two people have [already died](#) this of drowning at the South Yuba River, which doesn't include those who committed suicide or have accidentally fallen in the area. A [third person](#) went missing in the river this past weekend.

Like Belshe, Green hopes the bandanas are a "good beta test" for public safety, more effectively spreading information to prevent deaths and injuries.

"If it helps one person get a message about river safety, then it has its benefits," he said.

Belshe said river ambassadors will be sent to distribute bandanas at Bridgeport and along Highway 49. So many will be passed out by summer's end, there will likely be none left.

"I'm certain we will (run out)," he said. "But that's a good thing."

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