

Possible source of South Yuba plume identified

By Nevada County Office of Emergency Services - September 25, 2019, 05:35:13 PM

Nevada County, CA September 25, 2019 – Nevada County officials have identified a property on the 13000 block of Kilham Mine Road in Nevada City as the possible source of Friday's South Yuba River plume that moved downstream to Englebright Lake.

"We are thankful for all the community partners who helped us quickly get the word out about river conditions and identify the source of the plume," said Jeff Pettitt, Office of Emergency Services Manager and Sheriff Captain. "All agencies and organizations worked together to put the public's safety first and we are grateful for everyone's quick work."



Yuba River Plume Suspected Source Photo courtesy OES

After identifying the property by flying upriver with California Highway Patrol early on, officials from the County, Department of Fish and Wildlife and California State Water Resources Control Board made contact with the property owner on Tuesday. The owner has been cooperative, and staff from Nevada County Environmental Health have taken soil and water samples from the property to help complete the investigation.

Andrew Altevogt, Assistant Executive Officer of the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board, said "We take this incident very seriously and we will continue to work with county authorities to determine what happened and what the impacts were to water quality in the area. Once we've gathered the facts, we will determine the appropriate enforcement action to take." While on the property, staff also identified numerous code violations. Nevada County Code Compliance is working with the property owner to bring the property into compliance with County regulations.

"We are grateful for the County's rapid response to our report of the plume on Friday afternoon. Our history of mining makes our watershed especially vulnerable. It's when, not if, a catastrophic event will occur unless we take needed action and continue restoring our watershed," said Melinda Booth, South Yuba River Citizen League's Executive Director.

In addition to the samples taken from the property, Environmental Health will continue sampling this weekend to ensure water is safe for recreational use.

"After the preliminary tests showed dangerously high levels of E.coli at the Highway 49 Bridge of the South Yuba River, we were glad to have received recent results indicating no significant health concern," said Amy Irani, Nevada County Environmental Health Director.

Since tests at the Highway 49 Bridge on the South Yuba River initially showed dangerous levels of E.coli, please remember to contact your primary care physician if you were in the affected water since Friday and are experiencing vomiting or diarrhea. Nevada County Public Health has notified local health providers about the possibility of E.coli associated with Friday's plume.

All updates on the plume and Yuba River Advisory can be found at www.MyNevadaCounty.com/YubaRiverAdvisory.