



# What to know about the South Yuba River contamination

Nevada County river reopens following rare toxic plume

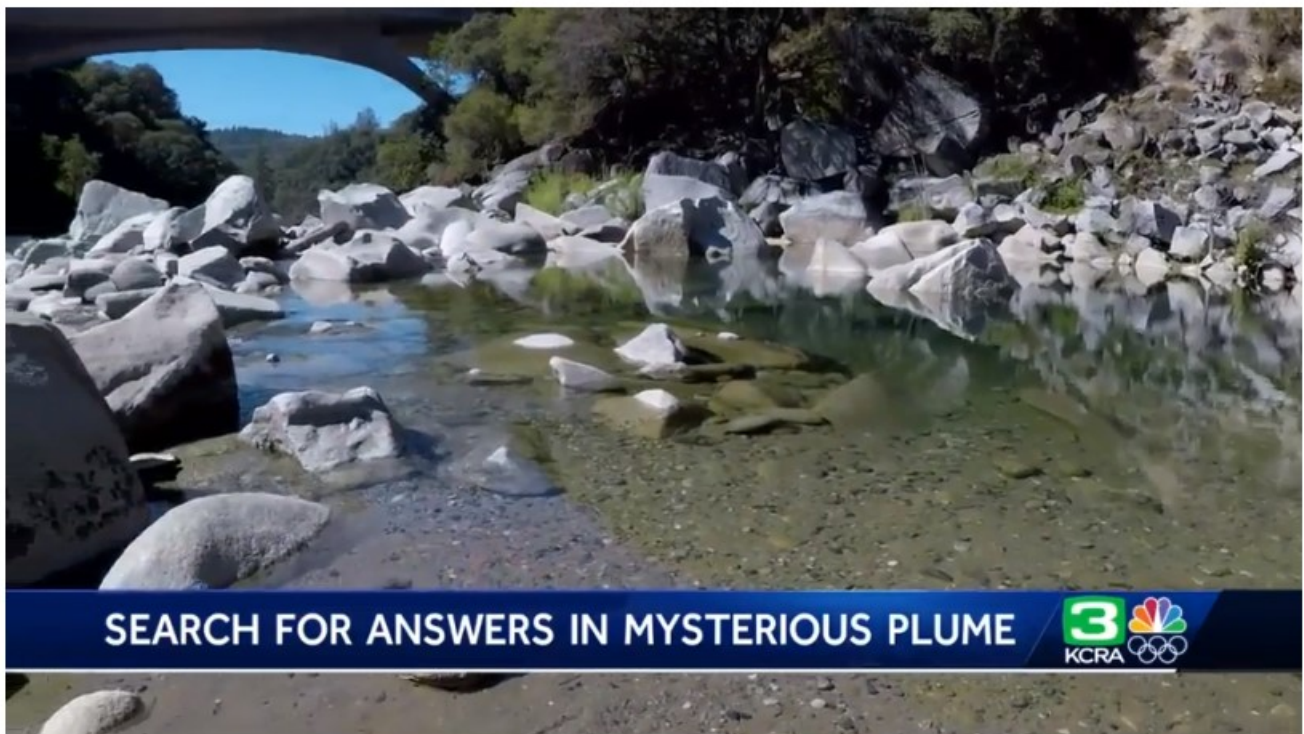
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Reporter



**NEVADA COUNTY, Calif.** — Health officials have lifted a no-swim advisory for parts of the [south fork of the Yuba River](#) and Englebright Reservoir after a mysterious plume contributed to unhealthy levels of E. coli and toxic metals [late last month](#).

Health officials determined [Wednesday](#) the water is now safe to enter.



“The county and the state have been doing additional testing over the past two weeks, and the river does appear to be safe,” said Melinda Boothe, with the [South Yuba River Citizens League](#). “The levels of E. coli, actually the next day had already dropped

to safe levels, and the sediments has washed down, as well. So, it is appearing that it is a great place to come visit and recreate this weekend.”



Here’s what you need to know:

### **What is considered safe?**

The county and state conducted testing for drinking water, toxic metals and E. coli, according to Nevada County Environmental Director Amy Irani.

There was no detection of lead, mercury or arsenic. The E. coli level was marked at 10 -- less than 3% of the 320 level the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency considers unhealthy.

“The water is truly safe,” Irani said.

### **What happened?**

That is still being investigated. The state is leading the investigation, with the collaboration of the county, and has been conducting testing.

Irani said the plume took place at a historic mining operation dating back to the 1800s off 13000 Kilham Mine Road. The more than 100-acre area is now the site of five parcels.

At this time, however, the former mining site doesn’t appear to be correlated with the contamination, Irani said. Investigators also ruled out cannabis grows as the cause or source.

### **Could this happen again?**

The county said it takes this issue very seriously. Should a future similar incident occur, the county would take any investigative and preventive action needed.