

PRESS RELEASE, May 20, 2020

High Water & Covid-19 Impact River Safety Memorial Day Weekend

Nevada City, CA—Memorial Day weekend typically marks the first surge of visitors to the Yuba River, but this year will be different due to COVID-19 and California’s stay-at-home order.

In anticipation of the warm weather predicted for the Memorial Day weekend, the South Yuba River Citizens League (SYRCL), California State Parks, Nevada County, and a host of additional government agencies and public safety officials who make up the Yuba River Safety Cohort group **urge the public to make the responsible choice and stay out of the water this weekend**. Not only are shelter-at-home orders still in effect, but this week’s rainfall left the Yuba River flowing swiftly creating unpredictable conditions in addition to colder water.

Nevada County does not have enough public safety personnel to monitor this extremely dangerous situation. **Most drownings occur in the spring when rivers are running cold and fast and the weather is warm—the exact conditions we can expect this Memorial Day weekend**. These tragedies are completely preventable by staying out of the water during spring runoff. Don’t put yourself—or our public safety personnel and rescue volunteers—at risk.

The public should be aware that the **preliminary Stage 2 openings in Nevada County don’t open river access infrastructure, campgrounds, or change the six-foot social distancing guidelines**. **Also Stage 2 guidelines ask people stay within their home county and only go out with people who live in their household, too**. Be advised, trails in the Yuba River canyon are narrow and do not allow for needed social distancing.

Especially during these unprecedented times, personal responsibility impacts more than just one person. **Keep safe at the river and reduce community exposure to COVID-19 and unnecessary strain on medical resources and first responders**.

About the Yuba River Safety Cohort: Made up of County supervisors and staff, local and regional fire protection districts, law enforcement, state and federal agencies, local NGOs, and community representatives, the Yuba River Safety Cohort has been collaborating for four years in an effort to address public safety issues within the South Yuba River canyon such as access, fire prevention, stewardship, and responsible use.

About SYRCL: The South Yuba River Citizens League (SYRCL, pronounced “circle”), based in Nevada City, CA, is the leading voice for the protection and restoration of the Yuba River watershed. Founded in 1983 through a rural, grassroots campaign to defend the South Yuba River from proposed hydropower dams, SYRCL has developed into a vibrant community organization with over 3,500 members and volunteers. See: www.yubariver.org.