



MERCED IRRIGATION DISTRICT PUBLIC NOTICE

High River Flows Expected on Merced River

January 26, 2017

High flows of fast moving water are currently in the Merced River and may be increasing in the coming days. These flows will be both upstream and downstream of the Snelling area and west to the Merced River's confluence with the San Joaquin River in Newman.

As Merced Irrigation District coordinates flood management operations with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, increasing larger volumes of water are expected to be released from Lake McClure to ensure reservoir space is available for storm and snowmelt runoff from the Sierra. Lake McClure is currently at about 75 percent of its capacity with several more months of snowmelt and rain expected. During this time of year, MID coordinates with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on flood-control management.

Within a matter of days, releases of well over 3,000 cubic feet per second will be observed in the Merced River, which flows through the community of Snelling. The last time such high flows were seen was 2011, the last wet year before five consecutive years of drought. The high flows in 2011 resulted in numerous water rescues on the Merced River after warnings of high water levels were ignored by some boaters and rafters. Ultimately, access to the river was temporarily closed off for public safety. Water flows at that time were approximately 4,000 cubic feet per second.

MID has been in contact with the Merced County Sheriff's Office to provide notice of the pending rise in flows on the river. The duration and volumes of the higher river flows will be based on multiple factors, including weather and the amount of water flowing into Lake McClure in the coming days.