



# High flows expected on Merced River throughout summer from melting snow

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**Contact Merced County:**

Mike North  
209-726-2744  
[mnorth@co.merced.ca.us](mailto:mnorth@co.merced.ca.us)

**Contact MID:**

Mike Jensen  
209-354-2856  
[mjensen@mercedid.org](mailto:mjensen@mercedid.org)

As a result of record-breaking snow levels this year, the Merced River will be running extremely high throughout the summer. Residents are urged to remain out of the river during these high flows of melting snow.

“As the temperature increases, that water is likely to become more inviting,” said Merced County Fire Chief Nancy Koerperich. “We want to encourage people to stay safe and stay out of the river in the coming months. We absolutely do not want a tragedy this summer, especially one that can be prevented by simply staying away from the high flows. The flows along our local waterways are deceptively fast.”

Merced County Sheriff Vern Warnke is also concerned about the heavy flows along the Merced River this year and will be taking precautionary efforts to preserve public safety.

“The Merced River is off-limits and should not be entered for recreational purposes,” Warnke said. “The area will be patrolled and there is a zero-tolerance policy for violators. Additionally, anyone who enters the water and needs to be rescued can be held personally liable for the costs associated with that operation.”

In 2011, a wetter-than-average year, high flows also resulted from melting snow. That summer, there were numerous near-tragic events along the river as boaters ignored warnings about the

water levels. Water levels so far this year have been even higher and are expected to remain high as snow continues to melt.

“When somebody goes out in those swift-moving waters, they’re not only risking their own life – they are also risking the lives of those who have to rescue them,” Koerperich said.

On average, approximately 996,000 acre feet of water flows down the Merced River. Since Oct. 1, Lake McClure has passed about 1.7 million acre feet of water downstream. Merced Irrigation District is preparing for another 0.8 million acre feet to reach the reservoir in the coming months.

“This is a record-breaking year in terms of snowfall and that is translating into large volumes of water in the Merced River,” said Hicham ElTal, Deputy General Manager at MID.

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