

# NEWS

From the County of San Bernardino  
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## County urges public to stay clear of river during dam releases

Announcements concerning next week's planned water releases from the Seven Oaks Dam have, for some, conjured up dreams of white-water rafting and other swift-water pursuits.

However, nothing could be more dangerous or less wise than playing in the Santa Ana River next week. The county urges the public, and urges the news media to remind the public, that the Santa Ana River bottom is never a suitable place to camp or hike, and that next week it could be downright deadly.

Tuesday through Thursday the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will for the first time test the dam's hydraulic gates and instrumentation under realistic conditions by releasing water from the dam in amounts ranging from 49 cubic feet per second to 6,134 cubic feet per second.

Although this will produce flows much weaker than those experienced during heavy storms and should not impact any areas beyond the river banks, the currents will be strong enough in certain locations to pose a deadly hazard to anyone who ventures onto the riverbed or attempts to enter the water. Additionally, obstacles such as sand, rocks, and culverts make the Santa Ana River completely unsuitable for the kind of white-water recreation associated with other rivers.

"We can't emphasize enough that no one should enter the river area during this test," said Pat Mead, director of the San Bernardino County Public Works Department and Flood Control District.

The San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department will run a helicopter equipped with a loudspeaker along the river in an attempt to spot and warn anyone in the river and coordinate communication with ground units. Trespassers could be subject to arrest.

Other emergency agencies, including the County Fire Department, will have swift-water rescue crews at the ready. The City of Redlands plans to close Orange Street at the river during the heaviest releases.