



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DATE: *Friday, January 15, 2014*
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COUNTY FIRE USAR TEAM RESCUES THREE FROM MOJAVE RIVER

Date/Time: *Friday, January 17, 2014 11:14 AM*
Location: *Mojave River near Bryman Road Oro Grande, CA*
Incident: *Swiftwater Rescue*

Just after 11:00 AM this morning, the San Bernardino County Fire Department responded to a Swiftwater Rescue in the Mojave River near the Palisades Ranch Airport in the community of Oro Grande. The 911 caller stated that three people including a small child were trapped on an island in the middle of the river.

A full Swiftwater Response was dispatched to the scene. California Highway Patrol's Aviation Unit was training in the area and responded as well. Due to thick vegetation in the area, ground resources had a difficult time getting an accurate location of the victims; however, thanks to the overhead vantage of CHP's helicopter, H82, the two adult males and female child were quickly located. Fire crews were subsequently directed to the area by H82.

Located a short distance upstream from the scene, Victor Valley Water Reclamation Authority (VWVRA) operates a facility which releases water into the Mojave River. Release rates vary throughout the day. According to statements from the adult males, they were crossing the river bottom when they reached an island and noticed that their intended path had become very wet marshland. They decided it was too risky to continue and attempted to return to the east bank of the river. By this time, water released at the reclamation facility had caused the river level to rise to a point that the adults feared for the safety of the child. All three returned to the mid-point of the island and called 911 for assistance.

County Fire officials contacted VWVRA which subsequently decreased its release rate ultimately lowering the level of the river. This permitted County Fire Urban Search & Rescue personnel to access the victims and successfully escort all three to shore with minimal risk to all parties. A helicopter from the San Bernardino Sheriff's Department staffed with Dive/Swiftwater personnel was also dispatched to the scene as an additional option but was cancelled enroute after the successful rescue.

There were no injuries to civilians or firefighters.

River levels can rise and fall with little to no warning. Be cautious whenever you enjoy these areas.

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