



OFFICE OF THE SUMMIT COUNTY SHERIFF

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SPRING RUNOFF AND SWIFT WATER SAFETY

SUMMIT COUNTY, COLORADO – Temperatures are on the rise and this year’s snowpack has begun to melt off, prompting officials in Summit County to monitor rising water levels throughout the county. As we move into the Memorial Day weekend, Summit County Sheriff John Minor reminds residents and visitors to be especially cautious in and around Summit County waterways.

“During spring runoff, creeks and streams can be particularly dangerous as flows are often higher and faster than they are during the summer months and the water temperature is just above freezing,” explained Minor.

When taking part in outdoor activities on or near the water this spring, Minor urges people to be cautious of elevated flows in rivers causing fast currents. Playing along the shore of fast moving water is especially dangerous for children and pets, as they can easily slip on wet, muddy banks and be swept away by fast-flowing icy water.

The Sheriff’s Office recommends following these safety rules around high water:

- If flooding occurs, get to higher ground immediately. Stay away from flood-prone areas, including dips, low spots, valleys, ditches, washes, etc.
- Avoid flooded areas or those with rapid water flow. Do not attempt to cross a flowing stream. It takes only six inches of fast flowing water to sweep you off your feet.
- Don’t allow children or pets to play near high water, storm drains, culverts or ditches. Hidden dangers could lie beneath the water, and even adults can easily be sucked under and drown in the strong currents near culverts.
- Flooded roads could have significant damage hidden by floodwaters. NEVER drive through floodwaters or on flooded roads. If your vehicle stalls, leave it immediately and seek higher ground. Water only two feet deep can float away most automobiles.
- Do not camp or park your vehicle along streams and washes, particularly when threatening conditions exist.
- Be especially cautious at night when it is harder to recognize flood dangers.
- Monitor NOAA Weather Radio or your local media for vital weather related information.

To learn more about the impacts of high water and what you can do to prepare for the spring runoff, download the High Water Preparedness Information brochure from the county website at: <http://www.co.summit.co.us/DocumentCenter/View/9596>.

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