



Media Release

Start of Outdoor Water Recreation Season Means Being Aware of *E. coli* in Rivers and Lakes

Public Advised to Check Water Quality Website for Latest Results

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SACRAMENTO – With the Memorial Day long weekend marking the unofficial launch of water recreation throughout much of California, the Central Valley Water Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Valley Water Board) is reminding the public to be aware of the risk of waterborne illnesses.

The Central Valley Water Board monitors and evaluates water quality data for many Central Valley lakes and rivers used for recreational activities. This summer, staffers will be collecting weekly *E. coli* water samples in selected watersheds and making the findings known to the public.

Sampling for *E. coli* provides a way to monitor the overall well-being of recreational waters. *E. coli* is a type of bacteria that naturally occurs in the intestines of warm-blooded animals and is used as an indicator of fecal pollution in our waters. Pinpointing the sources of *E. coli* is particularly challenging because it is found in pets, livestock, wildlife, and human waste. While most strains of *E. coli* are harmless, elevated levels may indicate an increased risk of illness to swimmers and others who recreate in and on the waterways.

To find out where the Central Valley Water Board is currently monitoring and to see the latest results visit, click [here](#) or follow the [CA Water Boards on Twitter](#).

The Water Boards regularly assess California's surface waters to determine if they support common beneficial uses, such as recreation. Recreational uses are assessed using [bacteria water quality objectives](#) designed to protect recreational users from the effects of pathogens in California's waters. Waterbodies that do not meet the protective water quality objectives are placed on a [list of impaired waters](#). You can view a map of the waters listed as impaired for recreation at https://mywaterquality.ca.gov/safe_to_swim/impaired_waters/index.html. Once a waterbody is listed as impaired, additional studies are needed to understand and address the source(s) of contamination. If a waterbody does not meet water quality objectives, exposure may increase the risk of illness.

Healthy water habits are encouraged for everyone recreating in Central Valley waterbodies:

- Do not drink river or lake water.
- Do not cook or wash dishes with river or lake water.
- Wash yourself and your family with clean water after swimming. Be sure to wash your hands before eating.
- If you have concerns regarding your family's health, contact your healthcare provider immediately.

You can make a difference to keep Central Valley Waterways safe and clean! Please use bathrooms and properly dispose of human and dog waste.

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