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BISHOP CREEK CANYON DAMS SEEING PEAK FLOWS
RESERVOIRS HANDLING RUNOFF AS DESIGNED

Dams in Bishop Creek Canyon are now at or near capacity but are effectively accommodating peak runoff as designed, according to Southern California Edison Government Relations Manager Matthew Paruolo.

Concerns arose recently about the reservoir levels amid soaring summer temperatures, however the flows are not expected to pose significant dam safety risks.

"SCE dams are inspected regularly per state and federal guidelines and are able to handle the currently projected volume of seasonal runoff," Paruolo stated Wednesday. "SCE does not believe these flows pose significant dam safety risks and does not anticipate activating FERC (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission) Emergency Action Plans for 'High Flow Events'" at either the South Lake or Sabrina dams.

Current dam levels and flows should remain high as the recent excessive heat melts the rest of the epic Sierra snowpack still lingering at upper elevations. Bishop Creek Canyon, like other critical water, electrical, and transportation infrastructure throughout the Eastern Sierra, was spared from severe impacts by the relatively mild spring. The slow melt gave SCE time to make room for the higher flows expected later in the summer.

"While these reservoirs are currently operating at or near capacity as designed, SCE has effectively reduced downstream impacts by passing the bulk of spring runoff through its reservoirs and hydroelectric generating facilities and 'absorbing' peak flows caused by persistently high summer temperatures and the rapid release of upper elevation snowpack," Paruolo noted.

Recreating downstream of dams presents certain hazards. Water levels can change without notice and create treacherous currents. Anyone recreating in the canyon is still advised to avoid

the swift water – including staying a safe distance from creekbanks that might be slippery and unstable.

For more information, visit: <https://ready.inyocounty.us>.

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