Swimming At Live Oak Boat Ramp An Unacceptable Safety Risk
Sutter County Officials Temporarily Close Live Oak Park To Prevent Possible Accidents

The Live Oak Park and boat ramp on the Feather River was closed by Sutter County officials on Friday to avoid a conflict between outboard motors and swimmers concentrated at the foot of the boat ramp.

"The park will re-open as soon as possible," said Public Works Director Douglas Gault. "The presence of a number of swimmers in the boat launch area, who are unwilling to leave, presents an unacceptable safety risk to the public. This is an unfortunate, and unforeseen, situation that developed in the past several days and will require the adoption of a new County ordinance in order to outlaw swimming in the vicinity of the boat dock. We are working on the draft ordinance right now."

The high flows in the Feather River have covered sandbars that are popular as beaches. In search of swimming locations, a dedicated group of swimmers discovered the new floating boat docks at the Live Oak boat ramp.

Efforts to clear the area so that the boat ramp is available for safe launching and docking of boats have been hampered by clear legal authority to remove the swimmers, said Gault. "Unfortunately, the swimmers have insisted on not vacating the area," Gault said. "Without a clear County ordinance establishing a prohibition against swimming at the boat dock, there appears to be nothing we can do to make the situation safe for all concerned but to close the park, and the boat ramp. We will re-open both when an ordinance is in place."

Gault said the timing of the closure, on the Fourth of July weekend, is sure to be upsetting to many who enjoy the park and the ability to put in a boat at that particular location of the Feather River.

"It is a nice facility," he said. "Unfortunately, we have competing uses for the boat dock area that are not compatible. We are working to resolve this conflict as quickly as possible."