

June 18, 2017

MEDIA CONTACT

Madeline Noblett
Public Affairs and Communication Manager
mnoblett@poudre-fire.org
970-219-5930

Emergency responders respond to river rescue involving two teens

Poudre Fire Authority and multiple partner agencies worked together Sunday evening to rescue two teenage boys from the Cache la Poudre River.

The two males were tubing together on the river in the area of the 4800 block of Rist Canyon Road. They reportedly went over a low-head dam, by Watson Lake. Emergency crews immediately responded following a 911 call at about 5:30 p.m.

A PFA firefighter located the 16-year-old male, who was on his inner tube and stuck in the low-head dam in the area of Watson Lake. The firefighter threw a rescue rope out to the teenager, who grabbed it; bystanders helped the firefighter pull the young man to shore. He was alert and talking, and transported to Poudre Valley Hospital in Fort Collins.

The 18-year-old fell off his tube and was unresponsive when bystanders pulled him to shore downstream from where the 16-year-old was located. Bystanders started to perform CPR on the young man. PFA and UCHealth EMS crews took over CPR when they arrived at the rescue scene. The 18-year-old was transported to Medical Center of the Rockies in Loveland by UCHealth's LifeLine air ambulance.

Neither of the young men were wearing a personal flotation device, otherwise known as a PFD or life jacket. PFA reminds people to always wear a PFD, whether you plan to play near or in water. It's especially important to make sure the PFD is rated for your activity of choice.

The Poudre River is currently flowing high and fast in many places. PFA recommends that people stay out of the water during current conditions. The river is unpredictable as it is strong. Its waters are also significantly colder than most people anticipate. People can easily experience hypothermia when in the water.

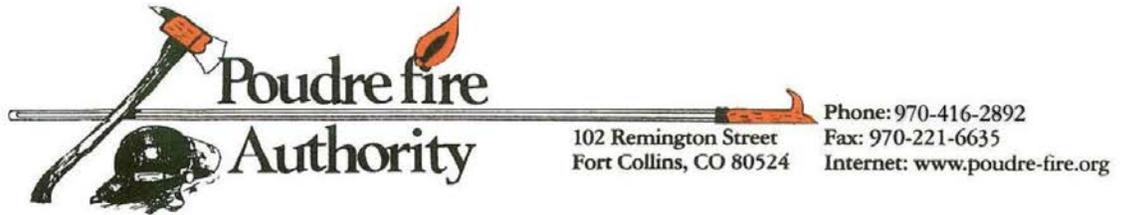
Responding agencies included: PFA; Larimer County Sheriff's Office; Larimer County Emergency Services; Larimer County Dive Rescue Team; UCHealth EMS; UCHealth LifeLife air ambulance; Larimer County Parks personnel; and State of Colorado Parks personnel.

This appears to be the first swift-water rescue of the 2017 season.

PFA has averaged about two swift-water (fast-moving water such as a river involved) rescues a year over the past five years. Specifically, this means that PFA crews actively responded to an emergency incident, deploying personnel and, in some cases, water craft to rescue people. Three incidents did involve significant rescues and, in all three instances, the rescues were successful and without incident.

We urge people, who plan to recreate in or near the river or other bodies of water, to keep the following safety tips in mind:

- Tell someone where you are going and always go with a partner, when you expect to return and where and who to call if you don't. If your plans change while you are traveling, put a note in your car on the driver's side dashboard with the new plans.



- Have a communication plan in the event of an emergency, not all areas west of Ted's place have cell service.
- Wear life jackets around water. Some areas near the water's edge and some riverbanks are unstable due to current high-flow rates.
- Stay away from riverbanks during times of high-flowing water. The banks may have become unstable and give way underneath you.
- Never forget the power of the river, especially when it is running high and fast from spring runoff or recent heavy rains.
- Be aware of the limitations of yourself in the water. Even if you are a good swimmer, fast moving water and under currents can easily catch you off guard. Additionally there are often rocks or other obstacles underneath the water that can knock you off balance even in shallow water depths.
- Watch your surroundings, including the weather. Be prepared for extremes in the weather, especially if more rain is predicted. Heavy rains upstream can alter the water flow and depth in a short period of time and also contribute to hypothermia. When your clothes are soaking wet, hypothermia is a danger even in the summer.
- Carry a First Aid kit and know how to use it. Take a first aid course for CPR and basic medical assistance.
- If caught in a fast flowing river, rapids or storm water, try to float feet first in a half sit position.
- Remember: Reach or Throw, Don't Go. If someone is caught in fast moving water, reach out to them or throw a rope to the person in the water. Don't go into the water yourself or you may also become in need of rescuing. Call 911 ASAP with as detailed location to where the incident is located.

If your plans include wanting to be on the river in a recreational watercraft, we urge you to use one of the many qualified local rafting companies for the best experience. They have qualified instructors, safety equipment and trained staff in case of medical emergencies. Additionally, if you are in your own recreational watercraft and it gets away from you, please call our non-emergency Dispatch number at 970-221-6540 to report the watercraft, when it is safe to do so. Have the color, approximate size and the location you last saw it and direction it was traveling so that we are aware of it and can let other concerned citizens who call in and see it know that there is no one trapped underneath the craft.

###