

Ravalli County Sheriff's Office  
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Chris Hoffman, Sheriff

Stephen Holton, Undersheriff

**\*\*Press Release for Bitterroot River Safety 7/3/2014\*\***

The Ravalli County Sheriff's Department and the Ravalli County Public Health Department want to remind all river users to take extra caution when going out onto the water. **The Bitterroot River is statistically one of the most dangerous rivers in Montana** and high water conditions at present make the river even more hazardous. The general character of the Bitterroot changes dramatically from year to year and floaters need to be aware of downed trees, new obstacles, and irrigation dams.

Of particular concern is the Supply Ditch Diversion Dam, located approximately three miles downstream of Woodside. It is a low-head dam built to divert water for irrigation. This dam creates dangerous currents that have caused several boating accidents over the past several years, including a fatality in 2013. The stretch of river where the dam is located is currently scheduled to re-open July 7<sup>th</sup>. Floaters are advised to follow the signs, exit the river on the left and go around the dam.

Floaters are reminded to always wear a life jacket, scout the river for obstacles, and never over-estimate their river skills. This river is deceptive and deadly, especially at runoff.