



BAKERSFIELD

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

City reducing water flows in Kern River east of Stockdale Highway River Bridge

Flow reduction to begin Sept. 3 to perform needed repairs and maintenance

SEPT. 3, 2024 — The City of Bakersfield [Water Department](#) is reducing water flows in the Kern River to address municipal operational needs, perform required maintenance and undertake upcoming infrastructure reconstruction.

Starting Tuesday, Sept. 3, the department will reduce river flows from Stockdale Highway River Bridge to the east to allow work areas to dry. Maintenance near the Park at River Walk at the Bellevue Weir is needed to ensure the safe and controlled operation of the Kern River, as required by the [United States Army Corps of Engineers \(USACE\)](#) and the [Federal Emergency Management Agency \(FEMA\)](#). The Department plans to begin weir repair and sediment removal in October 2024 once the area becomes accessible and receives repair and replacement materials. Sediment can reduce the river's flow and channel capacity, and it slows aquifer recharge rates. Removal of sediment buildup is needed for safe and controlled operation of the river.

In addition to river maintenance, the Water Department is currently seeking bids for the Kern River Canal Back-up Weir reconstruction project, located just east of Coffee Road bridge. The weir was damaged by high flows in 2019 and additional damage in 2023 rendered it non-operational. Replacing this structure is critical as it serves as a key facility for flood control, necessary to protect people and property during high-flow years. The project can only be completed under dry conditions, within a timeframe based upon permits obtained from multiple regulatory agencies.

This facility not only supports flood control, but also provides a connection across the Kern River as the reconstruction project includes a multi-use path for bikes and pedestrians. With the Friant Kern Canal multi-use path project under construction to the north and the existing Kern River Parkway multi-use path to the south, this facility will provide a route for active residents in Bakersfield to travel freely across the river.

In May 2024, the Water Department committed to maintaining water flow in the Kern River past the Bellevue Weir adjacent to River Walk Park through Labor Day. Bakersfield's Water Department facilitated this effort due to sufficient annual entitlement from the Kern River. This flow not only enhanced recreational opportunities, but also recharged the Kern Subbasin with surface water as part of the City's conjunctive use program. This program coordinates the use of surface water and groundwater to meet urban demands.

The City of Bakersfield is committed to enhancing and improving Kern River Parkway facilities to provide additional recreational opportunities and continues to beneficially use our water resources for our growing community.

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