

NEWS RELEASE



**Russel E. Burger, Sheriff
Lane County Sheriff's Office
125 East 8th Avenue
Eugene, OR 97401
(541) 682-4150 / FAX (541) 682-4522
Email: sheriffs.office@co.lane.or.us**

CASE NUMBER: 2008-3761

DATE/TIME OF INCIDENT: May 21, 2008 - 7:53PM

DATE/TIME OF RELEASE: May 21, 2008 - 11:45PM

NATURE OF STORY: Water Rescue/ Drowning/ River Conditions

**LOCATION: Willamette River
Lanes Turn Road (north of Coburg)**

INVOLVED: Three male subjects, one local and two from out of the area.

DETAILS: Lane County Sheriff's Office continues to strongly recommend persons voluntarily stay off the McKenzie and Willamette Rivers due to "winter flow rates" and large amounts of floating or partially submerged trees, logs, and miscellaneous debris. With the Willamette River flow 20% greater than last weekend and water temperatures in the 40's only skilled boaters equipped for winter river conditions should be on the water. All persons floating major rivers in Lane County should not only have PFD's aboard but wear them.

Current water conditions have led to a high number of water incidents and water rescues over the past week on both the Willamette and McKenzie River's.

Today was no exception with search, rescue and marine crews being called out for a water rescue of three subject's who attempted to float the Willamette River from Eugene to Portland using light duty inflatable rubber rafts. None of the three had PFD's (lifejackets) with them. They overturned their rafts near Lanes

Turn road. One subject was able to get to the east bank, one was rescued mid-stream by a responding SAR boat and one subject remains missing and is presumed drowned. Search crews worked well after dark from both the river and shore but were unable to locate the third subject. Lane County was assisted by Harrisburg, Junction City, Coburg, and Lane Rural Fire Departments. The boating incident is currently under investigation.

For additional information contact: John Miller, SAR Coordinator at 682-8544

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