

This is Ryan Aylward from the National Weather Service in Eureka with a community comment.

Just a couple months ago it seemed like the rain would never end. In fact, for this water year, Eureka received over 60 inches of rain, or 160 percent of normal. To put that in historical perspective, this was the third wettest water year since the 1880s with the two previous wetter years occurring in 1890 and 1904. In other words, it's been over 100 years since we recorded this much rain at the Eureka weather office.

No wonder there was river flooding and so many landslides onto our roadways this past winter. But there was one huge positive; the rainy winter did end our multi-year drought.

Now that the winter has past, it's time to have some fun and take advantage of the typically dry and hot interior weather during the summer. However, because the winter was so harsh, snow continues to melt off the higher peaks in Trinity and Humboldt counties. This is leading to cold, fast flowing rivers. Sadly, every year we hear of someone that drowns in a river in Northwest California.

This is why the National Weather Service and the Water Safety Coalition of Northwestern California highly suggests you take extreme caution if visiting a river this year, especially early this summer.

It can be impossible to see where logs are beneath the surface and a river's flow can change significantly from year to year. Stay out of the strong currents and always watch your children closely.

Take advantage of the new Humboldt County life jacket loaner program. Life jackets are now available at several area businesses including in Willow Creek, Hoopa, and Garberville to name a few, and also with the county parks and even here at the National Weather Service office. Wearing a life jacket could save your life.

I hope that you will help keep your friends and family safe. And if you own a business or are part of a community organization, share this information with your staff and customers. We would love to have your organization or business become a Weather Ready Nation Ambassador, keeping people prepared for the weather hazards that impact our lives. Give us a call at 707-443-6484 and ask to speak with me, Ryan Aylward, if you would like more information or to join this program.

Have fun this summer, but stay safe out there!