

Rivers in region rising each day as temperatures increase

By Jeff DeLong, Reno Gazette-Journal

WALKER – The big melt is on.

An epic snowpack locked in place by cool spring temperatures will soon be released by warming conditions, spilling water into churning rivers and streams.

It's happening before Mike White's eyes. He watched the levels of a foaming West Walker River next to his home rise by 6 inches overnight. By Friday morning, water was lapping at a rock that was dry the day before.

He knows more is coming. Maybe a lot more.

"It's starting to move. We're going to get some high water," White said.

On Friday, the National Weather Service issued a hydrologic outlook calling for possible flooding along the eastern Sierra over the next two weeks.

Coinciding with a spike in temperatures, the highest flows are expected between next Tuesday through June 25. Highs in Reno next week are expected to be well into the 80s while nighttime lows in the Sierra will remain well above freezing.

That's going to cause a lot of snow to melt and rivers and streams to gush. Flows are expected to peak by late next week, depending on location.

"That's really going to quicken the snowmelt. The waterfalls and creeks should be amazing," said Gary Barbato, a hydrologist with the National Weather Service in Reno.

It's an issue because there's still so much snow in the high country. The snowpack, Barbato said, is close to what it normally is in early April. At Lake Tahoe, the snowpack Friday was about seven times what it should be for early June.

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