

Tahoe Coast Guard unit gives a lesson on dangers of cold water

By Chris Buckley, KOLO-TV

TRUCKEE – About 400 students and community members heard from first responders and Coast Guard Auxiliary members on Wednesday. The topic was cold-water survival techniques, a subject that for many hits close to home.

“In early January we had a canoe that turned over in Donner Lake,” Truckee Fire District Public Safety and Information Officer Gene Welch said. “It was in about ten feet of water and the female made it to shore but the male drowned in about 10 feet of water very close to the shore.”

The Coast Guard Auxiliary says a lot of people don’t realize just how dangerous cold water can be.

“Cold water immersion – the muscle incapacitation you suffer, the muscles and nerves don’t connect anymore and you’re just sitting there,” Flotilla Commander Jerry Gilmore said.

That point was illustrated with a DVD documentary of a cold-water boot camp.

“These are very strong people that jump into 45-degree water,” Gilmore said. “And you see them take four or five strokes and then just start shivering and rescue swimmers have to come help them.”

Read the whole story