

# Squaw Valley man must pay to remove river cable

By George Warren, News 10

A federal court judge has ordered a Squaw Valley daredevil to pay \$4,000 to cover the cost of removing a mile-long steel cable across the north fork of the American River.

Mike Wilson, 27, is described by some as an action sports superstar. In one popular YouTube video, he performs a quadruple back flip from a 99-foot cable swing over Lake Tahoe.

Although Wilson thrives on risky behavior, the federal government said his cable over the canyon could have killed somebody else. The quarter-inch cable is virtually invisible to a pilot.

“It could have ended tragically,” said Jeff Horn of the Bureau of Land Management. “What if a helicopter had flown into this. What if a plane had flown into this. It would have been bad. Most helicopter crashes don’t end well.”

Another YouTube video, posted by one of Wilson’s friends, shows how the cable works. Wilson and his friends would “zipline” out to the middle, and then drop by parachute to the river 2,000 feet below.

Four days after the Bureau of Land Management discovered the cable in February 2012, the agency ordered Wilson to cut it down.

Since then, the cable has remained draped over trees and rocks in the canyon below.

In a one-day federal court trial in April 2013, Wilson was convicted of a single misdemeanor for an unauthorized

improvement on public land and ordered to pay \$4,000 to the BLM to remove the cable.

“It is still a hazard,” Horn said. “It’s about 250 feet maybe, give or take a few, above the canyon.”

Helicopters capable of lifting the cable out of the canyon won’t be available until after fire season so the cable will likely remain there until then.