

# Media Release

## Yavapai County Sheriff's Office

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### *Kayaker Rescued on the Verde River*

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On September 25, 2016, around 7 PM, the Camp Verde Marshals Office forwarded a 911 call from a woman reporting that her sister, who had been kayaking on the Verde River, was overdue. The kayaker, a 46-year-old woman from Camp Verde, had very little experience kayaking and was unfamiliar with the river. Her only supplies included a small amount of water, some trail mix, sunflower seeds, and a container of beer. The plan was for her to kayak alone on the Verde River beginning upstream from the West Clear Creek intersection to Beasley Flats where family members would pick her up. It was expected she would arrive before dark and when she did not show, her sister called 911.

Fortunately, the kayaker was in possession of a cell phone but could not be contacted. A 'ping' of the phone's GPS based location revealed she was well past Beasley Flats in an area of the river known for steep drops. The Backcountry unit from the Yavapai County Search and Rescue Team (YCSRT) was deployed along with a DPS Ranger helicopter. While staged at the Beasley Flats, a deputy and some family members began hearing a female voice yelling for help downstream. The helicopter and search team converged on the area and just before 11PM, the Ranger crew located the kayaker and found a spot nearby to land safely. She was located by the DPS Ranger crew, airlifted to Beasley Flats and reunited with her family suffering only from minor scratches.

Deputies were told that she mistakenly floated past Beasley Flats not realizing this was the designated location to meet her family. She kept paddling downstream even after the sun went down. At one point she was thrown from her boat and lost her cell phone in the water. She made it to shore and while walking to seek help, heard the helicopter overhead and called out.

Lessons – The kayaker's sister was smart to call for help as soon as she realized her sister did not show up at the designated location. Time is always critical in these type of incidents as the likelihood of a successful rescue increases the sooner search teams are deployed. Remember, the cell phone can truly be a lifeline in these cases so kayakers and boaters should consider carrying their phones waterproof containers that are secured to the body – see image example.



*Citizens can contact the Yavapai County Sheriff's Office with information or questions at 928-771-3260*

*or the YCSO website: [www.ycsoaz.gov](http://www.ycsoaz.gov)*