

After nine generations of fun, Camp Sierra's water pools still remain the 'best kept accidental secret' for family members of all ages.



PHOTOS BY ERIC PAUL ZAMORA/THE FRESNO BEE

Above: A life preserver hangs on a tree at a swimming hole created by Southern California Edison Co. It was made around 1918, according to Camp Sierra assistant manager David Boatright. **Below:** A sign at Camp Sierra points the way to swimming holes at Big Creek. Camp Sierra is a mix of forest, camp and a rustic community development of cabins in the woods.

Potholes not to be missed

By Diana Marcum
The Fresno Bee

BIG CREEK — This is the place "Where Potholes are a Good Thing."

As it says on an old camp T-shirt. Add Sierra snowmelt to giant potholes carved in granite and you have that most-sacred of summer treasures:

The swimming hole.

Through this Sierra family camp — which is open to all but known about by few — down a public trail, lies what in other years have

If you go

What: Camp Sierra
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been a series of gentle, natural water slides spilling into calm pools.

"They're pools that the water has dug out in certain places over the eons. We call them the potholes, and to us the potholes are our favorite aspect of summer," says Obo Help, 61, of San Francisco, who has been staying at Camp Sierra one week a



At a popular swimming hole created by Southern California Edison Co., Amy Herberger, 14, left, Cameron Cooper, 16, second from left, Joey Coffman, 15, and Nicholas Barry play King of the Raft near Camp Sierra.

year for 18 years.

Last year, record-breaking snowpack and rainfall raised the water so high that you couldn't see the potholes. The "Warning Danger" sign posted on a high rock — the one that always seemed a bit overly protective in paddling pool days —

was under raging water.

This year you can see some of the pools, but a year of late snows has turned the water slides into white water and most of the pools too dangerous for swimming. The warning sign is above water and to

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