With the garbage from previous river floaters littering the rocks and shoreline along the Coeur d'Alene River, Gabriel Clark, left, Ezra Clark and Hunter Clark, 11, relax below the Old River Road bridge after playing on the rope swing Wednesday. The Shoshone County Sheriff's Department is increasing its patrols to curtail the ill effects of the influx of people who recreate on the river during the weekends.

Rolling on the river

Shoshone County sheriff keeping a closer eye on weekend recreation

BY ALECIA WARREN
Staff writer


"You just get relaxed, hang out with the Bros, drink a couple beers," the Coeur d'Alene 21-year-old summarized with a grin.

It's the common recipe for a successful float down the Coeur d'Alene River: Searing sun, tubes lifting up and down on lazy waves, and a little bit of intoxication.

In some cases, unfortunately, a lot of intoxication.

"There are definitely people out here who overdo it a little bit," Anderson conceded as his friends loaded up. "You have situations like people jumping off the bridge (into the water). You can tell they're a little drunk, they're almost hitting people when they jump. All you have to do is paddle away, but some situations aren't as easily avoidable."

His friend, Chris Combo, agreed some just get a little too rowdy.

Carly Garcia, 17, waits for her inflatable orca to deflate after finishing her float Wednesday down the Coeur d'Alene River.

"I think it's maybe a little bit of the young crowd, in their 20s, who drink too much," said Combo, himself 21.

The Shoshone County Sheriff's Department is on it.

see RIVER, A2

Downtown offers plenty to do

This weekend will be a fun event with the Coeur d'Alenes at City Park. The Taste of the Coeur d'Alenes will feature food from around the world at The City Park Amphitheater.
Chris Combo, left, and his brother, Nick, fill up their tubes Wednesday at a gas station before floating down the Coeur d'Alene River.

"I think with any large assembly of people, I think the majority of people are law-abiding citizens who want to have a good time."

MITCH ALEXANDER, Shoshone County sheriff

He added that an officer stopped their car when they visited the river the other day, to give them a reminder about safety.

"It was fine. He just said a few things and we drove off," he said.

Did the words have an impact?

"Mm... No," he said. Alexander acknowledged that last weekend, there were still incidents of DUIs, underage drinking, public urination and trespassing along the river.

But he believes most recreators absorbed his suggestions.

"We were busy, but I think it's been better than it has been in the past," he said.