

Accident Database

Report ID# 46937

Help

2019-04-01

Date

Two Unknown People

Victim

Victim Age

DuPage (Shorewood: Hammel Woods to W.Shepley Rd.

River

Shorewood: Hammel Woods to W.Shepley Rd. (5.7 miles)

Section

United States Illinois, US

Location

Water Level

N/A

River Difficulty

Cause Code(s)

- Caught in Low Head Dam Hydraulic

Injury Type(s)

- Does not Apply

- Inadequate Equipment
- Inexperience
- High Water

Private

Trip Type

Raft

Boat Type

Reported

Status

Accident Description

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/us/searchers-find-bodies-of-boyfriend-girlfriend-who-went-missing-near-dupage-river-dam-that-officials-have-eyed-for-removal/ar-BBVuw93>

The bodies of a boyfriend and girlfriend were recovered Monday after they went missing Sunday in the DuPage River near a dam in Shorewood that Will County forest preserve commissioners have been studying for possible removal.

The body of a 28-year-old man was recovered about 10 a.m., and the body of a 22-year-old woman was recovered about 2 p.m., officials said. The names of the two had not been released as of mid-afternoon.

Searchers had been looking for the two since they went into the water about 6 p.m. Sunday in the Hammel Woods Forest Preserve. The woman had gone into the water to help the man, but it was unclear how or why the man went into the river, Troy Fire Protection District Chief Andy Doyle said Monday.

The woman's body was discovered about 2 p.m. Monday along the east bank of the river about a quarter mile from the dam. The man was found earlier in the day further downstream, about another quarter mile south from where the woman's body was later discovered, Doyle said.

The woman's body was discovered shortly after an air boat from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources went through the area. Doyle said rescuers

The man and woman were identified by Will County Forest Preserve District Police Chief Tracy Chapman as boyfriend and girlfriend. They were known to walk the trails at the preserve. Chapman said the woman was from the Shorewood area. The man is from the suburbs.

Will County forest preserve commissioners coincidentally were expected this week to review two resolutions regarding the eventual removal of the dam. The district has been working since 2017 with the Lower DuPage River Watershed Coalition to find ways to improve water quality and safety on the river, Forest Preserve District of Will County spokeswoman Cindy Cain said.

After a study of options, removal of the Hammel Woods dam was identified as the highest priority.

Before Monday, the river near the dam has been the scene of at least two deaths in the last couple of decades, according to news reports.

In 2013, A 24-year-old Itasca man drowned while swimming in the river. In 1993, a Joliet man died after jumping into the river to retrieve some fishing gear.

In 2015, two men were rescued after their canoe overturned in the river after it went over the dam.

It was not known if water currents played a role in those incidents.

Cain said the man and woman were not were in boats or kayaks.

The dam is described as a low-head dam that is about four feet tall. Authorities stressed the dangers of the dam, noting that the boil that churns below the dam can suck people back into the water and is very difficult to get out of even for strong swimmers.

Doyle compared the current to a rapid rip tide in Lake Michigan, noting that the only way out of the boil is to swim parallel to the dam.

He said that the area three feet above or below the dam is a danger zone where people can get sucked into the boil of the dam.

"We stress that people stay away from the dam," he said.

The couple went missing about 6 p.m. Sunday. An emergency call was placed by a woman just before 6 p.m. Sunday after the man went into the river, said Cindy Cain, a spokeswoman for the Forest Preserve District of Will County.

Doyle said the first firefighter on the scene Sunday jumped in the water after seeing the man in the water, but could not get to the man due to the conditions near the dam. The firefighter had to be tethered off with a life jacket and a rope to be brought back to shore, Doyle said.

Cain added that a sheriff's deputy who was in the area and one of the first to respond also saw both the man and the woman in the water near the dam.

The river, with depths ranging two to five feet, is a popular spot for kayaking and tubing in the warmer months, Doyle said. Doyle and Cain both noted warning signs are posted along the river urging people to port their canoes out of the water.

"It's a really nice preserve, it gets used quite a bit," Doyle said.

More than 100 responders from 30 departments were part of the search on Sunday that lasted until 8 p.m. The search resumed around 8 a.m. Monday, with crews from 10 fire and three police departments, with a focus on recovering the bodies.

Because the river is not deep enough for divers to search, crews dressed in dive suits were walking up and down the river and zigzagging across in some areas on foot or on boat to search. The Illinois State Police also searched the river with its fixed wing aircraft and drones also were used to search, Doyle said.

The forest preserve district's operations committee Wednesday is expected to vote on a resolution for phase 2 engineering for dam removal. The study is expected to cost \$104,000. Committee members also are expected to vote on a resolution of agreement with the Lower DuPage River Watershed Coalition for the coalition to fund the study.

The study is expected to be completed later this year. Initial estimates show dam removal could cost \$585,000, which also is expected to be covered by the coalition. Dam removal could begin as early as next year, Cain said.

Both resolutions, if approved by the committee, would be presented for a vote of the full forest preserve district board at its April 11 meeting, Cain said.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/weather/topstories/two-people-missing-from-dupage-river-in-shorewood/ar-BBVtbXy>

First responders rushed to Shorewood Sunday evening after witnesses spotted two people who vanished in the DuPage River. Using inflatable rafts, with dive teams in the water, they believe the two people were caught in the extreme undercurrent of the nearby dam.

Neighbor James Webber has spent his life in the area and has seen other drownings on the river. He fears the water temperatures and pull of the water was a fatal combination. "I've never seen nothing this big," Webber said about the helicopter and emergency vehicles that arrived at the scene.

The county says a witness saw a man in distress in the water. A woman went in after him. The call for help came in around 5:50 p.m. An arriving deputy saw the two go under and never resurface. At least six departments and around 50 first responders lined the banks of the river for hours.

First responders will be back in the area as early as 9 a.m. Monday to continue looking for the two people.