

Advertisement

 Living your *best* life just got easier. [Learn More](#)
Apply for loans up to \$40k. For eligible Card Members. [Terms](#)

NEWS

Man and his mother drown in Swatara Creek while fishing at low-head dam

Updated: Apr. 26, 2022, 5:34 p.m. | Published: Apr. 26, 2022, 2:37 p.m.





Jonestown dam low-head dam on Swatara Creek



By **Jenna Wise** | jwise@pennlive.com

The two people who died after they were pulled from the Swatara Creek Sunday in Lebanon County were a mother and son, according to a GoFundMe created by the family.

Salvador Jimenez, 42, and Ivette Santiago, 61, were two of the four people struggling in the creek, prompting a rescue situation Sunday evening near the Jonestown dam in Jonestown Borough, Pennsylvania State Police said.

The group was standing on top of the dam to fish, according to Jon Beers, executive director of the Lebanon Water Authority, which uses the dam for Lebanon's drinking water.

Advertisement



Subscribe now to continue reading

Monthly subscriptions renew automatically. Cancel anytime.

\$5/First Month

PennLive Basic Access
Renews at \$10/month

Subscribe Now

BEST OFFER

\$10/First Month

PennLive All Access plus The Patriot-News
daily online newspaper
Renews at \$15/month

Subscribe Now

Day Pass for \$5

24 hours of Basic Access
No commitment

Purchase

[View All Offers](#)

[Already a subscriber? Please sign in](#)

The deaths come less than two years after a 31-year-old man drowned at the dam while kayaking.

Jimenez was taken to Good Samaritan Hospital in Lebanon and pronounced dead, state police said. Santiago was in critical condition when she was taken to Penn State Hershey Medical Center, but the Dauphin County Coroner's Office said she has since died.

The coroner's office said Santiago's death was ruled accidental as a result of fresh water drowning. The Lebanon County Coroner's Office could not be reached for Jimenez' cause of death.

The other two people rescued from the water had only minor injuries, according to state police.

Jimenez's son and Santiago's grandson launched a [GoFundMe](#) to help the family pay for their funerals. The campaign has raised more than \$8,000 toward its \$15,000 goal as of Tuesday afternoon.

"This was a very random, horrible incident that has our whole family working together to get through. Anything helps, thank you so much," Salvador Jimenez Jr wrote.

The dam north of Jonestown is one of two dams on the Swatara Creek in Lebanon County. Low-head dams can appear harmless under certain conditions but the churning waters created by the dam are so dangerous they are known as "drowning machines."

Bethany Canner, president of the Swatara Watershed Association, said it is not unheard of for people to get too close and trapped in the dam's swift-moving waters.

Canner told PennLive the area is well-marked with signs and buoys warning visitors of the nearby dam and its dangers. There is also a fence on one side of the creek near the Lebanon Valley Rail-Trail. More signage was added after the June 2020 drowning, Canner said.

Some of the signs advise boaters to exit the water and re-enter after the dam and there is an area for "portage," she said.

The dam has been there since 1910. There have been four drownings in five years, according to Beers.

"I feel bad about it but I don't have an answer about how this could all be resolved just yet," Beers said. "They look very innocent...even experienced kayakers can get caught up in that."

Removing the dam could mess up the water supply, Beers said, but "we're going to have a lot of conversations" with local and state officials about who owns the dam and should be maintaining it.

In the latest drowning, Beers said the people fishing went through private property to access the dam and either didn't see or ignored the warning signs.

"People certainly have a right to be on the creek but they had to go through private property to get to the dam," Beers said.

READ MORE:

RECOMMENDED

Driver ID'd after fatal I-81 crash in Dauphin County [May. 28, 2025, 10:11 p.m.](#)

Driver who hit couple in fatal crash on Carlisle sidewalk had just left bar:
police [May. 27, 2025, 10:10 p.m.](#)

Harrisburg's 'drowning machine' dam has killed at least 29 people. Their stories

Man crashes into horse-and-buggies, killing horse and trapping driver in central Pa.:
police

Central Pa. woman to serve up to 14 years in prison for her child's fatal bathtub drowning:
prosecutors

If you purchase a product or register for an account through a link on our site, we may receive compensation.

By using this site, you consent to our [User Agreement](#) and agree that your clicks, interactions, and personal information may be collected, recorded, and/or stored by us and social media and other third-party partners in accordance with our [Privacy Policy](#).

Around the Web

Costco Shoppers Say This Fat-Burning Patch Triggers Weight Loss "Unlike Any Other"

Shocking results without diets or lifestyle changes

Health Advice Today | Sponsored

Cinnamon: The Greatest Enemy Of Blood Sugar (See How To Use It)

See this amazing trick right now!

bloghealthnet | Sponsored

[Learn More](#)

Not Sure Which Dental Implant Option is Best for You? Find Out in Just 60 Seconds!

Dentures, Snap-In's, All-On-4, Permanent Teeth in 24 Hours—what's the best choice for you? Don't waste time guessing! Take our quick 60-second quiz below the video to discover...

Nuvia Dental Implant Center | Sponsored

Mix 4 Kitchen Ingredients, Wake Up Thinner Every Morning (it's genius)

Health News | Sponsored

Why Are People Snapping up This New Flag Wreath?

Sherum | Sponsored

[Learn More](#)

Cardiologists: How to Quickly Lose a Hanging Tummy

Discover how a simple purple peel trick helps reduce stubborn belly fat effectively.

Health Wellness Journal | Sponsored

[Watch More](#)

Costco Shoppers Say This Wrinkle Cream Is "Actually Worth It"

The Skincare Magazine | Sponsored

Country music legend dead at 73

PennLive.com

Cumberland County man killed in forklift accident at RV dealership

PennLive.com



▼ About Us

[Contact Us](#)

[Send Us a News Tip](#)

[PA Media Group](#)

[The Patriot-News](#)

[Advertise with Us](#)

[Career Opportunities](#)

[PennLive](#)

[Community Rules](#)

[Accessibility Statement](#)

▼ Subscriptions

[PennLive](#)

[The Patriot-News](#)

[Newsletters](#)

▼ Already a Subscriber

[Manage your Subscription](#)

[Place a Vacation Hold](#)

[Make a Payment](#)

[Delivery Feedback](#)

▼ PennLive Sections

[Business](#)

[Obituaries](#)

[Jobs](#)

[Autos](#)

[Real Estate](#)

[Rentals](#)

[Classifieds](#)

[Home](#)

[News](#)

[Sports](#)

[PSU Football](#)

[High School Sports](#)

[Betting](#)

[Entertainment](#)

[Pa. Life & Culture](#)

[Pa. Food & Dining](#)

[Opinion](#)

▼ Mobile Apps

[iPhone, Android Apps](#)

[Tablet Apps](#)

▼ More on PennLive

[Weather News](#)

[Archives](#)

[Post a Job](#)

[Post a Classified Ad](#)

[Sell your Car](#)

[Sell/Rent your Home](#)

[Sponsor Content](#)

[Community Partners](#)

▼ Follow Us

[Twitter](#)

[Facebook](#)


[Instagram](#)

[RSS](#)

Your Privacy Choices 

[Privacy Policy](#)

| [User Agreement](#)

|  [Ad Choices](#)

ADVANCELOCAL

Use of and/or registration on any portion of this site constitutes acceptance of our [User Agreement](#), (updated 8/1/2024) and acknowledgement of our [Privacy Policy](#), and [Your Privacy Choices and Rights](#) (updated 1/1/2025).

© 2025 Advance Local Media LLC. All rights reserved ([About Us](#)).

The material on this site may not be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, cached or otherwise used, except with the prior written permission of Advance Local.

[Community Rules](#) apply to all content you upload or otherwise submit to this site.

YouTube's privacy policy is available [here](#) and **YouTube's terms of service** is available [here](#).

 [Ad Choices](#)