



Accident Database

Report ID# 2265

Help

2007-04-29

Date

Nicole Barlow

Victim

16

Victim Age

Susquehanna River

River

Holtwood

Section

United States Pennsylvania, US

Location

Gage

High

Water Level

N/A

River Difficulty

Caught in a Natural Hydraulic

Cause

Cause Code(s)

– Caught in Low Head Dam Hydraulic

Injury Type(s)

– Does not Apply

Factors

– Cold Water

Inexperienced

Victim Experience Level

Private

Trip Type

Other

Boat Type

Group Info

Other Victim Names

Reported

Status

Accident Description

04-29-07 SUSQUEHANNA RIVER, PA

Boater Missing After Accident

www.whptv.com (04-30-07)

Rescue crews are still looking for at least 1 person after a boat overturns in the Susquehanna River. It happened shortly after 2:00 p.m. Sun. (04-29) at the Holtwood Dam in Martic Township. A group of adults and teenagers were boating north of the dam, when they lost control of the boat. "It went right over the dam," says Chief David Jackson, with the Rawlinsville Fire Department. "And then they (the victims) swam to shore of some of the islands that were there."

Five people were able to swim safely to the islands in middle of the river, and were later transported by a Maryland State Police helicopter. All of the victims accounted for were said to be conscious, but each was taken to Lancaster General Hospital for evaluation. Now the search focuses on at least 1 member of the boating party who was not found with the rest. Says Jackson, "With the river, its so hard to tell where victims could pop up. People, they can swim ashore. They can float downstream. The current was extremely rough today. More than usual."

Approximately four hours after the boating accident, Jackson said crews were still conducting a rescue mission, not a recovery mission. But even rescuers say their efforts have been thwarted by the river's unforgiving conditions. After discovering the first five victims, rescue boat operators decided not to transport the victims to shore by boat, and waited for the helicopter to ensure their safety.

After dark, the chances for a successful rescue diminish. At about 9:30 Sunday

night, crews utilized a helicopter with infrared sensors to search the river banks. "All the islands will be searched. All the shore lines will be searched," adds Jackson. "We're going to have personnel on feet. We have plenty of personnel here, and we're going to exhaust every avenue we can." The crews will most likely return to the area of Holtwood Dam to resume their search on Monday morning. The identities of the victims, including the person missing, is not being released.

http://www.whptv.com/news/local/story.aspx?content_id=920d6dac-dfea-4e64-9ca0-c61551ff0cd3

Mon Apr 30, 2007 5:54 pm (PST)

<http://somid.com/news/headlines/2007/5830.shtml><<http://somid.com/news/headlines/2007/5830.shtml>>
MSP Troopers Perform Daring Aerial Rescue North of the Border

PIKESVILLE, Md. - A Maryland State Police (MSP) helicopter crew plucked three injured people from the Susquehanna River on Sunday, April 29 and flew them to safety after their small boat had been swept over a dam in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.

Shortly before 2:30 p.m., troopers assigned to the Maryland State Police helicopter "Trooper 1" at Martins State Airport responded to a call for assistance from EMS personnel in Lancaster County, Pa. Troopers were dispatched after it was determined that specialized help would be needed to effect a water rescue near Martic Township. Rescue personnel realized that the victims had been injured to the extent that transport from the rocks by boat was not a safe option.

The helicopter flew to the area and the crew was able to locate three people who were clinging to rocks in the river. The team then conducted hoist rescues of the victims, one at a time. The crew then used their medical expertise to treat the injured patients until care could be transferred to EMS personnel on the ground.

The situation began Sunday afternoon when the six people in a small boat on the Susquehanna River drifted towards the Holtwood Dam. The 16-foot boat's engine experienced mechanical trouble and stranded the boat in the middle of the river. The boat drifted until six people aboard the boat went over the dam and fell into the river below. Five of the passengers were eventually rescued. A search was

conducted for a missing 16-year old girl who was not immediately located. "Trooper 1" returned to the area after nightfall and used a heat-seeking FLIR camera to assist searchers.

LancasterOnline.com

Officials get photos of boating accident

By Brett Hambright, Staff

Intelligencer Journal

Published: May 03, 2007 2:35 AM EST

LANCASTER COUNTY, PA - Investigators have acquired amateur photographs that show the panic aboard a boat moments before it plunged over the Holtwood Dam Sunday. Nichole Barlow, 16, who was one of six people aboard the boat, is missing and presumed drowned. The other five survived the accident. Also, Jennifer Whitton, the boat's owner, has stopped cooperating with authorities, according to K. Derek Pritts, waterways conservation officer for Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission.

A Maryland tourist took the photographs with a wide-angle lens Sunday afternoon when she heard screams for help from those aboard the boat, Pritts said. The photos give investigators a glimpse of the panic on the boat before it plunged 55 feet over the dam into the Susquehanna River. "You can see six people in distress, getting into life jackets," he said of the photos. Some of the photos also show the boaters in churning waters after the fall over the dam. Pritts said Nichole is not visible in any of those shots.

The panic aboard the boat followed a peaceful Sunday afternoon spent eating lunch on Lake Aldred. The trip turned into a nightmare when the boat's engine failed to restart and the craft drifted about 300 yards south toward the dam. The vessel went over the dam about 2:25 p.m. Nichole and three other passengers were able to get life jackets on before the fall, the survivors said. Investigators believe they found her life jacket Wednesday submerged in water about 110 yards south of the dam. Searchers Wednesday also found the boat's motor, Pritts said.

However, Nichole, a Solanco High School 10th-grader, was still missing as of late Wednesday. Rescue helicopters and boats plucked five of the boaters from the area

near the base of the dam. Investigators believe Nichole was swept downstream by the river's strong currents. "This river is one of those crazy, wild rivers," Pritts said. "It's so deadly in Lancaster County. You can't hold back that water pressure. It's relentless."

Whitton, a 36-year-old Quarryville resident who owned the boat, referred Pritts to her attorney when Pritts asked her to complete a boat accident form. The form is required by law to be filled out within 48 hours of every boating accident. Pritts said Whitton's lack of cooperation, including her refusal to meet with Pritts, may hinder their search for Nichole. "If (the survivors) see the photos, it may trigger some things they may not recall," he said.

The search for Nichole was scaled back Wednesday, but conservation officers and dozens of citizen volunteers and firefighters were on the river looking for her. "We are covering all bases and looking in the river," Pritts said. "We don't want to say we are 100 percent sure, but we know that's where we want to be looking — in the river." The orange floatation device, believed to have been worn by Nichole, was pinned under rocks and brush in the Susquehanna River about 110 yards south of the Holtwood Dam, Pritts said. "We don't believe Nichole is there," he said, "but it does appear to be the type of (life jacket) that was on the boat. If it is, it would be the sixth one."

The other five jackets have already been recovered or were being worn by the survivors, Pritts said. The 16-foot SeaRay boat's inboard/outboard motor was found beneath Norman Wood Bridge, pinned between rocks, Pritts said. Pritts expected the motor and life jacket to be recovered from the river today. Other than narrowing or expanding the scope of search efforts, it is unclear what the recent findings will tell investigators about the accident or Nichole's whereabouts.

The search on the river is expected to continue for days. Pritts said he expects volunteers to continue showing up to help.

"The imperative thing is to continue to look for Nichole," he said. "All they want is Nichole to be found. "We will find Nichole; it's just a matter of time."

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