

Accident Database

Report ID# 463

Help

1997-05-29
Date
Larry Kendrick
Victim
49
Victim Age
San Marcos
River
None
Section
Ottine Dam United States Texas, US
Location
~1500-3000 cfs
Gage
High
Water Level
N/A
River Difficulty
Caught in Low Head Dam Hydraulic
Cause

Injury Type(s)

– Does not Apply

Factors

– High Water

– One Boat Trip

Extensive Experience

Victim Experience Level

Private

Trip Type

Open Canoe

Boat Type

Group Info

Other Victim Names

Reported

Status

Accident Description

On May 30, Larry Kendrick, the police chief of the city of San Marcos, Texas, met death while practicing or the Texas Water Safari. He was with his son in a canoe on the flooded San Marcos River. The report, forwarded by the ACA's David Reichert, states that the pair apparently paddled over Saber Tooth rapid, which had washed out, without knowing it. They became confused as to their location, a common problem in very high water, and inadvertently paddled over Ottline Dam just downstream. A 12' drop at normal levels, this dam has a horrible hydraulic at high water. Mr. Kendrick's body had not been recovered at the time of the report.

Larry Kendrick, the Police Chief for the City of San Marcos, TX, was practicing for the Texas Water Safari on the San Marcos River with his son. They'd entered the Safari twice before and had run the river several times at lower water. This time, however, the river was at flood stage.

The team was looking for Saber Tooth Rapid, small riffles just upstream of the confluence with Plum Creek. In the flood water, however, that rapid washes out. When they thought they were approaching Saber Tooth, they were actually approaching Ottline Dam, which has a 12 foot vertical drop at normal flows. In floodwater the drop is considerably less, but the hydraulic is awesome. They went over the dam on May 30, 1999 and Larry hasn't been seen since. A search is underway. When I offered to help with the search I was told that the local EMS people had everything under control. They were using john boats and jet skis to look for the victim.

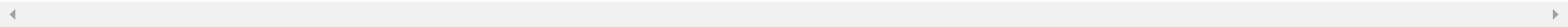
Mike McClabb lives just downstream of the low water bridge at the dam. He got word of the rescue in progress from a neighbor. He went to the dam and was told not to worry, the fire department had a jet ski and they were going out. Mike strongly suggested that they not use the jet ski, but that he would return with a canoe. While he was gone the \$8500 jet ski was launched and promptly got sucked under a low water bridge with a couple of inches of clearance. The operator lived, but the waverunner is probably still running waves downstream. By the time Mike got back with his canoe, Duane and Joe had arrived. All of us are on a list that used to be posted at the fire station known as the Martindale Swiftwater Rescue team. None of us were called. I was notified by Mike; the others heard the racket and just showed up.

rope to it. They paddled to shore and a group of us dragged the guy out. When the kayaker got to shore he started bragging about what a great ride he'd had and how he was ready to go back in. Some of us were ready to help him get back in.

SOURCE: Written by Tom Goynes, Goynes Canoe Livery

ANALYSIS (Goynes)

1. Be aware that the rivers are very high right now. As of this morning flows were: 5110 cfs at Gonzales, 6800 cfs at Cuero and 7790 cfs at Victoria.
2. Otlne dam should have been destroyed a long time ago. The State should at least require adequate warning signs.



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