

# Accident Database

**Report ID# 50362**

Help

2019-06-01

Date

Betty Michael

Victim

56

Victim Age

North Branch Kalamazoo River

River

The dam at Porter and Monroe Streets, Albion, MI United States Michigan, US

Location

Water Level

N/A

River Difficulty

Cause Code(s)

- Caught in Low Head Dam Hydraulic

Injury Type(s)

- Does not Apply

Factors

- Other

Kayak - Other

Boat Type

Reported

Status

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## Accident Description

Woman drowns after falling out of kayak

KALAMAZOO AND BATTLE CREEK

by: 24 Hour News 8 web staff

Posted: Jun 1, 2019

ALBION, Mich. (WOOD) — A 56-year-old woman who had fallen out of a kayak and was trapped underwater in Albion has died. The Albion Department of Public Safety identified the woman as Betty Micheal of Albion.

Police were called around 7:30 p.m. Friday near the dam at Porter and Monroe Streets for a report of a person trapped under water. Micheal had been kayaking with a friend when she lost control in the swift-moving water, pulling her underneath the surface and through the dam.

Authorities say officers worked quickly to close the gates of the dam to slow down the flow of the water, but it took about 10 minutes to get the woman free. Paramedics and firefighters worked on the woman for several minutes before she was taken to the hospital.

She was pronounced dead around 4:30 a.m. at Henry Ford Allegiance Hospital in Jackson Saturday morning after complications due to the accident.

Husband of Albion woman who died in kayaking accident looking for answers

by Tarvarious Haywood | Newschannel 3

Thursday, June 6th 2019

ALBION, Mich. — The husband of a kayaker who died on Saturday near a dam in Albion wants someone to take responsibility in the incident before it happens again.

Dennis Michael said Betty Michael, his wife of three decades, was an avid kayaker, but it was the first time she and another kayaker had ever paddled down the swift stretch of water near the dam where she drowned. “It should have wires across here. There should be water buoys telling you that it’s here,” said Michael.

He said he got the call from the other kayaker's boyfriend that Betty was drowning near a dam. He says it took him five minutes to get to the site. At that time she had been under water for 5 minutes.

Albion Public Safety Chief Scott Kipp said, “We are not water rescue trained, let alone swift-water rescue trained, and we don’t have any swift-water rescue teams near here.” Residents who live near the river said this is not the first incident and they have had close calls themselves.

The neighbors, who didn’t want to be identified, said, “Right here at this area we have been outside a lot sitting on the bank, lots of other kayakers that come upon it don’t even realize the dams there. Some of them shot right through with their kayak. There are no signs. We went kayaking before and there is absolutely no signs saying 'dam ahead.'”

Kipp said he has been working for awhile with several entities to get the funding to remove the dam in the area. He said he recently spoke with U.S. Senator Gary Peters in hopes to get the funds needed to tear the dam in the area down. “These dams have outlived there purpose. They’re old they’re falling apart and it would just be better if they were all removed and make it safe for everybody to use the waterways,” Kipp said.

Dennis said it’s hard to start over after losing a loved one. “I don’t know I have no idea what he is to do now,” said Dennis. Albion College is responsible for the section of the river where the dam sits. We did reach out to them and they said to speak with the Albion police chief.



*Produced under a grant from the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund, administered by the U.S. Coast Guard.*

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