

LOCAL

Two brothers drown at Percha

Bill Armendariz Deming Headlight

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DEMING – Two members of a Deming family drowned late Saturday while on a family outing at Percha Dam State Park near Caballo.

According to a New Mexico State Police report, brothers Gabino Porras, 34, and Cosme “Cosmito” Romero, 17, were attempting to cross a spillway runoff near their campsite. They found a rope and tied themselves at the waist with about five-feet of slack between them.

Witnesses said the brothers were returning to the bank of the river when one of the men lost his balance and fell.

The strong current took the brothers under and they drowned.

“It’s was supposed to be a fun day and it turned tragic,” said cousin and eye witness Angelica Arias. “We tried to help them, but the current was so strong.”

Arias was one of 11 people on a family outing who arrived late Saturday to the campground.

“I bet we weren’t even there 45 minutes when this happened,” Arias said.

She said Porras and Romero had found a chain underwater and were curious to see where it led. “When the rescuers and rangers found them, they had the rope tangled in the chain,” Arias said.

Romero was a Deming High School Wildcat football player this past season. He would have been a senior defensive end this year at 5-foot-11 and 220 pounds. According to Arias, “He was a beast.”

Of the 11 family members on the trip, six were adults, including their mother, Norma Romero.

Porras was living in Rio Rancho.

A New Mexico State Parks rescue team using an air boat located and recovered the brothers and performed CPR, but were unable to revive the victims. The men were recovered about 50 yards from the family’s campsite, according to Arias.

"The family is taking it hard," Arias said. "We are all in shock. These were Norma's only two sons."

An account has been established at First Financial Credit Union, 801 E. Cedar St., to help the family with funeral expenses.

St. Ann Catholic Church also is hosting an enchilada supper to raise money for the family. Red enchiladas will be served from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Wednesday at St. Ann Parish Center, 400 S. Ruby St. Plates are \$6. Delivery to businesses is available for the purchase of five or more plates. Call 575-544-6928, 575-494-0711, or 505-469-1315.

According to NMSP, no more details are available.

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