



Accident Database

Report ID# 116186

Help

2022-06-25

Date

Donovan Forsythe

Victim

26

Victim Age

St. Joseph River

River

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

Private

Trip Type

Kayak - Other

Boat Type

Reported

Status

Accident Description

UPDATE:

THREE RIVERS, Mich. – The body of a kayaker that went missing in the St. Joseph River on Saturday has been identified, the Three Rivers Police Department announced.

Donovan Forsythe, 26, of Princeton, North Carolina, was identified as the man police say went missing after falling out of a kayak.

UPDATE: Police recover body of missing kayaker who fell into the St. Joseph River by Gabrielle Dawson | News Channel 3

Saturday, June 25th 2022

THREE RIVERS, Mich. — The Michigan State Police Marine Services Team recovered the body of a missing kayaker from the St. Joseph River. Police began searching for a kayaker who fell into the St. Joseph River around 6:00 a.m.

Saturday, according to the Three Rivers Police Department. The victim's body was recovered at 7:14 p.m. Police said the victim was identified but the name is being withheld until family is notified.

The kayaker was near a dam in the river located near River Drive and Wood Street before falling into the water, according to investigators. A witness told police they saw the kayaker go underwater and not resurface. A person fishing attempted to rescue the kayaker but was unable to find them with the heavy water current, according to police.

Officers, deputies, and firefighters searched the area until the St. Joseph County Sheriff's Dive team arrived, according to police. Fabius Park Fire Department, White Pigeon Fire Department, Liberty Township Fire Department, and Michigan State Police Marine Division all responded to assist.

Anyone with information is asked to contact the Three Rivers Police Department at 269-278-1235 or Silent Observer at 616-774-2345.

Fatal drowning of Donovan Forsythe, 26, visiting location from residence in Princeton, NC. Recreational boat trying to navigate riverwide lowhead dam. One fisherman (unidentified) was witness. The account from news media and local officials was very scant. A public statement was released from Three Rivers documenting the incident date and estimated time. Body was later identified after later recovery. (Copies of documents/links are attached) The dam is clearly marked upstream, and has cable/buoy warning device.

I tried to get information from the local police detective, identified in the City's release, but received no answer to my inquiry on whether Mr. Forsythe went over the dam, or whether he launched below the dam, if a pfd was worn or not, nor if there had been any recent storm damage to the warning cable/buoy. Looking at picture taken that day in article, it is likely that the turbulent water described by the witness was the dam itself.

Facebook link from Three Rivers:

<https://www.facebook.com/3riverspolice/posts/pfbid036evzWA5vJaujHajkHiXDRbjY2C>

Media article on recovery (shows water level at base of dam)

<https://wwmt.com/news/local/police-identify-body-missing-kayaker-st-joseph-river-donovan-forsyth-county-fabius-park-drowning-three-rivers-michigan>

Missing Kayaker Update

Date: Saturday, June 25th, 2022

Address: 333 W. Michigan, Three Rivers, MI, 49093

Contact: Det. Smallcombe, ssmallcombe@threeriversmi.org, 269-278-1235

Three Rivers, MI

On Saturday, 6/25/2022, at 5:46 am, multiple public safety agencies responded to the area of River Dr. and Wood St., near the dam, for a report of a subject that fell out of a kayak. The caller stated that the subject had been bobbing in the water,

before going under and not resurfacing. Another subject, that had been fishing, attempted to help the subject; however, was unable to locate him in the churning water.

Officers, Deputies, and firefighters searched the area until the St. Joseph County Sheriff's Dive Team arrived on the scene and began recovery operations. Due to the dynamics of the search, Fabius Park Fire Department, White Pigeon Fire Department, Liberty Township Fire Department, and Michigan State Police Marine Services Team all responded to assist.

At the current time, the subject that had been kayaking, in the St Joseph River, has not been located. Anyone having information regarding this incident is asked to contact the Three Rivers Police Department at 269-278-1235 or Silent Observer at 616-774-2345.

*****UPDATE*****

On Saturday, 6/25/2022, at 7:14 pm, members of the Michigan State Police Marine Services Team recovered the body of the missing kayaker. The victim has been identified; however, the victim's name is not being released until notification can be made to the family.

Three Rivers Police Department would like to extend its deepest sympathy to the family and friends of the victim.

By authority of:

Chief Scott Boling





Our Organization

- About AW
- Outdoor Alliance
- News
- Stewardship
- Safety
- Contact Us
- Employment Opportunities
- Board of Directors
- Professional Staff

Support AW

- Join or Renew
- Donate
- Giving
- Become a Volunteer
- AW Store
- Industry Partner Program
- Advertising Information

River Info

Library

- AW Journal

Community

- Clubs
- Events
- Industry Partners

Account

- AW Site Login
- New Account
- Password Reminder
- Create AW Account

Administrator

Content

Users

© 1999-2025 American Whitewater

Terms of Service