

THE Messenger



Authorities seek kayaker who capsized near Hydroelectric Dam in Des Moines River

Man and woman went under; man was last seen about 100 yards from dam



-Messenger photo by Peter Kaspari

Deputy Amy Stringer, with the Webster County Sheriff's Department, and Fort Dodge firefighters look over the Des Moines River Monday afternoon while looking for a man who capsized while kayaking.

A kayaker fell into the Des Moines River Monday afternoon after the kayak he was in capsized and the current swept him away.

The incident was reported near the Hydroelectric Dam around 3:30 p.m. Monday.

Fort Dodge Fire Chief Steve Hergenreter said the man and a woman were kayaking below the dam when both of them capsized.

The woman, who was identified by Hergenreter as the man's wife, was able to swim to shore, but the man got caught in the river.

"The river is very high and very strong," Hergenreter said of the water conditions.



-Messenger photo by Peter Kaspari

Rescuers search on land and by boat for a missing man who fell into the Des Moines River while kayaking.

The man was last seen about 100 yards away from the dam.

Hergenreter declined to identify the people involved at this time.

Rescuers from the Fort Dodge Fire Department and Iowa Department of Natural Resources used boats to get into the water and search for the man. The Fire Department has one boat and the DNR has two.

Additionally, the Fort Dodge Police Department, Iowa State Patrol and Webster County Sheriff's Department converged on scene to search the banks of the river.

Officers and rescuers were stationed at various points along the Des Moines River, including near the Hydro Electric Dam, the river's edge next to Amigos, 280 N. First St., and atop the Karl King Bridge after a witness reported seeing something in the river. It turned out not to be the man.



-Messenger photo by Peter Kaspari

Fort Dodge Firefighters search the Des Moines River in a rescue boat Monday afternoon for a man who capsized while kayaking. The search was expected to conclude at dark.

Hergenreter said the rescuers went up and down the river multiple times in an attempt to search.

Though the skies got dark and a severe thunderstorm warning was issued for parts of Webster County, Hergenreter said the weather did not prevent the search from happening.

However, the conditions did prevent rescuers from utilizing one tool.

“We talked about the Iowa State Patrol about bringing in their plane,” Hergenreter said.

The Iowa State Patrol has a plane, the Air Wing, which can be utilized in searches. But the weather meant the plane had to stay grounded.



-Messenger photo by Peter Kaspari

Emergency vehicles from UnityPoint Health - Trinity Regional Medical Center and the Fort Dodge Fire Department stage near the Hydro Electric Dam Monday afternoon.

By evening, the man still had not been located.

Hergenreter said the search would continue.

"We'll go to dark and start first thing in the morning," he said.

He also stressed that volunteers are not needed and asked that any members of the public stay away from the search area, from the Hydroelectric Dam to the Karl King Bridge.

Hergenreter said all involved are thinking of the family and friends of the man.

"Our hearts go out to them," he said.

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