

Accident Database

Report ID# 676

Help

2000-08-15
Date
Charles Weaver
Victim
58
Victim Age
Musconetcong
River
Below Warren Glen
Section
8' high Dam at Finesville United States New Jersey, US
Location
7 feet above optimum
Gage
High
Water Level
N/A
River Difficulty
Caught in Low Head Dam Hydraulic
Cause

Injury Type(s)

– Does not Apply

Factors

– Solo Paddling

Some Experience

Victim Experience Level

Private

Trip Type

Whitewater Kayak

Boat Type

Group Info

Other Victim Names

Reported

Status



Accident Description

In the middle of August, north-central New Jersey was hit by a "once in a lifetime" thunderstorm that dropped 14" of rain in a single day. The area suffered the worst flooding in decades. Homes flooded, power was lost, dams broke, hills slid into highways, and bridges washed out.

According to the Newark, NJ Star-Ledger, as the skies cleared on August 15th Charles Weaver, 58, decided to paddle the swollen Muscoanetcong River near Hacketstown, NJ. Weaver, who had been an outstanding high school football player in his youth, worked as a guidance counselor at a local school. Anxious for a high water run, he ignored his wife’s pleas for caution and launched at Warren Glen. Four miles later he washed over an 8’ high dam at Finesville and became caught in the hydraulic below.

Construction workers heard his cries for help and threw him a rope, but he was being wildly thrashed and could not grab hold. Witnesses saw his life vest pulled off before Weaver disappeared for the last time. Flooding hampered efforts to find him afterwards. Four days later his body was found at Milford, on the Delaware River, roughly eight miles downstream. His boat was found in the brush a short distance below the dam.

Ed Gertler’s "Garden State Canoeing" calls the "Musky" a Class II+, suitable for someone like Mr. Weaver, who had been boating about a year. But a local paddler reported the level that day was seven feet above optimum. The river was extremely powerful and pushy, with very few eddies. He had no desire to paddle it. Even if Weaver had seen the dam or known it was there, he would have had his hands full getting to shore. And although boating solo is not a good idea, I’m pretty sure another paddler would not have helped much .

Once a person went over the dam they were on their own.

CW



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