

# Accident Database

**Report ID# 114584**

Help

2021-01-17

Date

Jacob Stover

Victim

16

Victim Age

Ohio River

River

Louisville, KY United States Kentucky, US

Location

Water Level

N/A

River Difficulty

Cause Code(s)

- Caught in Low Head Dam Hydraulic

Injury Type(s)

- Does not Apply

Factors

- Cold Water
- Solo Paddling

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Trip Type

Kayak - Other

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Boat Type

Reported

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Status

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## Accident Description

<https://www.dailydot.com/irl/weather-cam-jacob-stover-disappearance/>

Missing teen was inadvertently captured  
by weather cam before his disappearance  
His kayak was found without him in it.

Jan 17, 2021 by Eilish O'Sullivan, Wave3 News

A missing teenage kayaker in Ohio went missing on Sunday, and a weather camera may have captured the moments leading up to his disappearance. Louisville Metro Police Department and the Indiana Department of Natural Resources are working together to search for 16-year-old Jacob Stover, whose kayak was found without him in it on Sunday, according to WAVE 3 News.

The WAVE 3 News Skytrack Weather Camera captured what is believed to be Stover in the kayak on the Ohio River. The kayak is seen moving in circles and passing under a bridge, into an area that prohibits boats and kayaks, according to alleged signs at the bridge. The teen then exits the frame. The way the kayak was moving is raising questions, according to WAVE 3 News. According to Nathan Ginn, an experienced kayaker who spoke with WAVE 3 News, "There's so many things going against (Stover) in that condition." "If you look across the horizon, you see a line in the horizon," Ginn said. "There's a drop, a low head dam, circulating dam."

"Being (alone) and in the most dangerous spot... Cold weather kayaking is one of the most dangerous things you can do and springtime kayaking, when the water is still cold, people can fall in and don't realize how terrible that experience is going to be for their bodies. It's oftentimes not survivable," he added.

'I need that river to let my son go': Jacob Stover's family hopes tragedy can help others  
Shawn and Melissa Stover said they hope their son's story can help others who may underestimate the water or overestimate their own powers.

Author: Heather Fountaine (WHAS 11.com)

June 29, 2021

around safety on the deceiving water of the Ohio River.

Shawn and Melissa Stover said their son's love for the water began when he was only five. As he got older, Jake would ask his mom to bring him to a nearby pond nearly every day. "She was dropping him off at the pond and picking him up at the pond almost every day," Shawn Stover said. "How many nights he came and said, 'Mom will you take me to the pond in the morning?' cause he couldn't drive on his own, he was still on his provisional license...and goodness how I wish I still had those nights when he would ask that," Melissa Stover said.

Eventually, Jake got his license. Instead of heading to the pond that January morning, he grabbed his fishing gear and winter coat and steered toward the Ohio River — something his family said they had never done before.

"We can't figure it out," Melissa Stover said. "It was...he got a bug to go, and like most kids his age, he wanted to do something. He got the opportunity to be independent and he did it. No, it was not a norm in any way, shape or form."

Jake parked his Jeep at Cox Park that morning, but when his family tracked his phone, it pinged just over four miles downstream near the Falls of the Ohio. "His sister had a gymnastics competition that afternoon, and we were just kind of getting ready for that when we realized that he wasn't where we thought he was and then we couldn't get him to respond to us," Melissa Stover said.

The next day, Jake's kayak was found floating near the Falls.

"You hang onto hope, cause that's what you want," Shawn Stover said. "I was always hoping for lonely, cold and scared and as the days progressed, that gets harder to hold onto."

Family and friends joined crews from the Louisville Metro Police Department and Indiana Department of Natural Resources, searching for Jake along the Ohio. When strangers heard the news, they also joined search efforts.

The Stovers leaned on people like Dale A. Brown, assistant property manager at the Falls of the Ohio State Park, for his knowledge of the river. After volunteering and working at the park for more than a decade, Brown was able to point to places to search based on the river's patterns.

"The river is not unpredictable if you know it's routine," Brown said. "If you're searching for someone over a period of time, and that river is going up and down, you have to search that entire span from the high water to the low water and hope you'll be successful."

After 57 days of agonizing searches, a tugboat operator found Jake about 111 miles southwest of Louisville in Newburgh, Indiana.

"At the end of our driveway was a gentleman who lived in the neighborhood who knew Jake from fishing," Melissa Stover said. "And I said to him as I was walking away that I need that river to let my son go — and that was it...2:15 p.m. EST, 1:15 p.m. CT. The notification from the police was like 1:20 p.m. CT."

Officials said Jake died from drowning and hypothermia, recommending his parents not see him after he was pulled from the water. "They did tell us that he didn't have any injuries," Melissa

it's, it's very deceiving," Melissa Stover said. "A lot of boating safety is talked about, wear your PFD [personal floatation device] of course, but what's not talked about is the water temperature." Louisville Area Canoe and Kayak organizer Nathan Ginn knows the risk of kayaking and fishing during the winter. "From late October through March, April, you need to be prepared for a cold-water swim," Ginn said. "Cold water below 40 is immediately life threatening, it's an emergency the moment you hit the water."

Experts say wet suits and dry suits should be worn instead of typical winter clothing. "If you are dressed for winter out here and you've got down jackets on and tight jeans, things like that...it may keep you warmer in the wintertime, if you go in the water, that's going to absorb the water and it can help pull you down and restrict your movement for you to save yourself," Brown said.

The Stovers said they could not believe their son went in the river, especially after he commented on how difficult the conditions are. "We never expected him to be there," Melissa Stover said. "And he had made comments about how not smart it was to be in the river so we can't figure...it just doesn't make sense."

Even after boating for more than 20 years, Ginn said going out solo is a no-go for him. "When things are really bad out there and the current comes up, it's dangerous," Ginn said. "I would never paddle by myself on the Ohio River."

The Stovers said they share Jake's story to remind people not to underestimate the power of the water nor overestimate their own abilities. "Jake was an outdoorsman, he was a super strong swimmer," Melissa Stover said. "We just hope that there's things that people will do or think about," Shawn Stover said. "Give it a second thought, don't take it for granted when you're out there, and understand, the river...it's very deceiving."

Jake's parents believe he was paddling in a restricted area, past the Second Street Bridge that marks the end point for most recreational vehicles. Warning signs are painted on the pillars, but they are difficult to read. "There's gotta be a better way to let the people know that they can't be there," Melissa Stover said.

Brown said on average, one person drowns near the Falls of the Ohio every year. The common denominator? "None of them has a life vest on." WHAS11 reached out the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers about the signs on the Second Street Bridge. In a statement, they agreed the signs were in "poor shape," but said "they are not required by USACE regulation. Although not required, we have chosen to leave them in place until this point as an added safety measure for mariners." They said they are "partnering with U.S. Coast Guard Sector Ohio Valley to determine best placement for buoys in that area as an alternative to the signage on the piers."

The Falls of the Ohio keep safety pamphlets on the walls inside the center, and hold annual trainings for those who fish on the river. The Stovers are also working with the Falls, looking for more ways to address some of their safety concerns. Stover's high school bass fishing team is hosting a boating safety class open to the public July 10 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Arvin Center. It costs \$5 to attend. People can register online here.

Mar 10, 2021

WDRB.com

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (WDRB) -- The body of Jacob Stover, a 16-year-old from Oldham County who went missing in January while kayaking on the Ohio River, has been found. Stover's body was recovered Monday afternoon from the Ohio River near Newburgh, Indiana, according to the Warrick County Coroner. That's roughly 120 miles away from Louisville. Stover was last seen Jan. 10 kayak fishing on the Ohio River. Search and rescue crews had been searching for the teen for about two months since he went missing. Several professional organizations and local volunteers helped with the search.

In a statement, Stover's family said: "We are overcome with the grief of losing our son. We are grateful to have resolution in this search made possible by the tremendous support from the community and heroic volunteer efforts during the past two agonizing months. While hope remained in our hearts that we might find Jake alive, as the days continued, our prayers and efforts turned to recovering our son. While the sadness is overwhelming, we are profoundly grateful for the support of our extended family and friends, our co-workers and the strangers we never had the chance to meet." "We are now making funeral arrangements and managing through our grief as a family. Arrangements to celebrate Jake's life will be communicated shortly. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts for showing your love for us and for Jake." - Shawn and Melissa Stover. An autopsy is scheduled for Wednesday.



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