

Accident Database

Report ID# 95406

Help

2020-05-07

Date

2 Unidentified Men

Victim

Victim Age

Kankakee River

River

Kanakee, IL: Dam below Washington Avenue Bridge United States Illinois, US

Location

Water Level

N/A

River Difficulty

Cause Code(s)

- Caught in Low Head Dam Hydraulic

Injury Type(s)

- Does not Apply

Factors

- One Boat Trip

Private

Trip Type

Kayak - Other

Boat Type

Reported

Status

Accident Description

Recovery Mission After For 2 Fishermen Disappear On Kankakee River

By Jermont Terry CBS 2 Chicago

May 7, 2020

KANKAKEE, Ill. (CBS) — Two fishermen on the water were swept into the Kankakee River in Kankakee Thursday afternoon, and hours later, rescue efforts turned to recovery. As CBS 2's Jermont Terry reported, witness said the men were there one minute and underwater the next.

There was swift current along the river Thursday night, and that played a factor in the two men going under. That witness was out fishing himself — one moment, he was talking to men, and the next, they were drifting down river. Dive teams searched will into the night Thursday along the Kankakee River after the men went under near the Washington Avenue Bridge. A 911 call brought the divers into the murky water.

Tony Gooden was out fishing when he spotted a man trying to dock his boat. "He's trying to anchor the boat while the propeller was running. He had got snagged,"

Gooden said. “So he took his knife and cut the anchor line, and the boat, basically, drifts towards the dam.”

Gooden and his son did not think much of it until minutes later, something besides the boat caught his eye near the dam. “We’ve seen the bodies, but the guys just floating down the river,” Gooden said. The Kankakee fire chief said the fishermen were both on the boat when for reasons unknown, they went into distress and into the river.

“At this point, we have several mutual aid departments on the scene. We’re using a variety of different types of boats to do a search, and we believe to be in a recovery mode at this point, and we have not found anybody now,” said Kankakee Fire Chief Damon Schuldt.

The fire chief said the river has a deep pocket throughout. He said divers scoured a 300-foot-wide, and a quarter- to half-mile radius of the river. That search in the chilly waters lasted until sunset. On Thursday night, many questions surrounded the drownings, but the biggest concern was to recover the bodies.

For Gooden, he wishes he could have done more. “Man, it’s just a tragic situation, you know, that we all have to witness, you know, for something like that to happen – where you know kids was around and everything like that,” he said.

The recovery efforts will resume Friday morning. It’s believed the two men are from the Kankakee area.



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