

Father finds 2d teenager's body in creek

The best friends jumped into Pennypack Creek for a swim. But rain made the water high and dangerous.

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The body of Nicholas Simonetti, one of two Northeast Philadelphia teenagers who drowned after jumping into the Pennypack Creek for a summer dip on Friday, was found yesterday by the boy's father as a search team waded through waist-high water.

Simonetti, 15, was discovered at 12:50 p.m. about a mile south of the bridge where the youngster and his best friend, Christopher Busse, entered the water about 2:30 p.m. Friday. The father, also Nicholas, was among more than a dozen searchers who had formed a human chain across the creek.

Rescue workers had found Busse, 16, about an hour after the boys jumped into the creek.

"They've been friends ever since they were 2 years old," said Joseph Busse, Christopher's father. He had been tossing flowers from the footbridge the youths had jumped from at the time Simonetti was found.

"They did everything together growing up, playing sports, going out with girls, going to the Shore."

James Gallelli, a Simonetti family friend who was part of the search party, said of the two boys: "You

never saw one without the other."

Shortly after a rainstorm Friday, the teenagers jumped off the footbridge, near Roosevelt Boulevard, into the storm-swollen creek and were carried over a four-foot waterfall. At the bottom of the falls, they were caught up in roiling waters that produced a whirlpool effect.

"They kept coming up and calling for help but they couldn't get out," Busse said. "I believe Christopher was trying to save Nicky and vice versa and that's why they died together. They wouldn't give up on each other without a fight. If there's any consolation, it's that Christopher died with his best friend trying to help him."

Police marine units, district officers and park rangers, who halted their search Friday night, resumed their hunt for Simonetti about 8 a.m. yesterday, according to Sgt. Leigh Cochrane of the Marine Police Unit. Their search was concentrated near the bridge where the two boys dove into the water. Civilians, at the same time, combed the creek downstream.

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