

North Raleigh News

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Young cousins drown in Neuse River

The children add to recent tragedies in area waters

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After a four-hour search Monday afternoon, divers found two cousins – a 7-year-old boy and 10-year-old girl – who had drowned in the Neuse River just downstream of the Milburnie Dam.

The search started at 4 p.m., less than two hours after the Johnston County Sheriff's Office was called to a residence at 5465 Applewhite Drive in Wendell where a 15-month-old girl was found unresponsive in a residential pool. She was taken to WakeMed Raleigh where she died.

Those incidents, along with the drowning of Wake Forest teen Jaimel Cooper July 7 at a man-made lake near Goldsboro, make four drowning deaths of area resi-



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Rescuers head out to search for a 10-year-old girl and 7-year-old boy below the Milburnie Dam on the Neuse River near New Bern Avenue in Raleigh on Monday.

dents in less than two weeks.

A fisherman took his son and three nieces to the Neuse River Monday afternoon.

The boy wandered into the water and was pulled under by a strong current about 20 yards south of the dam, according to Raleigh police Maj. J.C. Perry.

His 10-year-old cousin went in after him and also was pulled under.

The father of the boy and his 13-year-old niece attempted to save them. They were able to emerge from the river safely but could not locate the two children.

A troubled spot

Apex Search and Rescue was brought in to aid Raleigh Police and Wake County EMS in the search.

Poor visibility hindered

divers looking for the missing children. The bodies were eventually found 20 yards downstream near the shore, Perry said.

Tuesday, the police identified the children as Katherine Rcom, 10, and Johnny Nay, 7.

The site below the dam at Milburnie Park has claimed lives before. John Brian Taylor and Michael Patrick McDowell, both 21, drowned in the river late at night in July 2008. The two men had been drinking and swimming, according to their friend's 911 call, when Taylor began yelling for help and McDowell swam after him.

The area, primarily designated as a canoe launch site, doesn't have lifeguards, and a sign posted by the city of Raleigh warned that the area was closed from 11 p.m. to 6 a.m. The city owns the area around the park.

Summer drownings

With summer comes heat, and with heat comes a search

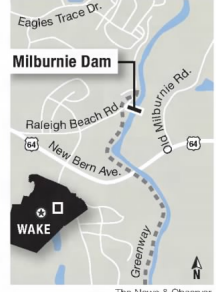
for relief in rivers, lakes and pools. That attraction carries risks as well, especially for the young.

Youths in particular face the highest risks of drowning.

According to the N.C. Child Fatality Task Force, 20 of the state's 37 drowning victims in 2010 were between the ages of 1 and 4. And most of the rest were under 17.

The Center for Disease Control's Childhood Injury Report says that, in data spanning from 2000 to 2005, drowning is the leading cause of injury death nationwide for toddlers between 1 and 4.

Also, across all ages,



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drownings exceed all other types of injury deaths not involving motor vehicles.

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