

TRYING TO BEAT THE HEAT



DAILY RECORD / SUNDAY NEWS — PAUL KUEHNEL

Among some of the tubers on the Yellow Breeches Creek on Wednesday are Jared Adams, left; an unidentified friend, second from left; Chris Chiampi, second from right; and Jeff Eslinger, right, all of Mechanicsburg. They were on a leisurely tube ride Wednesday from a covered bridge near Messiah College. To read about Leon Clymer of Oklahoma City, who drowned in the creek Tuesday, log on to inyork.com/ydr.

Officials urge caution

■ A man drowned Tuesday in the Yellow Breeches Creek.

By ANGIE MASON
Daily Record/Sunday News

A group of Mechanicsburg friends dropped inner tubes into the Yellow Breeches Creek around Messiah College in Cumberland County on Wednesday morning to beat the heat.

They don't go tubing often, but one of them, Jared Adams, got the urge and persuaded the rest to join him.

"It's just really hot today," said Kelsey Evans, 18.

The group set out from a point north of where an Oklahoma man drowned Tuesday while tubing.

Leon Clymer, 70, of Oklahoma City, was tubing with friends in the creek near Old Gettysburg Pike when they approached a low-head dam, according to Upper Allen Township Police in Cumberland County.

One member of the group went ahead to check the dam while the group waited, police said. Then Clymer went ahead to check the dam, too, and never returned to the group. His friends found him facedown in the water.

"Everything we have indicates he went over the dam on a tube and got caught in the wash," said Sgt. Tom Kauffman.

The Cumberland County Coroner's office ruled the cause of death was drowning.

The Yellow Breeches Creek runs along the York County-Cumberland County line. It's a popular spot for tubing, Kauffman said. There are several parks along the creek where people head out, he said.

Kauffman said there have not been any problems before in the area where Clymer drowned.

"We've never had any problems in the past with that particular dam, because it's clearly marked with a very large sign that says 'danger,'" he said.

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Man drowned

Leon Clymer, 70, of Oklahoma City, Okla., drowned Tuesday while tubing on the Yellow Breeches Creek, which runs along the York County-Cumberland County line. Police said Clymer went over a low-head dam, which was marked as dangerous.



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Dam

□ Police advise to not attempt to go near or over low-head dams.

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Water going over low-head dams creates an undertow that can pull a person or boat under the water, according to information on the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission Web site.

"It can suck a person back against the dam," Kauffman said. Even if victims try to get out, it just washes them back in, he said.

The Mechanicsburg group on the water Wednesday said they heard about Clymer's death. A woman nearby had warned them to be careful on the water, they said.

Chris Chiampi said he's



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Chris Chiampi, of Mechanicsburg, floats Wednesday on the Yellow Breeches Creek past Messiah College. He and a group of friends went tubing, and Chiampi said he was sure there were no low-head dams on their route. An Oklahoma man died Tuesday after going over a low-head dam on the creek.

gone fishing and kayaking on the creek before and knew where it was safe.

"There are no dams from here to where we're getting out," he said.

"We've been down this (creek) tons of times," Evans added. "We know where eve-

rything is."

The creek runs pretty slowly where they were planning to tube, said Eli Fahnestock, 18. He guessed it would take them two or three hours to float one-half mile.

Kauffman urged caution around dams.

SAFETY

Low-head dams can be dangerous for swimmers, boaters and anyone else on the water, according to the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission.

Anyone who gets too close to the dam can be drawn into the backwash current and pulled underwater, according to the commission's Web site. Victims are then pushed away from the dam, but when they resurface, they are often pulled back into the current, it said.

Pennsylvania law requires low-head dams to be marked. People are advised to heed warning signs and stay away from low-head dams.

The dams are inspected periodically by the Fish and Boat Commission, which works with the state Department of Environmental Protection to remove dams that are deemed unsafe, according to the commission.

"The best advice we could give as the police department is if you come to those dams, don't ever attempt to go near them or over them," he said.