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NEWS

Two drown at Silver Lake, third rescued

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TILTON — A hot summer day turned into tragedy for two young men who were swimming in Silver Lake by the Lochmere Dam.

Fire Chief Stephen Carrier said the Tilton-Northfield and Winnisquam fire department received a call just after 5 p.m. on Sunday about three teenage boys who were swimming in the lake near the dam and had gone under.

"Apparently three people were swimming, just below the dam on Silver Lake Road," said Carrier. "All three had trouble in the water."

All three boys had gone under; however, Carrier said one, a nine-year-old was rescued by a boater who was nearby.

That youth was transported to Lakes Region General Hospital in Laconia and authorities say he is doing very well.

Boats were brought in from Belmont and Franklin to assist in the search for the other two victims.

The victims were identified as Nick Lorette, 16, and Michael Squeglia, 20, both of Belmont.

Rescuers received "excellent information" from an eyewitness and they placed a buoy where the victims were last seen. Units began an extensive surface search and others searched the land adjacent to the area on foot.

One body was received around 7:30 p.m. and the other about one hour later.

There is no beach near the dam where the boys were swimming, but there is an open area to the lake, which can be inviting on days when temperatures soar into the 90s.

"It seems to be popular swimming spot," Carrier said.

Personnel from N.H. Fish and Game and the Marine Patrol arrived to help with the search and Bob Fay of the N.H. Department of Environmental Services also assisted by stopping the flow of water from the dam.

Fish and Game divers located the two victims in about 15 feet of water, very close to where the witness had last seen them.

"This is a terrible tragedy," Chief Carrier said. "We are so lucky that one of the victims was saved and is doing quite well."

The chief went on to explain, "The current below the dam is significant. Swimmers should avoid currents, normally, but with the extensive rainfall that we have had over the past few weeks, more water than usual is being released from the lakes, creating even more dangerous currents."

In his three years as chief of the department, Carrier said there had not been any calls for rescues there; however, he knows there have been in the past.

Carrier said he highly recommends that people not swim there or near currents at all because of the undertow they create.

Family members of the two boys were at the scene, Carrier said.

"The agencies on the scene worked extremely well together, both state and local," said Carrier. "We wish the outcome would have been more positive."

Ambulances from Tilton-Northfield and Belmont responded to the scene. Boats from Tilton-Northfield, Belmont, and Franklin were used at the scene, as well as from Marine Patrol and several Good Samaritans. Winnisquam Fire Department provided assistance on the scene and Sanbornton and New Hampton provided cover for the Tilton-Northfield stations.

Also assisting at the scene were Tilton, Northfield and Belmont police and New Hampshire State Police.

All units were back in service by 10 p.m.