

# Authorities believe they have found body of drowned swimmer at Palisades-Kepler State Park



**Kat Russell**

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People enjoy a warm spring day on the banks of the Cedar River at Palisades-Kepler State Park on Saturday, May 23, 2015. (Liz Martin/The Gazette)

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CEDAR RAPIDS - Searchers believe they have found the body of Jairo Mejia Jimenez, [a swimmer who went missing in the water at Palisades-Kepler State Park](#) over the weekend.

The Linn County Sheriff's Office released a media release after 4 p.m. Monday saying a man's body was discovered in the Cedar River just south of the Highway 1 Bridge.

The body will be sent to the Iowa Medical Examiner's Office in Ankeny for an autopsy and an identification.

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In the meantime, the search of the Cedar River has ended, but the incident remains under investigation.

Jimenez, 31, of Cedar Rapids, was swimming Saturday near the Cedar River dam when he disappeared, a news release from the sheriff's office said.

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Linn County Sheriff's Maj. Chad Colston said witnesses reported seeing a man go under water and not resurface about 7:30 p.m. Saturday. Friends of the swimmer identified him as Jimenez, Colston said, who noted the sheriff's office could not make a positive ID 'until the recovery is made."

With the help of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Linn County sheriff's deputies searched for the man Saturday evening and all day Sunday.

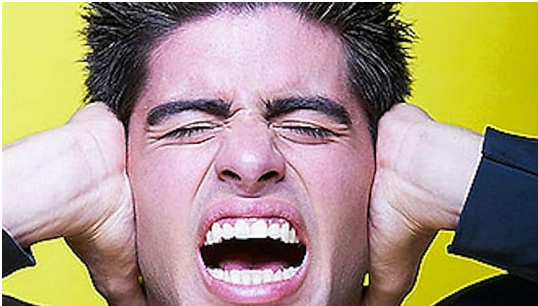
Colston said emergency personnel used boats and sonar machines to search the river.

He said a search such as this poses some challenges. Fast-moving water and the varying depths of the river can make searching the riverbed difficult and pose a threat to the searchers. Additionally, he said, debris in the river can get picked up by sonar and needs to be investigated, which can take time.

Jimenez is the second person to drown at the state park near Mount Vernon in the past two weeks.

On July 7, a boater, later identified as [Ricky Veenstra](#), 59, of Cedar Rapids, went into the Cedar River near the dam and did not resurface. His body was found two days later.

' Comments: (319) 398-8238; [kat.russell@thegazette.com](mailto:kat.russell@thegazette.com)



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