

# South Licking claims man's life Saturday

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and FRANK WARNOCK

Local authorities have stopped searching for the body of a man who drowned about noon Saturday on the lower side of Terry Dam in the South Fork Licking River.

A search will resume as soon as river waters recede.

The apparent drowning victim is Leon Withers, 40, of Paris Pike, a 3M employee.

Withers' body was last seen by several witnesses at the A. Keller Dam north of Cynthiana.

Jim Keeton, who lives next to the A. Keller Dam, said he and several others watched a body go over the A. Keller Dam about 7:30 p.m. Monday night.

The body hasn't been seen since.

City and county firemen and members of the Harrison County Rescue Squad searched for the body from the time it was last seen about 12:10 p.m. Saturday, until Tuesday morning.

Searchers were stationed at

the Poindexter Dam Monday night and Tuesday morning, but didn't see a body.

Betty Marcum and her husband, Bill, were fishing at the Terry Dam when the boat carrying the drowning victim overturned, throwing him into the swollen river waters.

Mrs. Marcum said the turbulent water and powerful undertow near the dam sucked the drowning victim's boat underneath the surface of the river.

She said she ran to get her husband, who was on the road above the dam. He immediately went to City Hall for help.

Cynthiana police Patrolman John Hiten was the first to arrive at the scene.

Hiten said the man was still alive and struggling to grasp a log that was floating near the dam.

Hiten said he couldn't reach the man so he drove to the west side of the dam. When he got there the man was gone.



Cynthiana volunteer fireman John Gross Monday from the Terry Dam created a powerful undertow that looked for the body of a man who drowned about noon Saturday on the lower side of Terry Dam near Southern States. The South Fork Licking River water flowing swept the drowning victim and his boat underneath the river's surface.

Hiten waded into the river until the water was chest-deep, but gave up because the water near the dam was too turbulent. "That's all I could do..."

Soon after city and county rescue workers arrived and immediately began searching for the body.

Cynthiana Fire Chief Milton Knight said the search for the body had to be abandoned "because the water is too high

for any dragging or searching."

Knight said the river, which is normally about 4½ feet deep at the Bridge Street crossing, reached 11.42 feet at 10 p.m. Monday night. Heavy weekend rainfall pushed river water above the Terry Dam and caused the river current to flow much faster than normal.

Local authorities experienced another scare about

9 p.m. Monday night when they lost touch with three county volunteer firemen who were searching for the body in a small aluminum boat. The men showed up about a half hour later.

Local authorities are reluctant to say that the drowning victim is definitely Leon Withers. However, Withers reportedly went fishing

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