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Kayaker's body pulled from Androscoggin River

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GORHAM, N.H. (AP) – The body of a young kayaker who disappeared underwater while his brother and a companion were unable to save him was recovered Monday from the Androscoggin River.

Ryan Corrigan, 21, apparently drowned after he and his brother Lee, 19, decided to kayak in a sluiceway of water rushing over a 12-foot dam on Sunday, Fish and Game Sgt. Doug Gralenski said. Fish and Game divers recovered the body 10 to 15 feet from the dam about 10:20 a.m. Monday, Gralenski said.

A companion, Jason Guay, had chosen not to go over the dam and called authorities by cell phone. All three were from Gorham. Gralenski said both brothers capsized and struggled in the rough water, but only Lee made it to shore.

Ryan Corrigan had just bought his kayak and was on his second run about 6 p.m. Sunday when he made the fatal decision to go over the dam.

“It was just extremely treacherous,” Gralenski said. “The most experienced kayaker would not attempt it, and these were not experienced kayakers.”

Guay and Lee Corrigan attempted to rescue Ryan Corrigan, but could not, Gralenski said. He said the body was recovered only after the water flow was restricted at dams upstream.


Gralenski said the Corrigans did not have lifejackets, helmets or other safety gear and were kayaking in 53-degree water.

He said lifejackets are the most important piece of safety gear, but boaters also need to use good judgment and know that being immersed in cold water will quickly sap their ability to swim.

He said helmets help prevent people from being knocked unconscious if their boats overturn, and many kayakers wear wetsuits both for warmth and buoyancy.

Gralenski said the dam is about a half mile north of the junction of Routes 16 and 2. He said spring runoff had broken some splashboards and created a rush of water over the dam.

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