



KITSAP COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

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Central Kitsap

Tragedy at Big Beef Creek

SILVERDALE, Wash. -- A hiking outing amongst four friends turned tragic this afternoon when one of the young men in the party fell into the raging waters of Big Beef Creek and was lost.

The Kitsap County Coroner's Office has confirmed the identity of the victim as Lucas Earl Weaver, age 18, from Seabeck.

The initial report of the incident was dispatched just before noon. Witness statements report that the victim had slipped on partially submerged rocks while attempting to cross Big Beef Creek, downstream more than a mile and a half from the spillway that empties water out of Lake William Symington into Big Beef Creek, in Central Kitsap.

Lake Symington is approximately five miles southwest of Silverdale, close to the community of Seabeck.

The victim's friends attempted to save Lucas by grabbing ahold of his backpack, which subsequently slipped off. Big Beef Creek was a torrent of deep storm water from the lake and from smaller draining streams. Lucas was swept downstream to a waterfall where he became trapped.

Despite efforts to help keep him above water, the fishing waders that Lucas was wearing quickly filled acting like an anchor that pulled him under.

A sheriff's detective happened to be in the area and was on-scene at the spillway within two minutes of the initial radio dispatch. The detective initiated coordination efforts to direct additional responding sheriff's patrol units and fire emergency responders. Mobile phone communications difficulties, steep and muddy terrain, and exact position location details hampered and delayed the response effort.

Once the site of Lucas' disappearance was determined, a search effort was started by patrol deputies. Safety was paramount as they inched their way along roiling waters at the bottom of the creek ravine, hampered by thick brush and mucky footing. Lucas subsequently was found in the water within 45 minutes following the initial emergency dispatch.

A recovery effort was launched by Central Kitsap Fire & Rescue, with assistance from Bainbridge Island Fire Department, Navy Region Northwest Fire and Emergency Services and Mason County Fire District 2.

The victim was recovered by fire technical rescue crews at approximately 2:15 p.m.

The same elements of nature that obstructed initial response and search actions also hindered fire rescue efforts. Fire emergency vehicles could not gain access to the creek. All equipment was carried in and out by rescuers. On the return climb out of the ravine they brought Lucas with them.

An autopsy will be scheduled to be performed by the county's forensic pathologist. The Kitsap County Coroner will make a determination as to the cause and manner of death.

The sheriff's office investigation continues. Case report number **K16-001467**.

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