

One body recovered, one missing in Ludlow drowning

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State Police divers located the body of a male drowning victim in the Chicopee River in Ludlow Friday evening, but one man remains missing. The search for the second victim was suspended at dark and will resume Saturday morning.

Fire Capt. Richard Machado said divers located the body of one of two victims missing since just after 5 p.m. when a group of five people struggled in strong currents just below the Red Bridge dam.

Machado said the drowning victim was found by divers just before dark approximately 50 feet from where witnesses identified his last location.

Ludlow and Wilbraham firefighters responded to the scene just after 5 p.m. when they received a 911 call from a child reporting adults were drowning.

Wilbraham units followed by Ludlow rescuers commandeered kayaks to pull three people from the swirling waters. All three were transported to the Baystate Medical Center where their conditions are unknown.

Machado said a group of nine adults and five children were swimming from a small beach at the confluence of turbulent water released from the dam, and swift currents from a nearby spillway. The currents are especially treacherous at that point.

Ludlow firefighters were assisted by Wilbraham and Three Rivers rescue units. Rescue boats from the Ludlow and Wilbraham departments were launched. A boat from the state Environmental Police was also launched.

Divers from the State Police Dive Team searched the area around the small beach and eventually located the first fatality. A helicopter attached to the State Police Air Wing flew over the area searching as well.

The area is typically frequented by fishermen, Machado said, but swimmers occasionally use the small beach near a parking area below the dam even after authorities discourage recreational swimming near that area.