

https://journalstar.com/news/local/man-missing-in-big-blue-river-near-beatrice/article_9f79d3be-79b8-11df-a8e1-001cc4c002e0.html

Man missing in Big Blue River near Beatrice

By ZACH PLUHACEK / Lincoln Journal Star

Jun 16, 2010

Rescue crews searched along a six-mile stretch of the Big Blue River on Wednesday evening after a man disappeared in the water in Beatrice.

Beatrice Fire Chief Brian Daake said a 22-year-old man was swimming with a small group near the U.S. 136/Court Street bridge around 7 p.m. and never resurfaced.

About three hours later, a dive team from Jefferson County had yet to find him, and rescue teams downriver at bridges in Holmesville and Blue Springs hadn't spotted anything.

Daake said teams were close to shifting from a search and rescue mission to a recovery mission, but they were planning to remain in the area overnight.

The Gage County emergency manager and Beatrice Fire and Rescue were leading the search, with help from the Jefferson County emergency manager and area rescue agencies.

People are also reading...

Prosecutors and deputies from Gage County also were at the scene, which Daake said is standard procedure for such incidents.

Beatrice Police Sgt. Brian Carver said investigators still weren't sure why the man went under.

The Big Blue is running at about 8.3 feet deep in that area, about half of flood stage for the river there, according to the National Weather Service.

"It's faster than normal," Daake said.

*Reach Zach Pluhacek at 402-473-7234 or ***zpluhacek@journalstar.com***.*

https://journalstar.com/news/local/family-friends-of-missing-beatrice-man-gather-by-river/article_0a881718-7a0b-11df-96f9-001cc4c03286.html

Family, friends of missing Beatrice man gather by river

By CHRIS DUNKER / Beatrice Daily Sun

Jun 17, 2010



Eric Pospichal (Courtesy / Beatrice Daily Sun)

By CHRIS DUNKER / Beatrice Daily Sun

The search continued Thursday for a Beatrice man who may have drowned in the Big Blue River on Wednesday evening, and friends and family gathered by the river, keeping vigil for a man known as brash and daring, yet loving and always ready to help others.

Eric Pospichal, 22, was last seen around 6:30 p.m. Wednesday while swimming with friends in the river before he went under and never resurfaced. The river was estimated at 8 feet deep Wednesday, about half of flood stage.

"He decided to go out where the dam was, and he got caught in the current," said 16-year-old Tiffany Stevison, who was at the river with Pospichal when he vanished. "He got out of it once, but he got pulled back in and never came back up."

Beatrice Fire and Rescue Department received a call of the possible drowning at 6:45 p.m. Wednesday.

Firefighters, law enforcement and other rescue authorities searched the banks of the river between the West Court bridge and Holmesville on Wednesday night, and they remained at the site throughout the night.

People are also reading...

Officials from numerous Gage County agencies, as well as search and rescue agencies from Fairbury and Kansas, continued searching for Pospichal on Thursday, but they called off the active parts of their search because of evening weather conditions.

According to Beatrice Fire Chief Brian Daake, a Nebraska State Patrol helicopter performed a search of the river with thermal imaging at 6:30 a.m. Thursday but found nothing resembling a body.

Shortly after the flyover, firefighters set up a system of ropes across the river to aid boats and divers in searching for Pospichal's body.

At 11 a.m., the first boat was put into the river, casting a fishing line near the dam in an attempt to locate the body. The effort was called off about 30 minutes later. A second attempt was called off after a boat encountered turbulent waters near the dam.

At 2 p.m., Kansas Search and Rescue officers arrived with a veteran cadaver dog.

Soon after, the dog made a possible "hit" about 40 yards downstream from the original search zone, causing the area of focus to shift.

At 4:45 p.m., a dive team conducted a search of the new area, combing the riverbed with long poles in an attempt to locate the body. The team exited the river at 5:30 p.m.

Veteran diver Bill Petersen of Barneston, who has 35 years of diving experience, said an underwater dive would be very difficult to perform in Thursday's conditions.

"It's fairly difficult because there is a lot of trash and stuff to get hung up on," Petersen said. "Plus zero visibility and a lot of current."

He was hopeful the team could locate the body Thursday, but "I'm relying solely on where the cadaver dog smelled something," he said, adding the team's search pattern would be critical. "I'm confident in the team, but the conditions make it tough."

At 5:40 p.m., rescuers began combing the new search area once more.

This time, however, the dog couldn't pick up a scent, leading authorities to believe the body had been taken further downstream.

Daake said officials from Blue Springs and Wymore would be called into service at the Holmesville and Blue Springs bridges.

"(This) morning we'll have a couple of boat crews out, going down river checking things out," he said.

Pospichal's family and friends arrived at the scene throughout the evening Wednesday after hearing the news.

Pospichal's older brother, Kenny, said he got the call at about 6:45 p.m.

"I just kind of dropped what I was doing to get here," he said.

"I've been here all night and haven't gotten any sleep yet," he said Thursday morning. He, along with friends and family, camped across the street from the search site Wednesday and remained there throughout the day Thursday.

Eric Pospichal was the type of person that would never hesitate to help a friend, his brother said, and his character was indicative by the number of friends and family keeping vigil near the river. A few dozen people waited for news near the scene.

Kenny Pospichal said he would stay at the site until his brother is found.

"I'm his brother, and I love him."

https://beatricedailysun.com/news/local/search-crews-find-body-of-beatrice-man/article_0f47631e-7b03-11df-99f1-001cc4c03286.html

Search crews find body of Beatrice man

Eric Pospichal's body found 5.4 miles downstream from original search site

By Chris Dunker/Daily Sun staff writer

Jun 18, 2010



Rescue workers search the Big Blue River Thursday afternoon for 22-year-old Eric Pospichal of Beatrice. Pospichal went missing Wednesday evening while swimming in the Big Blue River near the West Court Street bridge in Beatrice and is presumed drowned.

Photo by Jane White/Daily Sun staff

By Chris Dunker/Daily Sun staff writer

The search for a Beatrice man believed to have drowned in the Big Blue River ended shortly after 1 p.m. Friday afternoon.

Eric Pospichal, 22, disappeared into the strong current of the dam spillway underneath the West Court Street bridge Wednesday evening.

A search was conducted in the immediate area Thursday with no results. After a cadaver dog lost the scent late Thursday afternoon, authorities shifted their search zone downstream.

Pospichal's body was found 5.4 miles downstream from the point of his disappearance Friday.

Friday morning, all-terrain vehicles and horses were used by firefighters from the Firth Fire Department to search along the river bank downstream from the site of the drowning.

Beatrice Fire Department chief Brian Daake said the horse teams conducted a search to the water treatment facility east of Chautauqua Park before turning around at noon. The ATV teams searched the river to South 10th Road near Seitz Quarry before turning around.

People are also reading...

It was in that search that Pospichal's body was located.

Daake said he received a call at 1:12 p.m. from Beatrice fire captain Craig Fisher stating Pospichal's body had been found floating in the river near that point.

"We removed the body with as much respect as we could," Daake said. Pospichal's body was transported to a mortuary.

The Beatrice fire chief said he appreciated all the help from local fire departments, law enforcement, emergency management officials and volunteers who performed a variety of tasks over the 40-plus hour search.

“There was a ton of people, and we’ve got to thank them all,” Daake said.

Across the street from the original search site, Pospichal’s family and friends embraced one another, able to find closure in the events of the past two days.

Kenny Pospichal, Eric’s older brother, said the family appreciated all the hours and work that went into the search for Eric.

“The family is very thankful for the time the fire department, the police department, the sheriff’s department all took, as well as all the friends that came out to support our family,” Pospichal said. He called the presence of friends a “comfort.”

“Without their support, this would have hurt more,” he added.

Learning the search had been called off when Eric was almost relieving to the family, Pospichal said.

“I’m just glad they have found him and we don’t have to sit here any longer and suffer,” Pospichal said. “We’re all hurt, it’s a family loss and we’re all in pain.”

Pospichal said the family will make funeral arrangements in the next few days.

Tim Harrison, an uncle to Eric, called his nephew “a good kid.”

Harrison and Pospichal agreed that Eric would want all those who gathered waiting for news of the search for Eric “to go on with their lives.”

“He was a good kid — he did crazy things, we all do — but he was caring,” Harrison said.

https://journalstar.com/news/local/body-of-missing-beatrice-man-found-in-big-blue-river/article_850ae72a-7b2a-11df-a344-001cc4c03286.html

Body of missing Beatrice man found in Big Blue River

By the Lincoln Journal Star

Jun 18, 2010



Eric Pospichal (Courtesy / Beatrice Daily Sun)

By the Lincoln Journal Star

Rescue workers have found the body of a Beatrice man who disappeared Wednesday evening while swimming in the Big Blue River.

A search crew in a boat found Eric Pospichal, 22, shortly after 1 p.m. Friday in a winding section of the river north of Holmesville, Beatrice Fire Chief Brian Daake said. The spot is about five miles downriver from the U.S. 136/Court Street bridge, where Pospichal disappeared Wednesday.

Teams from across Southeast Nebraska had been searching for Pospichal.

Daake said authorities still aren't sure what caused Pospichal to go under water. An autopsy is scheduled for Saturday morning at a Douglas County hospital.

The Big Blue was about 6 1/2 feet deep Friday, down from 8.3 feet on Wednesday. Flood stage for the river in Beatrice is 16 feet.

Kenny Pospichal, Eric's older brother, said the family appreciated all the hours and work that went into the search for Eric.

People are also reading...

"The family is very thankful for the time the fire department, the police department, the sheriff's department all took, as well as all the friends that came out to support our family," Pospichal said. He called the presence of friends a "comfort."

"Without their support, this would have hurt more," he added.

Pospichal said the family will make funeral arrangements in the next few days.