

Accident Database

Report ID# 10664

Help

2017-05-16

Date

Ronald B. Sley

Victim

77

Victim Age

Laurel Creek

River

near Damascus, VA

Section

United States Virginia, US

Location

Gage

Low

Water Level

N/A

River Difficulty

Injury Type(s)

- Does not Apply

Factors

- Solo Paddling

Extensive Experience

Victim Experience Level

Private

Trip Type

Whitewater Kayak

Boat Type

Group Info

Other Victim Names

Reported

Status

Accident Description

Ronald B. Sley, age 77, was paddling solo when he became caught in the backwash of a low head dam northwest of Damascus, VA on May 16th. Mr. Sley was a Class 3-5 paddler who had paddled all over the world. He often paddled solo and had run this section before. He was wearing a PFD and helmet and scouted the drop before running according to investigators. Water levels that day were low.

Witnesses called 911; Sley recirculated face down in the hydraulic for some time before floating free. Firefighters arrived; launched a raft; recovered his body. There might have been a heart attack or other health problem.