

Accident Database

Report ID# 566

Help

1990-04-06
Date
Andy Kasen
Victim
21
Victim Age
James
River
4. Upper James into Richmond
Section
Williams Dam United States Virginia, US
Location
Gage
Medium
Water Level
VI
River Difficulty
Caught in a Natural Hydraulic
Cause

Injury Type(s)

– Does not Apply

Factors

– Inexperience

– One Boat Trip

Inexperienced

Victim Experience Level

Private

Trip Type

Open Canoe

Boat Type

Group Info

Other Victim Names

Reported

Status

Accident Description

JAMES RIVER CLAIMS PADDLER AT WILLAMS DAM

Running Williams Dam proved fatal for canoeist Andy Kasen, 21, son of Best Products, President/CEO. He was running tandem with a friend who narrowly escaped the same fate. Two other friends opted to portage the dam. The April 6th incident happened within sight of a sign warning of dangerous hydraulics beneath the dam, noting that 14 others had already drowned there.

Kasen and Miller made it over the dam (between Huguenot Bridge and Pony Pasture Park) but the current pulled their canoe sideways toward the dam and swamped it.

"I told them, "Man, you're crazy to go over that," a stunned friend said. "They thought they were going to be big shots and go across." She then watched helplessly as their friends struggled, then disappeared under water.

The river level at the Westham gage was 7.18, a medium level.

SOURCE: Coastal CaNews

ANALYSIS: Dams are dangerous, and the problems with this particular dam are well-documented. While warning signs clearly have limitations, in this case they may have saved the life of the second boatload of paddlers.



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