

Woman Drowns in Monongahela River

Fairmont resident was swimming with friends near Opekiska Dam

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By Alex Lang



Ron Rittenhouse / The Dominion Post photos - Divers and EMS recover the body of a 37-year-old Fairmont woman after she drowned Thursday about 300 yards south of the Opekiska Locks and Dam.

A 37-year-old Fairmont woman drowned while swimming near the Opekiska Lock and Dam on the Monongahela River on Thursday afternoon.

The Monongalia County Sheriff's Department did not release the victim's name Thursday night.

At 2:38 p.m., the Mon County emergency 911 center received a call saying a woman had been swimming and was missing, according to Deputy Rick Adkins, of the Monongalia Sheriff's Department. The victim was swimming in the river with friends when she went under.

Police radio traffic indicated the woman went under the water, and it had been about five minutes since her friends had seen her when the 911 call was made.

Shortly after the call went out, deputies from the Sheriff's Office, paramedics from Mon EMS and Emergency Operations Center personnel were joined on the scene by Morgantown Police and Fire Department divers, as well as volunteer fire-fighters from Triune-Halleck, Win-field, Clinton District and Barrackville volunteer fire departments.

The rescue operation was set up on the east side of the Mon River, off W.Va. 73.



The victim's daughter (in pink) is consoled by friends at the scene.

Three dive teams with more than 10 divers were ready to go into the river to search for and retrieve the body.

The victim's daughter and other family members arrived on the scene after receiving word of the incident.

Adkins said some of the divers discovered the body of the woman around 4:30 p.m. Officers on the scene did not have an exact time of death.

The family was visibly shaken, crying and embracing one another after learning that the body was discovered. None of the family and friends at the scene would comment.

Police said it was too early to tell the exact cause of death. They also said it was too early to tell if alcohol was a factor in the drowning. The investigation by the Sheriff's Department is ongoing.

Staff, submitted reports