
LANE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
NEWS RELEASE



CASE NUMBER: 16-8415

DATE/TIME OF INCIDENT: 11/21/2016 @ 11:22 a.m.

DATE/TIME OF RELEASE: 11/22/2016 @ 8:00 a.m.

NATURE OF STORY: Boating Fatality

LOCATION: Lake Creek near Hwy 36/ Indian Creek Rd. Swisshome, OR

DECEASED: Bruggeman Jr, James Edward
61 year of age male of Umpqua, OR

DETAILS: On November 21, 2016, at about 11:22 a.m., the Lane County Sheriff's Office and Siuslaw Valley Fire and Rescue received a call regarding a drift boat with two occupants that overturned on Lake Creek near the intersection of Hwy 36 and Indian Creek Rd., Swisshome. A passing motorist initiated the call when he spotted a male floating down stream wearing a bright yellow life jacket and initially made voice contact with him. The male was later identified as James Bruggeman, Jr. Mr. Bruggeman indicated the boat operator was also in the water, upstream. The motorist located the boat operator upstream, who had self-rescued and was climbing out of the water onto the bank.

Both the boat operator and the motorist continued to follow Mr. Bruggeman by vehicle, as Mr. Bruggeman floated downstream to the area of Stagecoach Rd. Once the bank cleared enough, Mr. Bruggeman was pulled from the water by the boat operator and passing motorist. Siuslaw Valley Fire and Rescue met them at that location and performed CPR in an attempt to revive Mr. Bruggeman, but were unsuccessful. The boat operator was transported to Peace Harbor hospital for cold weather related treatment.

Deputies learned that both men were very familiar with the river and had fished it numerous times before. The high, fast moving water overtook the boat when it lodged on some rocks, at which time both men jumped into the water to avoid injury from the capsizing boat. Mr. Bruggeman was wearing a self-inflating life vest, which deployed appropriately; the boat operator's vest did not deploy as designed.

Due to high, fast moving water in the area, LCSO has not been able to retrieve the capsized aluminum boat, which is still partially submerged in the channel near Hwy 36 mp 10. Area boaters should be aware of the yellow hulled boat and the high water levels in the area.

****Prepared by: Lt. Billy Halvorson, LCSO ****