



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Iowa DNR News
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Florida woman drowns in Upper Iowa River near Decorah

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DECORAH, Iowa – Emergency personnel responded to a report of a drowning on July 22 around 2:45 p.m. on the Upper Iowa River, northwest of Decorah.

Kayakers found the body of Susan Ann Fechhelm, 65, of St. Petersburg, Florida near the shoreline and attempted to provide immediate medical attention. She was eventually transported to Winneshiek Medical Center in Decorah, where she was pronounced dead.

Fechhelm was by herself in a kayak and believed to have been in distress, although no witnesses observed her kayak capsizing. Fechhelm was wearing a life jacket when she left the canoe access, however it is unknown at this time why and when the life jacket partially came off.

An autopsy will be performed on Fechhelm at the Iowa Office of the State Medical Examiner in Ankeny to determine if any other factors contributed to the drowning.

This case remains under investigation by the Iowa DNR and assisting agencies included Winneshiek County Sheriff's Office, Decorah Fire Department, Winneshiek County Medical Center Ambulance, Iowa State Patrol and Iowa Department of Transportation Motor Vehicle Enforcement.