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# Floating fiasco

## Canoe outing ends with water rescue

**BY DUSTIN TRACY Northwest Arkansas Times**

The Washington County Tactical Rescue Team sifted through muck, mud and white-capped rapids Wednesday to save a Fayetteville man stuck in the rushing waters of an overflow stream on the northwest side of Lake Sequoyah.

Mike Duncan was pulled from the swift current he had been standing waist deep in for about an hour after the boat he and two of his friends were floating in capsized.

Michelle Sherwin, of Garfield Mo., said she and her family were visiting her dad, who lives near the lake, and she and her kids were on a walk when she saw Duncan and his two friends, Dave Bradley of Huntsville and Mike Green of Hogeye, float past them in their silver canoe.

"I told my kids that probably wasn't a good idea," she said.

After the group passed, Sherwin said, she became worried when she lost sight of them. She ran down the bank and heard one of the men yelling for help. She sent her daughter running to her dad's house to call 911. Sherwin's daughter managed to flag someone down on the road who called for help.

"We were praying so hard," Sherwin said.

Bradley and Green managed to pull themselves to the roadside bank. They sat shivering in the back of a Central Emergency Medical Service pickup truck while the rescue team put a boat in the water to get their friend. While the rescue was under way for Duncan, Green told the story of how it all began.

He said the three put the canoe in the water right off the White River bridge off Arkansas 16 in Elkins. They spent a small part of the trip just floating. After they passed Sherwin and her kids, they saw the spillway and subsequent rapids and began to head for the bank, but when they were close Bradley stood up to grab a branch, lost his balance and shifted the canoe sideways, flipping it and sending its occupants into the thundering rapids fueled by 24 hours of heavy rain.

"All of a sudden I just found myself rolling," Green said. "I managed to find the top."

Green and Bradley made it to the west shore; Duncan found himself clinging to an island in the water. The boat was flipped and wrapped in a U shape around a tree in the water. The rapids bobbed it up and down as the rescue took place.

"There goes a \$160 canoe down the tubes," Bradley said, teeth still chattering.

The rescue team, decked out in wet suits and galoshes, pounded down a rocky hillside and through a swamp of a trail the recent rain had created to find and save Duncan. The boat they used fought the current and rescuers pulled Duncan out of the water and brought him to shore. CEMS workers urged Duncan, stripped of his wet, cold clothes, to stay awake and remain standing while they wrapped him in a heat-retaining garment. About eight men hauled him back up the hill to the ambulance. He was taken to Washington Regional Medical Center, where he was listed in fair condition Wednesday night.

Mario Compos, a battalion chief with the Fayetteville Fire Department, said the main responders were his

department and the county rescue team, made up of volunteers from the Elkins, Farmington and Round Mountain fire departments.

Part of the rescue team had worked with teams searching for a missing West Fork man earlier Wednesday.



ANTHONY REYES Northwest Arkansas Times Members of Washington County's Tactical Rescue Team convey Mike Duncan to an ambulance Wednesday after pulling him from the waters of the spillway of Lake Sequoyah. Duncan and two companions were in a boat on the lake when it capsized going over the spillway. The other two occupants were able to pull themselves from the water before Duncan was rescued.