

# Swimmer drowns at quarry

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SPRING TOWNSHIP — A middle-aged man from the area died Friday evening at the Bellefonte Quarry after he apparently took a miscalculated plunge into the illegal swimming hole, police said.

The man, whose name was not released Friday night, appears to have jumped near some jagged rocks about 6:30 p.m., Spring Township Police Chief David King said. The man's body was retrieved by

divers later in the evening.

Two boys — both under 18 — had been visiting the popular summertime spot with the victim, who was in his 30s, King said. He said the boys apparently tried to rescue the man by themselves.

When they couldn't, King said, they ran to call police about 7 p.m.

"They should be commended for what they did, at their age," King said. He said the boys were friends of the victim.

Emergency responders

included rescue divers from the Clinton County area who arrived 30 to 45 minutes after the 911 call, police said.

Graymont Inc. owns the abandoned, 80-year-old quarry. It is surrounded largely by forest and no-trespassing signs, but it remains popular with thrill-seeking locals and Penn State students, neighbors and police said. King said state and municipal police had stepped up patrols around the site even before Friday's fatality.

"We're going to be here a lot

more often to keep the people out," King said. "And they will get arrested."

A number of deaths have been logged at the quarry. In June 1996, an intoxicated 24-year-old jumped into the water, hit his head on a limestone ledge and drowned. A Bellefonte teenager died there in July 1978 after he became wedged among some rocks and drowned.

Details on the exact cause of Friday's death were not immediately available as darkness fell.

In the adjacent Brockerhoff Heights development, neighbors congregated quietly on their lawns and watched emergency workers gather on a new cul-de-sac. Parents fretted over the quarry's proximity to their own backyards.

Resident Tom Frank said he constantly sees swimmers and rock climbers headed to the quarry, especially on weekends.

"The rock climbers seem to be in their 30s and 40s," Frank said. "People swimming seem to be teenagers."

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