

OCEAN COUNTY

Swimmer drowns in quarry

Jeff Goldman

For Hunterdon County Democrat

A second man has drowned this summer while swimming at a lake on private property at a former mining site in Manchester in Ocean County.

Victor Arias-Peralta, 18, was swimming in the quarry at the Heritage Mineral property at about 6 p.m. Monday when he grew tired about 20 yards off shore, Manchester police said.

Arias-Peralta disappeared under the water a short time later and was swept away in the current, officials said.

The Perth Amboy resident was pulled from the water after a 45-minute search by police, firefighters and a State Police helicopter.

Authorities have ruled the drowning accidental following a preliminary investigation.

A 33-year-old Howell man drowned there in June.

Located off Route 37, the 7,000-acre Heritage Mineral property ceased mining operations in the early 1980s. Left behind are a series of “lakes” — which are actually quarry holes that have filled with water.

The banks are inherently unstable and the drop-offs can be steep, police say. Even more dangerous, the lakes are fed by springs in the underground aquifer, water that tends to be much colder and can cause a swimmer to cramp, police said.

Although “No Trespassing” signs are posted on the property, the land is a popular riding spot for people with all-terrain vehicles.

In 2020, one man was killed when his all-terrain vehicle overturned into one of the lakes at Heritage Mineral.

NJ Advance Media staff writer Richard Cowen contributed to this report.

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2024 Jul 18 year old drowns in NJ quarry

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