

Four-year-old boy drowns in pond near Roodhouse

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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ROODHOUSE - A 4-year-old Roodhouse boy playing in a pond drowned about five miles north of White Hall and four miles north of Roodhouse on Wednesday.

Paramedics and law enforcement were called to the scene at 3:28 p.m. Wednesday and when they arrived they discovered a lifeless 4-year-old. Paul Andrew Huston and his 8-year-old brother were playing and wading in the pond when the incident occurred, Greene County Sheriff Rob McMillen said.

Greene County Coroner Danny Powell pronounced the boy dead at the scene at the Huston home south of Barrow, McMillen said.

“The boy was pronounced dead at the scene,” McMillen said. “Once paramedics got there, they did an evaluation and started doing their care for him. They forwarded the information they found on to a physician who evaluated the evidence with a medical team and decided it was futile to continue to resuscitate.”

“The mother got to the scene within 7 or 8 minutes from work and she went out to where the boy was last seen in the water and started searching,” the sheriff said. “She started searching in that area and discovered him submerged in the water and pulled him up. She took him back to the bank.”

The sheriff said the woman did what she could for the child and waited for emergency responders to arrive, who discovered it wasn’t possible to resuscitate him. McMillen said Huston comes from a Mennonite family in Greene County.

McMillen said Mennonite children are very disciplined and often start working with their families at a very young age. The children are brought up in a very strict environment and he said he has never had any problems whatsoever with any of the children.

The sheriff said the family pond was maybe 75 yards from the front of the house and was a very large pond.

“The pond was man-made,” he said. “The pond was probably 40-50 yards in diameter and with it being hot weather, the boys had been playing outside. The mom runs a business in Roodhouse and a 15-year-old was supervising the children. All the others in the family were either at work or elsewhere.

"The children asked if they could go and cool off in the pond and contacted the mother. The mother instructed them to only wade in water no deeper than their knees along the bank. For whatever reason, the 4-year-old got out deeper than he should have.”

McMillen said the area in the family pond was pretty deep in the middle, which is common for most ponds.

The deepest portion of the pool was likely about 7 or 8 feet, McMillen said.

“Ponds are filled with mud,” McMillen said. “They are not made out of concrete like a pool. When you stand in a lake or pond water, you kind of sink a little bit. Mud is slick in a pool.”

The sheriff said days like Wednesday are difficult in his role and for other first responders at the scene.

“I was out there moments after CPR was started and I also assisted,” he said. “You never expect to deal with death at such a young age. You anticipate car accidents with adults, but with small children, it makes those types of incidents more difficult to put behind you.”

McMillen said the incident was a terrible tragedy. He said the Mennonite community is very tight knit and families from throughout the area arrived quickly to support the Huston family. Over the last 20 years, the Mennonite community around the White Hall and Roodhouse areas has grown, McMillen said.

The sheriff urged caution for people and children with recreation occurring constantly on lakes, ponds, creeks, rivers, and pools.

“There are a lot of boating and fishing activities that go on in the summer,” he said. “You can never be careful enough in these situations. Always practice good safety in these types of situations.”