

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**



**City of Duluth - Fire Department**

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**DATE:** 4/12/2023

**SUBJECT:** Duluth Fire Department rescues two in water emergency at Lester River, warns public of dangerous waters

**BY:** Kelli Latuska, Public Information Officer

**NATURE OF INCIDENT:** Water Emergency--Water Rescue

**CASE NO.:**

**INCIDENT DATE:** 4/12/2023

**INCIDENT TIME:** 1334

**INCIDENT LOCATION:**

**Duluth Fire Department rescues two in water emergency at Lester River, warns public of dangerous waters**

[DULUTH, MN] This afternoon, the Duluth Fire Department responded to a water emergency at Lester River.

DFD's 6 Engine, 4 Quint, Rescue 1, 1 Engine, and 11 Engine were dispatched at 1:34 PM and were on scene at the emergency in three minutes to find two youths, aged 13 and 14, were swept down river due to rapidly running waters in Lester River while swimming. The youths were able to temporarily self-rescue by swimming to an island. Firefighters then reached the youths using a series of ropes, ladders, and rescue slings to pull the youths to safety. Nobody was injured in the incident.

DFD's Assistant Chief Dennis Edwards was in command of the rescue, which took approximately one hour to complete. "This location is one that we are called to often, and it's always a dangerous location for swimming, but especially so with all the flood risks that spring runoff brings," said AC Edwards. "Thanks to the quick response of Duluth Fire and the DPD, and to the quick thinking and observation of these two kids, they are safe today. But the history of these rescues at Lester River haven't always had good outcomes, and especially when the river is running, it can become extremely dangerous very quickly."

Duluth Fire Department encourages the public to stay away from bodies of water that are running, as they are unpredictable and pose a serious life safety risk to anyone, regardless of ability. Keep small children and pets away from any water during times of high flood risk, snow melt, and storm runoff. Do not drive into standing water at this time of year. Do not enter bodies of water without life preserving gear like a life jacket. Do not swim alone. Know your limitations and adjust for conditions like unclear water,

water temperature, river current, and rip current.

Thank you to DFD, DPD, and St. Louis County 911 Dispatch for their quick response in saving the youths involved in this incident.

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