



ROCKY WATSON, SHERIFF
TAD LEACH, UNDERSHERIFF

KOOTENAI COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

April 3, 2010

Media Release

On 04/03/10 at approximately 1452 hours, Kootenai County Sheriff's Deputies responded to Coeur d' Alene Lake in the area of Higgen's Point regarding a report of a capsized sailboat with one male subject in the water swimming for shore.

A passerby on I-90 had observed the capsized sailboat and called in the report. Deputies from the Recreation Safety Section responded to the area by patrol boat while Dive Team members responded via land directly to Higgen's Point.

Upon arrival, deputies made contact with the male operator of the sailboat who had successfully swam to shore. The man said he was having trouble navigating his 16' sailboat through the wind and white caps and tried to use a small outboard motor to get back to the boat launch. Unfortunately the outboard motor wouldn't stay running and the operator called his wife and told her he was unable to make it back to the boat launch, asking her to drive to Higgen's Point where he hoped to beach the boat. The operator told deputies a sudden wind gust filled the sail and capsized the small sailboat about 300 feet from shore. The operator said his life jacket was right next to him but he was unable to grab it when he went into the water so he just swam to shore.

Marine Deputies took the operator back to the sailboat and assisted him in getting it to a dock where it was secured, although still capsized. The operator plans to recover the sailboat in the near future. The name of the operator is unavailable at this time.

The water depth where this occurred was approximately 70 feet and the temperature was 42 degrees. The Sheriff's Department would like to remind people that having the proper safety equipment on board all vessels is essential to water safety. Wearing your life jacket at this time of year is essential to survival due to the cold water temperature.

Sheriff Rocky Watson
By: Sgt. M. Street
Re: 10-07122
Date: 04-03-10 @ 1820 hrs.