



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
City of Duluth Fire Department

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DATE: 08/03/2011
NATURE OF INCIDENT: Water Rescue
CASE NO.: 11005278
INCIDENT DATE :08/03/2011
INCIDENT TIME: 12:42 PM
INCIDENT LOCATION: 3300 London Road
SUBJECT: Glensheen Mansion Water Rescue
BY: Assistant Chief Richard Mattson

Today at 12:42 in the afternoon the Duluth Fire Dept responded to a report of a man in Lake Superior yelling for help. His cry for help was heard by visitors and workers at the nearby Glensheen Mansion tourist site. It was reported that his head kept going under the water.

First arriving Duluth Police and Fire personnel at Glensheen reported that the male was about 200 yards out from shore and was losing strength. He had disappeared under the water several times in the first minute on scene. Firefighters from Lakeside, UMD, and Downtown arrived on scene and used cold water survival suits, floatation vests, and swim fins to enter the cold Lake Superior water.

Captain Steve Sauve, FF John Kienzle, and FF Nicholas Biondich swam out to the male victim and arrived before he lost his ability to stay afloat. They supported him for several minutes while awaiting the arrival of the U.S. Coast Guard from the Park Point Station. A Minnesota DNR boat also arrived on scene to lend assistance at the same time as the Coast Guard. The victim and the rescuers were taken aboard the Coast Guard boat, which was then beached on the shore of Glensheen. The male swimmer showed extreme signs of hypothermia. He was unable to talk to the rescuers other than to say no when asked if there was anyone in the water with him. The swimmer was carried from the boat and transferred to the care of Gold Cross Ambulance for transport and treatment at a local hospital.

Although it may seem like the extremely warm weather Duluth has recently experienced might have warmed the waters of Lake Superior, this is not always true. When prevailing winds are from a southerly direction the warm surface water can be pushed away from the shores causing the colder waters from deeper in the lake to rise to the surface and cause frigid swimming conditions. Residents and tourists alike should take care when swimming in the big lake. Never swim alone. Be cautious of hypothermia setting in without your being aware. Watch for riptides which can carry a swimmer far out into the cold waters (swim parallel to the shore to escape these dangerous currents). Have someone on shore watching for trouble so help can be summoned when needed. Wear a floatation devise if unsure of your swimming ability. Following these tips may help keep you out of trouble or at least help you get out of it when it happens.

