

Avery County Sheriff Kevin Frye still does not know the circumstances surrounding the Sunday drowning of 16-year-old Nicholas “Chad” Hicks near Elk River Falls.

We may never know, he says.

It could have been a cramp or even that Hicks got tangled in weeds. All we do know, Frye said, is that Hicks went under and did not resurface.

Hicks' body was found at approximately 1:45 p.m. yesterday after over a dozen rescue organizations joined the search. The body was located within twenty feet of where Hicks went under. If not for the muddy water, Hicks might have been found sooner, Frye said.

Divers had to search by touch. They could have been within two feet of the body and not have known, Frye said.

Hicks is survived by his father, Teddy Wayne Hicks, mother Deborah Ann Whicker, four sisters and a brother. They are doing okay, Frye said.

In a statement yesterday, Frye encouraged those with the jurisdiction to do so to make the Elk River Falls area off limits for swimmers.