

Body found in Willamette River IDâ€™d

by Cheryl McDermott

Troutdale driver fled from Canby Police last month, crashed his vehicle, and dived in the river

The body recovered from the Willamette River last Friday has been positively identified as the driver who fled from Canby Police last month.

Gregg B. Welch - photo provided by Canby Police Gregg B. Welch, Jr., 38, of Troutdale, Oregon was identified through fingerprints taken by the Clackamas County Medical Examiner, and was associated with the police pursuit by a car key found in his pocket which fit the suspect vehicle, police reported. His body was found with a small amount of methamphetamine in a watertight container.

About 2:15 a.m. on March 16, Officer Brett Ethington stopped a mid 1980â€™s Volvo on Highway 99E near Territorial Road in Canby for a traffic violation. The driver did not identify himself or present a drivers license, and sped off northbound on the highway during the contact.

The Canby Police officer pursued Welchâ€™s vehicle through Oregon City with lights and sirens activated, and was joined by officers from the Oregon City Police department and Clackamas County Sheriffâ€™s deputies.

According to an earlier news release, Welch drove down the road leading to the Sportcraft Marina near the Willamette River, crashed through a gate and into two boats parked in a storage area.

The suspect fled on foot, closely followed by police, but when Welch ran into a brushy area officers lost sight of him. Police on scene reported hearing a splash and seeing ripples in the water, and a search ensued.

All officers on scene, four rescue boats from the Clackamas County Sheriff's Marine Unit outfitted with night vision technology, and two K-9 police dogs from Canby Police and Washington County searched for the suspect to no avail.

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