

Driver found dead in submerged vehicle in Umpqua River

by Cheryl McDermott

A 74-year old Brookings man died after his SUV left Highway 38 near Scottsburg, went down a 180-foot embankment and landed partially submerged in the Umpqua River, authorities reported.

A fisherman called 911 and the US Coast Guard about 1:30 p.m. Wednesday after he discovered the 2004 Ford Explorer about six feet from the riverbank, Oregon State Police (OSP) said.

Piper's SUV was found upside down, partially submerged in the Umpqua River off Highway 38 near Scottsburg, Oregon - OSP photo Troopers, Coast Guard personnel, Douglas County Sheriff's deputies, and Scottsburg Fire medical technicians responded to the scene.

Preliminary investigation indicates the crash may have occurred sometime Wednesday, April 18, when the driver rounded a left-hand curve as he traveled eastbound, but instead drove straight onto the shoulder. The vehicle continued up a slight incline, then down a 180-foot bank before landing upside-down in the river.

Marion Lawrence Piper, 74, was found deceased inside the SUV, troopers said.

The investigation, led by the OSP Coos Bay Area Command office is continuing.

Driver found dead in submerged vehicle in Umpqua River by Cheryl McDermott