

Search and Rescue help hurt snowmobiler, lost snowboarders

by Cheryl McDermott

Deschutes County Sheriff's Search and Rescue (SAR) had a busy afternoon on Sunday when they responded to two calls within a brief period of time, both in the Mt. Bachelor ski area. One call involved a Bend man who was injured when his snowmobile flipped over and landed on top of him, and the second call was in connection with a group of six snowboarders who were lost in blizzard conditions.

About 3:30 p.m., SAR, U.S. Forest Service personnel and Bend Fire paramedics were activated when 911 dispatch was notified of a snowmobile crash with injuries near Sparks Lake, Deschutes County Sheriff's Cpl. Wayne Morgan said.

Adam Sutterfield, 36, drove his snowmobile down a steep bank and came to an abrupt stop, causing the vehicle to flip over and land on top of him. Sutterfield, hurt and unable to stay warm in the extreme cold and blizzard-like weather conditions, was assisted by friends to Vista Butte Sno-Park where he sought shelter and warmth in a vehicle.

A SAR medic was first to arrive on scene, and evaluated the injured man's condition. Shortly thereafter, Morgan said, a Bend Fire ambulance arrived but Sutterfield refused transport and was driven by private vehicle to St. Charles Medical Center in Bend for treatment of non-life threatening injuries.

About 5:10 p.m., Jessica Christine Mastrud, a 27-year old Vancouver, Washington resident who had become lost after being separated from five others in her party who were snowboarding down Mt. Bachelor's east side from the Summit Chairlift in the blizzard conditions, called for help. Her entire party, now split into three groups, was lost, the corporal said.

Mastrud was still on her cell phone with 911 when she was finally able to see a road, then luckily spotted a patrol vehicle pass by.

SAR and deputies were still in the area after having responded to the injured snowmobiler, Morgan said, but until various vehicles activated their lights and sirens at different times they were unable to narrow down her location.

Once they did, it was only minutes until Mastrud and the other five lost snowboarders were able to converge, then make their way safely to the Sunrise Lodge Parking lot where they arrived about 5:40 p.m.

“The Sheriff’s Office would like to caution people to be careful while winter recreating, and to be aware how extreme weather conditions may quickly turn a routine adventure into a life threatening experience,” Sgt. Morgan warned.

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