

N.C. hiker's remains identified

by UPI

BREVARD, N.C. - Skeletal remains found recently in North Carolina's Nantahala National Forest are those of missing hiker John Bryant, authorities said Monday. Macon County Sheriff Robert Holland said investigators believe Bryant was killed. The sheriff declined to say more than that, the Asheville (N.C.) Citizen-Times reported. Bryant had been missing in Transylvania County since October while on a hiking trip with his wife. Transylvania County Sheriff David Mahoney said the investigation can move forward now that Bryant's remains have been recovered. "It allows us to move forward into a different side of the case, the prosecutorial side of it," he told the newspaper. Gary Michael Hilton, 61, was named last month as a suspect in the case, the newspaper reported. Hilton was sentenced to life in the Georgia state penitentiary Friday following his confession to abducting and killing Meredith Emerson. Hilton will be eligible for parole in 2038, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported.

Â© 2008 United Press International. All Rights Reserved.

N.C. hiker's remains identified by UPI