Search Efforts for Lost Snowmobilers Hampered by Wind, Snow

by Bend Weekly News Sources

The search continued Tuesday morning for Roger and Brian Rouse, the father and son who failed to return from a snowmobile ride on Sunday, November 26 in the Mt. Bachelor area. Search efforts are being hampered by windy conditions, continuing snowfall, and very low visibility -- often less than 20 feet. Air resources have not been used at this time due to the low visibility problems. Search efforts Tuesday, consisting of 13 teams including skiers, snowshoers, snowmobile riders and snowcats, are being focused on high priority areas identified by other family members.

Roger Rouse was riding a 2004 Polaris 700 RMK similar to the one shown above. 1) Anyone who believes they may have seen Roger or Brian Rouse snowmobiling in the Mt. Bachelor area on Sunday, November 26 is urged to page Cpl. Neil Mackey at 693.6512. Roger Rouse, 53, was riding a gray/black 2004 Polaris 700 RMK with yellow accents. Brian Rouse, 29, was riding a 1988 Yamaha Enticer of unknown color.

2) Deschutes County Search and Rescue is asking all recreational users to stay out of the area for the time being. This will help reduce the number of false clues (tracks, etc.) that might otherwise appear.

3) Search and Rescue has also received numerous phone calls from the public offering their assistance. Because of the conditions and the search area, those who wish to assist must meet some very exacting standards. These are detailed below:

3a) Snowmobile riders: Must be in EXCELLENT physical condition, with EXCELLENT equipment and EXCELLENT snowmobiling skills. Potential riders should be prepared for cross-country riding, and should also be equipped and prepared to spend possibly one night on their own. This would include possessing and the ability to use compasses, maps, GPS units, etc.

3b) Back-country skiers and snowshoers: Same basic requirements as above. Search conditions will probably require skiers or snowshoers to cut cross-country, go up/down drainages, etc. Must possess skills and equipment for possibly spending one night in the field on their own. Casual cross-country skiers will not meet the requirements needed.

Those in the public who feel they meet these standards and wish to assist should page Cpl. Neil Mackey at 693-6512. Those who do call will be assessed for the needed skills, a list will be established and public assets will be notified if their services are needed.

Please do not respond to Mt. Bachelor at this time if you wish to assist; all civilian search efforts must be coordinated through Deschutes County Search and Rescue.

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