

Lost backcountry snowboarder rescued near Todd Lake

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

BEND, Ore. — Hampered by flight conditions so poor a helicopter was forced to abort its search, snow hip-deep in areas, rapidly changing and unpredictable weather, and an inaccurate location provided by the dated technology of a cell phone GPS, search and rescue team members struggled throughout the night for more than nine hours looking for a backcountry snowboarder who was lost and eventually rescued Thursday morning about five miles northwest of Todd Lake.

Mathew Euteneier, 30, of Bend, contacted a family member by cell phone who then, in turn, called 911 about 7:40 p.m., Wednesday, when the man had been trying to find his way back to a trailhead or roadway for more than six hours after he became disoriented during a snowboarding and hiking trip, Deschutes County Sheriff's Office Search and Rescue (SAR) Coordinator Sgt. Scott Shelton reported.

Euteneier was in intermittent contact by cell phone with SAR throughout the night until communication became limited and was eventually lost, Shelton said. Advised to stay put, he was able to provide enough information for search teams to narrow their search to an area of about 28 square miles.

At 9:30 p.m., SAR members and a U.S. Forest Service employee were dispatched to an area near Todd Lake cut-off and Cascade Lakes Highway, and SAR snowmobile, ski and snowshoe teams set off on multiple trails to find the lost man, a news release stated.

At 1:30 a.m., an Air Link helicopter and crew were dispatched to help with the search, but hazardous flying conditions precipitated its return to Bend, the sergeant said. Because of the complexity and length of the search, a decision was made to relieve the exhausted SAR teams if Euteneier was not found by 6 a.m.

Deschutes County Sheriff's deputies, additional SAR team members, Jefferson County Sheriff's Office SAR and U.S.F.S. Law Enforcement officers were readied for deployment, but before they could be activated a SAR snow shoe team found a very tired and cold Euteneier about 5:25 a.m. by following a set of tracks located earlier in the night by a ski team.

Euteneier was located in the Fall Creek drainage area approximately five miles northwest of Todd Lake and approximately three miles north of Sparks Lake, Sgt. Shelton said. He was reportedly in fair condition and was given food, water and additional clothing. He was then able to walk with SAR to an area where they were met by snowmobiles and transported to a command post that had been established at Dutchmen Flat Sno Park.

Mr. Euteneier was reunited with his family at approximately 8:30 this morning, Sgt. Shelton said.

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