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SEARCH CONTINUES FOR MISSING HIKER

Sixth Day of Intense Multiagency Search

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The sixth day of operation began this morning in search of Ric DeVan, a 44 year-old hiker from San Diego, California who went missing after a solo hike in the Bishop Pass/ Treasure Lakes area. California State OES has been essential in coordinating team involvement. Additional support teams arrived today from Marin County Search and Rescue and San Dimas Mountain Rescue to offer relief and supplement teams from Inyo County Search and Rescue, Tulare County Search and Rescue, Sequoia-Kings National Park Service, Inyo National Forest, Mono County Search and Rescue, and Los Angeles Sheriff's Overhead Assistance Teams consisting of Sierra Madre Search and Rescue and Montrose Search and Rescue.

In addition to ground crews charged with examining terrain in the John Muir Wilderness and Kings Canyon National Park areas from Mt. Agassiz to Mt. Gilbert and throughout Treasure Lakes and Bishop Pass, there are canine teams and three helicopters provided by Inyo National Forest, San Bernardino Aviation Unit, and Sequoia-Kings National Park Service. Approximately 60 people are dedicated to this search effort. "We treat every person that is lost as if they are one of our family members – this motivates our volunteer search teams to unselfishly continue their efforts," said Inyo County Sheriff's Sergeant, Keith Hardcastle.

In a briefing early this morning, teams were instructed to be mindful of the weather changes. Thunder and lightning are expected in the high country and are a huge concern to Incident Commander, Corporal Terry Waterbury. "I'm encouraging search teams to stay focused and aware. Back country summer storms can be particularly volatile in the Eastern Sierra," said Waterbury.

DeVan's last confirmed location was a signed register book at the summit of Mt. Goode on July 4th. In the book DeVan stated that he would be traversing to Mt. Johnson, a neighboring peak, next. Search teams describe the route from Mt. Goode to Mt. Johnson as treacherous, and extremely unstable. Coupled with the treacherous terrain are the

snowmelts that can create unstable ice bridges at lower elevations. "These ice bridges are particularly dangerous due to the high temperatures," said spokeswoman for the National Park Service, Erika Jostad.

DeVan set out on a hike with his family on July 3rd out of South Lake toward Bishop Pass. Family went with DeVan as far as the Long Lake area; the plan was to rendezvous late in the afternoon on July 4th at Treasure Lakes after DeVan traversed the ridge from Bishop Pass to Mt. Johnson. Inyo County Search and Rescue were notified Saturday July 5th, after DeVan failed to show up as planned.

Friends and family members describe DeVan as an experienced alpine mountaineer. DeVan was equipped with enough food for an overnight backpack trip, and carried a water filter for hydration. He is said to be wearing a yellow shirt with black side panels, tan pants, light colored back-pack, grey jacket with black trim, a beige or green ball cap, and an orange, gold and purple National Geographic bandana.

It is critical that anyone who may have seen or had contact with DeVan, especially after he signed the registration book on Mt. Goode on July 4th, contact the Sheriff's Department at (760) 878-0383.

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