



Siskiyou County Sheriff's Office

News Release

For Immediate Release:

SISKIYOU COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE NEWS UPDATE

May 5, 2017

Sheriff's Office Identifies Body Recovered in Happy Camp Area

Link with Missing Happy Camp Man Confirmed

On May 5, 2017 at about 10:00 a.m., the Siskiyou County Sheriff's Office's (SCSO) Chief Deputy Coroner positively identified the body recovered on May 4, 2017 in the Klamath River as that of a missing Happy Camp man, Mr. Benjamin Arthur Camarena, 42 years-of-age. On May 4, 2017 at about 2:05 p.m. members of the SCSO's Dive Team located Mr. Camarena's body in the Klamath River about two miles east of Wingate, in the Happy Camp area. SCSO Dive and Search and Rescue (SAR) members removed the body from the river and the body was transported to Yreka. The case is being investigated as a possible homicide, but the official determination of a cause and manner of death are pending an autopsy and further investigation. The autopsy will be conducted next week.

The SCSO has been searching for a body last seen in the Klamath River at the Indian Creek Access point since Friday, April 14, 2017. On Friday, April 14, 2017, at about 6:34 p.m. SCSO received a citizen's report of a possible dead body floating in Indian Creek in the Happy Camp area. A search by SCSO and California Highway Patrol (CHP) units failed to locate the body as it entered the Klamath River access point. The Klamath River and other tributaries have been flowing rapidly and have been muddy due to recent snow run-off and intermittent rains and water levels are seasonally high. An exhaustive search of the area has been conducted by SCSO SAR, SCSO Posse, SCSO Dive Team, SCSO Water Safety Unit, CHP Northern Division Air Operations fixed-wing and rotary wing aircraft, and, extensive assistance and support has been received by Karuk, Hoopa, and Yurok tribal emergency response and various volunteer resources. The U.S. Coast Guard, California Army National Guard, and California Office of Emergency Services also assisted with the search and recovery efforts since April 14th.

In recent days, the SCSO's SAR Team, SCSO Water Safety Unit, SCSO Dive Team, SCSO Posse members, SCSO Major Crimes Unit, and SCSO field units and other SCSO personnel conducted a large-scale search effort supported by numerous local, state, federal, and tribal organizations and volunteers. The CHP made several fly-overs of the area with fixed-wing and rotary-wing aircraft in an effort to locate the body. CHP Air Operations units are assigned to the CHP's Northern Division in Redding.

Shortly after the initial search for the suspected dead body was started, relatives of Mr. Camarena reported him missing. He was last seen in vicinity of Indian Creek in the Happy Camp area at about the time the body in the river was reported to law enforcement authorities on April 14th.

SCSO detective units have made a number of trips to Happy Camp to gather information and to interview more people who may know what Mr. Camarena was doing in the hours and moments before his disappearance. SCSO investigators have classified his disappearance as “suspicious” and until the investigation dictates otherwise, the case will be continue to be handled as a possible homicide.

According to Sheriff Jon Lopey, “On behalf of the Siskiyou County Sheriff’s Office, I would like to extend our sincere condolences, thoughts, and prayers to the family and friends of Mr. Camarena in the aftermath of his tragic death. I would also like to thank the Camarena family and friends for being so helpful and supportive during this on-going search effort. I would like to again thank all of the federal, state, and local agencies, volunteers, and tribal members from the Karuk, Yurok, and Hoopa Tribes whose assistance and support truly went ‘above and beyond’ during this search operation. This case is still being investigated and we have more work to do to find out what happened to Mr. Camarena. Anyone with any information about Mr. Camarena’s case is urged to contact the SCSO’s 24-hour Dispatch Center at (530) 841-2900.”



Mr. Benjamin Arthur Camarena

