



Siskiyou County Sheriff's Office

News Release

Sheriff's Office Recovers Body of Drowning Victim in Remote Cliff Lake

July 31, 2017

On Saturday, July 29, 2017 at about 4:00 p.m., the Siskiyou County Sheriff's Office (SCSO) responded to Cliff Lake in response to an emergency call of a possible missing person last seen swimming in Cliff Lake. Cliff Lake is a remote mountain lake located southwest of Mt. Shasta in a rural area of the Shasta-Trinity National Forest. A search of the immediate area did not locate the missing man whose body was presumed to be submerged in deep water based on statements of family and friends. The man, later identified as Richard Louis Martin, 61, of Sebastopol, California, was last seen snorkeling in the lake when he disappeared. A ground search of the area by SCSO and an aerial search by the California Highway Patrol's (CHP) H-14 (helicopter) failed to locate Mr. Martin. Shoes and a hat belonging to Mr. Martin were located along the shore, another indicator that he never returned to shore.

On Sunday, July 30, 2017, five SCSO Dive Team members returned to the lake to conduct a dive in the deep-water areas of Cliff Lake, which includes depths of 200 feet. Four members of the SCSO Dive Team traversed an area of the lake ranging from 40 to 60 feet in depth. Mr. Martin was later located submerged in about 70 feet of water. His body was retrieved successfully and transported to a local funeral home. The temperatures in the lake were frigid and the search location averaged about 38 degrees. The area is rugged, a boat could not be deployed but local business owners in McCloud, Charlie, and Cindy Miller provided four kayaks to the SCSO Dive Team, which made the rescue effort safer and more efficient.

According to Sheriff Jon Lopey, "On behalf of the Siskiyou County Sheriff's Office, I would like to extend our thoughts and prayers to Mr. Martin, his family, and friends."

Sheriff Lopey went on to say, "This is a good time to remind our citizens and visitors to the area that remote mountain lakes and virtually all bodies of water in Siskiyou County can be potentially hazardous this time of the year due to cold-water temperatures and unpredictable depths and sometimes debris may be encountered below the surface of the water. It is always a good idea to swim in groups and it is advisable to consider wearing flotation devices when swimming. If diving or snorkeling, do so in pairs and have a flotation device readily available in close proximity should you experience any type of distress while in the water. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Millers and CHP for assisting us with this search and recovery effort, which were conducted under difficult and hazardous conditions by our Dive Team."