



November 24, 2010
PR# 10-076

AST locates Missing Snowmachiners in the Skwentna Area

(SKWENTNA, Alaska)— Two missing snowmachiners were located and recovered this morning by the Alaska State Troopers and the Rescue Coordination Center. Search and rescue personnel set out to search the outer lying areas of Skwentna shortly after sun up, approximately 9:00 a.m., in hopes of locating Dave Luce, 65 of Willow, and Russ Bevans, 71 of Willow. The men were reported missing yesterday around 2:00 p.m. AST Helo 3 pilot Mel Nading found the missing men about an hour and a half later holed up in a cabin. The Rescue Coordination Center was requested to respond to the snowmachiners' location as a hoist was needed for the rescue operation. Luce was in good health and transported to a nearby lodge by Helo 3. Bevans was transported to Providence Hospital by RCC for evaluation and treatment for exposure.

Investigation revealed that Luce and Bevans had set out on their excursion at around 11:00 a.m. on November 22, 2010 to check the trail system. When they were headed back home, at approximately 1:00 p.m., both of their snowmachines went through ice. All their survival gear and communication devices went into the water with the snowmachines. They were able to hike approximately 7.5 miles to a cabin where they were located.

ORIGINAL DISPATCH

On 11/23/10 at approximately 1400 hours, Alaska State Troopers received a report of two overdue snowmachiners, Dave Luce, age 65 of Willow, and Russ Bevans, Age 71 of Willow. The two men have not been seen or heard from for approximately thirty-six hours since making a trip to pick-up heating fuel for their cabins. It is believed that Luce and Bevans may have been traveling to either the Deshka Landing in Willow or to a residence in Big Lake. It is believed that Luce and Bevans are driving yellow, Ski-doo, widetrack snowmobiles.

At this time information is limited regarding their actual departure time, destination, or actual purpose for the trip. Weather in the area is poor, 32°F, mist, freezing rain, and fog. The Susitna and Yentna Rivers are developing many open leads, ice is shifting and there is a lot of new overflow. Snow conditions on the ground are poor to fair with snow depth ranging between 12" to 18". The Alaska State Troopers and RCC are assessing whether conditions which are currently restricting both ground and aerial search efforts. If you have any information regarding this Search and Rescue please contact the Alaska State Troopers in Wasilla at 352-5401. Investigation is ongoing.

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