



Alaska State Troopers Announce Change in Sawyer Cipolla Search Strategy

May 14, 2022 (Kodiak, AK)— On Saturday, May 7, 2022 at 12:12 pm, the Alaska State Troopers were alerted that 7-year-old Sawyer Cipolla had gone missing from his home on Forest Drive in Kodiak. Law enforcement agencies and first responders from across Kodiak Island immediately responded to the area and started an intense multi-day search for the missing child.

Over the course of the past week, more than 2,500 volunteer searchers, 14 search and rescue dog teams from across the State, and search and rescue professionals have searched just under 10,000 acres of Kodiak Island for Sawyer. In addition to the extensive ground search, the US Coast Guard, Alaska Army National Guard, and private aircraft have flown dozens of missions above the coastline, waterways, and terrain in search of Sawyer. Volunteer drone pilots have used thermal imaging to search across the Kodiak area. The US Navy SEALs provided 60 of their service members to conduct searches along the coast, sweep freshwater ponds, and traverse steep and difficult terrain throughout this weeklong search. Despite relentless searching, covering a great deal of the search area at least twice, there have been no clues or signs of Sawyer located in the probable area and there are no additional leads for search teams to follow up on.

Beginning Saturday, May 14, 2022, the Alaska State Troopers and Alaska Wildlife Troopers will be shifting their search strategy for Sawyer from a widespread active search to a limited reactive search. Law enforcement and professional search teams will limit their search activities to areas where new evidence or information suggests that Sawyer may be located.

“Over the last week the Kodiak community has rallied together to search for young Sawyer, over two thousand residents of Kodiak showed the state that when faced with adversity, Alaskans join together to work the problem and find solutions. Despite one of the most thorough ground searches in Alaska history, as of today we have exhausted all of our leads and searched far beyond the search perimeter in an effort to bring closure to the Cipolla family and the Kodiak community,” **stated Colonel Bryan Barlow, Director of the Alaska State Troopers.** “While the search will now be taking a different shape and strategy, know that locating Sawyer remains a top priority for the State Troopers and everyone involved in this search and investigation.”

In addition to the widespread search and rescue operations that have occurred over the last week, there has also been a thorough law enforcement investigation into Sawyer’s disappearance. Specially trained law enforcement officers from the Alaska State Troopers, Alaska Bureau of Investigation, FBI, Anchorage Police Department, Kodiak Police Department, US Coast Guard Investigative Service, US Coast Guard Police, and Sand Point Police Department have been reviewing all of the facts surrounding Sawyer’s disappearance. This team has conducted dozens

of interviews, searched inside numerous residences in the area, reviewed security camera footage, and followed up on every tip that was made to law enforcement. The FBI-led Joint Child Abduction Response Team also responded to assist with this investigation. After a thorough multi-day investigation into all of the known information, there is currently no evidence to suggest that there is a criminal element to Sawyer's disappearance.

While the active search and rescue has shifted to a different strategy, the Alaska State Troopers and Alaska Wildlife Troopers ask that all Kodiak residents remain vigilant. Any information that has not already been reported to law enforcement, can be reported by phone to (907) 486-4121. If you would like to report information anonymously, you can submit a tip through the AKtips smartphone app or online at <https://dps.alaska.gov/ast/tips>.

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