

## HIDDEN GROVE

# Hikers found safe after long night in woods

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Two young men and their dog were found cold and wet, but safe, after a night lost in the woods.

After Sunday night's search that ended with no results, search and rescue crews were brought in from four other jurisdictions to help Sunshine Coast Search and Rescue (SCSAR) and the Sechelt Fire Department locate the men.

"There were over 100 people involved, and they are all volunteers," said Bill Elsner, emergency coordinator for the Sunshine Coast Regional District (SCRD).

SCSAR search manager Alec Tebbutt said they received a page around 9:15 p.m. and were out until about 4:30 a.m. looking for 20-year-old Ben Tynner of Sechelt and 17-year-old Ty McKinnon of Halfmoon Bay.

Tebbutt said the young men did the right thing in telling family where they were headed and when to be expected back, but once the sun went down and with the snow on the ground, they lost the trail. Parents of one of the boys alerted RCMP.

"They stayed put as much as possible at night," Tebbutt said, "but moving keeps you warmer."

He said the boys were not dressed for the weather nor prepared with gear, water or food to stay out overnight.

Returning from the initial search at 4:30 a.m., Tebbutt said some of the 20 volunteers went home to catch a couple hours sleep while he and a few others



BILL ELSNER PHOTO

Search and rescue volunteers and family members were happy to get the news that two hikers were found Monday afternoon after an extensive search.

began to create a plan for daybreak.

"At about 3 a.m. we started calling for assistance from other areas ... and for search dogs from the Lower Mainland," Tebbutt said.

Powell River, Lions Bay, North Shore and Squamish search and rescue teams aided the search on Monday around 8 a.m. Three search and rescue dogs and their handlers also assisted and Airspan Helicopters brought in a chopper to hunt for the missing hikers. The Salvation Army provided meals to the searchers.

"At 1:30 p.m. the missing hikers and their dog were located by both a search and rescue dog handler and an RCMP dog handler approximately 400 metres off of the Hidden Grove trail in the bush,"

said RCMP Cpl. Murray McNeil. "Both males were very cold and wet. However, they were in good health and spirits."

*"Be prepared to stay out overnight."*

**Bill Elsner**

The hikers were transported to St. Mary's Hospital with mild to moderate hypothermia, Tebbutt said.

"They're quite responsible young people and they realized they had an awful lot of people out looking for them," he said. "We're a volunteer organization that loves the outdoors and our community."

Elsner said no one who gets lost in B.C. is charged for the costs of their rescue as the Provincial Emergency Program covers costs. He did ask, however, that before people go out into the backcountry to consider that the people who will come to their aid if needed are volunteers risking their lives instead of being at work or home with their families.

"Be prepared to stay out overnight," Elsner said. "Take food and shelter protection, water, a signalling device. They could hear the helicopter, but couldn't let us know where they were. Be familiar with where you're going and take a cell phone — they didn't have one and that would have helped, and take a compass or GPS too."

## LOST HIKERS LOCATED

According to an RCMP press release, two local hikers were located cold but safe after a lengthy overnight search by Sunshine Coast Search and Rescue and police. On January 11, the Sunshine Coast RCMP responded to a report of two overdue hikers in the Hidden Grove area of Porpoise Bay in Sechelt. The two men, Ben Tyner aged 20 and Ty McKinnon 17, who were familiar with the area, were also accompanied by a pet Labrador retriever. According to the report, neither of the men was dressed properly for a hike.

The hikers' vehicle was located at the base of the Hidden Grove trail, which lead police to think the men were still in the park. At 9:00pm, the SC Search and Rescue was called to the scene. Twenty SAR members walked through the trails throughout the night searching for the missing men without success. At daybreak, the RCMP expanded the search and

included additional SAR teams which included members from Powell River, Lions Bay, North Shore, Squamish and the Sechelt Fire Department. The search crew included 25 members on the ground, three search dogs and their handlers and a helicopter.

At 1:30pm on January 12, a Search and Rescue dog handler and a RCMP dog handler located the missing hikers and their dog. The men were found in the bush approximately 400 metres off of the Hidden Grove trail. According to reports, both men were very cold and wet, but in good health and good spirits. The hikers were transported to Sechelt Hospital for observation after their rescue.

The RCMP want to thank all the Search and Rescue Units and Airspan Helicopters who provided assistance in the search, and the Salvation Army who provided hot meals to the searchers.

*Submitted*