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June 19, 2014
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Whitney SAR – John Likely, **UPDATE**

Search and Rescue teams from all over the state of California have just set out on their fifth day of a massive multiagency search in the Mt. Whitney area for missing hiker John Likely, a 60-year old man from Dumont, NJ. Likely and his two friends have hiked as a group for approximately 30-years, and as a group have summited Mt. Whitney five times throughout the years.

After the group summited the peak on June 14th and began the decent down the trail, two members of the group went on ahead due to Likely's slower pace. According to reports received, this was not uncommon. Once at Trail Camp they could see Likely through binoculars continuing the decent near the cable rails on the 99-switchback section of the Mt. Whitney Trail. Believing that he was fine, they continued on to Outpost Camp where they were to spend the night. Likely never made it to Outpost Camp; his friends search the night of the 14th and the morning of the 15th. Inyo County Search and Rescue was contacted and deployed the afternoon of Sunday June 15th. Since then at least 70 search and rescue volunteers from all over the state have come to assist. Ground operations have been combing the rugged terrain along the Mt. Whitney Trail and throughout the surrounding areas. Aerial reconnaissance have collected and analyzed imagery from the Sierra Crest and beyond.

"There has been very little to go on," stated Inyo County Search and Rescue Coordinator Nate Derr. "We have followed every lead, back-tracked the hiking route and the surrounding terrain, posted flyers, interviewed hikers, and still nothing. My experience in search and rescue leads me to remain confident that the skills and expertise of the search and rescue members will result in the location of Likely. But this search is leaving even the seasoned experts scratching their heads."

John Likely is believed to be wearing a red San Francisco 49ers ball cap, black jacket, dark colored shorts and a small backpack, he has gray hair and no facial hair.

Support for today's search is provided by Inyo County Search and Rescue, China Lake Mountain Rescue Group, Marin County Search and Rescue, Contra Costa County Search and Rescue, Monterey County Search and Rescue, San Mateo County Search and Rescue, San Bernardino County Search and Rescue, and San Diego County Search and Rescue. Additionally, Sequoia-Kings National Park has provided ground operations to search the area between Trail Crest and the Crab Tree Ranger Station. California Rescue Dog Association (CARDA) has also joined the search and will be bringing in specialized search dogs to assist in the operation. Air support today is provided by Sequoia-Kings National Park, and Army National Guard out of Stockton, CA.

The Sheriff's Office is asking for any information from hikers who may have seen John Likely. Please call Sheriff's Dispatch at 760-878-0383 if you have any information that could assist in this search.