



"A Professional Service Agency"

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Whitney SAR – John Likely, **FINAL UPDATE**

Early in the evening of June 19th, during an aerial reconnaissance mission above Mirror Lake west of Outpost Camp, search crews located what is believed to be the remains of missing hiker John Likely in an extremely steep chute. The recovery is technical, and requires specialized equipment and search and rescue expertise. The remains will be taken to the Inyo County Coroner for official identification, and determination of death.

"This has been an extremely difficult five-day search," stated Inyo County Search and Rescue Coordinator Nate Derr. "From the beginning we've treated this mission as a rescue, not a recovery. As a team we are deeply saddened, and our thoughts go out to Likely's family and friends during this very difficult time."

Search and Rescue teams from all over the state of California assisted in this massive multiagency search effort to locate Likely who was last seen on June 14th after summiting Mt. Whitney. Between 90-100 SAR members have tirelessly scoured the rugged backcountry near and around the Mt. Whitney trail – many choosing to camp at various locations in order to track down clues, interview hikers, and be up and searching at first light. Sequoia-Kings National Park provided ground operations as well in the area between Trail Crest and the Crab Tree Ranger Station. Four different helicopters were used – for inserting SAR members into the backcountry, and for imagery collection and analysis.

The Inyo County Sheriff's Office wants to acknowledge the help and assistance from the following agencies: Inyo County Search and Rescue, Mono County Search and Rescue, Antelope Valley Search and Rescue, China Lake Mountain Rescue Group, Sierra Madre Search and Rescue, 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, Orange County Search and Rescue, San Diego County Search and Rescue, and California Rescue Dog Association (CARDA). Additionally the Sheriff's Office would like to acknowledge the tremendous support provided by Sequoia-Kings National Park, who not only provided ground operations, but aerial reconnaissance as well. Lastly, we want to recognize all the agencies that provided aerial support throughout the last five days: California Highway Patrol H-82 out of Apple Valley, China Lake Naval Air Base out of Ridgecrest, Sequoia-Kings, and Army National Guard out of Stockton, California. Thank you all for your tireless efforts!