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Search for man missing near George Lake scaled back

After nearly two weeks of searching the George Lake area for missing Livingston resident Brad Spalding, the Park County Sheriff's Office stated Friday morning they are not stopping, but are scaling back search efforts.

An aerial search just went out today, but ground crews are taking a break for now, said Park County Sheriff Allan Lutes.

"We have covered a lot of area — a lot," but those searches have yielded no new leads, Lutes said.

The Park County Sheriff's Office now plans to step back and analyze the progress they have already made, Lutes said.

"If we see something we haven't done, we'll go back and do it," the sheriff said.

Lutes said investigators have considered all possibilities, including the chance that Spalding, 27, left his car at the George Lake trailhead, about 15 miles south of Livingston, but did not go into the wilderness there.

An extensive search of Spalding's car, however, revealed no evidence pointing to this possibility, Lutes said.

Spalding's family first reported him missing to the Livingston Police Department on Friday, June 14. His car was found at the trailhead Monday, June 17.

Since then, The Park County Sheriff's Office, with assistance from Sweet Grass and Gallatin counties and various agencies, has searched the area surrounding Spalding's car both on the ground and in the air, and with the help of several dog teams.



Search and rescue ground crews have been "working literally to the point of exhaustion," Lutes said.

SAR teams, comprised of many unpaid, trained volunteers, have been challenged by extensive mountainous, steep terrain, he said.

"It takes a lot of stamina to do what these people do — it amazes me," Lutes said.

With no new leads, the Sheriff's Office continues to ask the public for any information about Spalding's disappearance. To speak to detective Brian Green, call 222-4181, or call Park County Dispatch at 222-2050.

Lutes said he wants to assure the public and Spalding's family that the Sheriff's Office is not giving up.

"We're not stopping — we're scaling back because we have to use our resources wisely," he said.

Contact The Livingston Enterprise: 401 South Main St. Livingston, Mt. 59047 (406) 222-2000

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