

Lost hikers rescued on South Sister

Two hikers were rescued on South Sister last Saturday after they lost their way on a hike.

On September 19, at 9:06 p.m, the Deschutes County Sheriff's Office Search and Rescue Unit received a call from Mohammed Alnemer, 22, who reported he and Ananiya Demessie, 19, had been hiking on South Sister, had lost their way during their decent and were currently in an area of icy rocks off-trail.

Alnemer reported he and Demessie were not able to continue and needed assistance. The hiker's location was identified through Alnemer's 9-1-1 call as being southwest of the main climber's trail, at approximately 8,200 feet in elevation.

Alnemer reported they had plenty of food and water, but only one of them had warm clothing. Alnemer and Demessie had never hiked South Sister previously, had not planned on staying overnight, and did not have shelter supplies or means to make a warming fire.

Rescuers lost cell phone

contact with Alnemer a short time later.

DCSO deputies, along with three DCSO Search and Rescue (SAR) volunteers, began planning the rescue of Alnemer and Demessie. The rescue mission was complex, requiring rescuers to operate in complete darkness and snow and ice conditions in steep terrain at high elevation. It was determined air and ground resources could not safely deploy until daylight hours.

On Sunday at about 6:45 a.m., two SAR volunteers were transported by Lifelight from the Redmond Air Center to the open saddle area northwest of Moraine Lake along the South Sister climbing trail. Lifelight attempted to visually locate Alnemer and Demessie in the area of their last known cell phone location, but without success. The two volunteers began their ground ascent up South Sister in an attempt to locate Alnemer and Demessie, or their tracks. During their ascent, the rescuers made contact with other hikers in the area, not associated with



PHOTO BY JIM CORNELIUS

That new snow is pretty – but it can make backcountry adventures a little more perilous.

Alnemer or Demessie, asking them to be on the lookout for them and if they came across them, to call 9-1-1.

Twelve additional SAR volunteers were activated to serve as multiple search teams in a further effort to locate Alnemer and Demessie. It had also been learned Alnemer and Demessie had been hiking with two other friends who had turned around prior to the summit, splitting up. The two other hikers had received a ride into Bend, contacted deputies, but had no further information to provide regarding Alnemer and Demessie other than they had all driven over together from Corvallis.

At about 9:40 a.m., dispatch received a call from hikers on the South Sister climber's trail, reporting they were with Alnemer and Demessie. They reported their location as being at the "false summit," at approximately 8,870 feet in elevation. Alnemer and Demessie were reportedly cold and tired, but otherwise in good condition. The two rescuers responded to the described location and made contact with the hikers, confirming their physical condition. Alnemer and Demessie were then escorted down the climber's trail, back to Devil's Lake Trailhead, arriving at their vehicle at 12:37 p.m. They refused any further

medical treatment.

The Deschutes County Sheriff's Office reminds the community as we enter the fall and winter seasons that weather patterns can change quickly in the surrounding mountains. Easily identifiable trails can quickly become covered in snow and ice, which can cause hikers to lose their way. It's recommended to pre-plan hikes and research the surrounding area. Always carry the "10 Essentials for Wilderness Survival," which would include sources for navigation, sun protection, insulation, illumination, first-aid supplies, fire, repair kit/tools, nutrition, hydration and emergency shelter.

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