



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Sarah Stremming, left, is reunited with her dog Felix by members of the Seaside rope and rescue team.

Rescue: Fire chief flew private drone to locate Felix

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For the rest of the evening, Seattle resident Stremming and a group of friends searched the cliffside to no avail.

"We thought we knew where he was, we just couldn't see him and he couldn't hear us due to the tides," she said.

Stremming posted a call to action on her Facebook page Monday night in an effort to reach out to what she called "an extensive network of dog lovers." By Tuesday morning, Cannon Beach Fire Chief Matt Benedict had a flood of messages waiting on the Cannon Beach Fire and Rescue Facebook page from Stremming's

concerned friends. Shortly after 8 a.m., Hamlet Fire Chief Matt Verley used his private drone to locate Felix. It was determined the only way to reach him was by scaling the cliff face with ropes.

Search and rescue missions aren't uncommon in and around Ecola State Park.

On average, the rope and rescue team retrieves about six to 12 hikers each year, Benedict said.

But most happen in the summer, and this was the first high-angle rescue this year, Benedict said — a type of rescue that is steeper and requires more climbing than usual.

For Seaside Fire Lieutenant

Genesee Dennis, the man who scaled the rock face to retrieve Felix, this was his first rescue since gaining his certification a year ago.

"The most difficult part about this rescue was the fact it was a dog," Dennis said. "You can't reason with a dog, and they can't really help. At one point he slipped out of his

harness, and I was basically bear hugging him, with no available hand holds."

About three hours later, Felix was greeted by a warm blanket, a visibly emotional owner and group of friends anxiously awaiting his arrival.

"He's everything," Stremming said, clutching Felix in her arms.

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