

# Searches:

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He kindled a fire the night of Oct. 23 but was unable to get a blaze started the next morning with about 2 feet of snow on the ground.

Borders then sent a text message with his Garmin inReach to let his friends know he couldn't find the trail and needed help. His friends called the Baker County Dispatch Center at about noon Oct. 24.

Ash activated the Baker County Sheriff's Office's volunteer search and rescue team at 12:20 p.m.

Ash, along with seven team members, decided to try to reach Borders via the Deadman trail near Fish Lake, which is closer to the site than Cornucopia.

Ash said rescuers were able to relay a message to Borders, through his friends, that he should stay here he was, about a quarter-mile from the West Sugarloaf trail. The team had side-by-side ATVs but the terrain, and the snow, made it impossible to continue traveling in vehicles, Ash said.

He and Logan Kerns went ahead in snowshoes.

Although the snow had turned to rain, Ash said he would have preferred the former, since it's possible to brush snow off clothes.

Rain just soaks in. "It was miserable," Ash said. "Those were the worst



Baker County Search and Rescue/Contributed Photos  
**Volunteers had to cut many logs along the trail during the rescue of a Baker County man stranded in the snowy Wallowa Mountains on Monday, Oct. 25, 2021.**

conditions I've ever faced in the mountains. The wind was blowing us out of our foot-steps, and trees were crashing down. The only time I've experienced rain like that was up in Alaska, halibut fishing."

Even after dusk fell, Ash said he and Kerns were spurred to continue.

Based on the messages Borders had sent to friends, in which he mentioned that he had lost feeling in his feet due to the cold, Ash said he was concerned that Borders might not survive overnight without a fire.

Ash said he and Kerns were wearing high-quality rain gear but the garments couldn't cope with the wind-driven downpour.

Eventually, around 11:15 p.m., the pair turned back. They were about 2 miles from Borders.

"We felt horrible," Ash said. But the situation was such,

he said, that he and Kerns were concerned that even if they managed to get to Borders, they would themselves be so bedraggled by the storm that "we would be a liability and might need to be rescued ourselves."

"I honestly don't know if I could have gotten a fire going in that weather," Ash said.

At 5 a.m. the next day, Monday, Oct. 25, the Baker County team, joined by members of Union County Search and Rescue and the U.S. Forest Service, gathered in Baker City and headed back to the mountains.

This time the rescuers started from the Russel Mountain area, Ash said, after learning that snowmobilers had earlier this year cut trees along a trail in that area, in preparation for winter riding.

Conditions had improved considerably, with the rain having ceased, said Ash, who coordinated Monday's operation but didn't join the rescuers.

The team managed to drive a side-by-side, equipped with tracks installed by the Baker County Road Department, to within about a quarter-mile of Borders' camp. U.S. Forest Service mechanics also

installed tracks on an all-terrain vehicle used in the rescue.

Ash said the sheriff's office had not yet swapped tires for tracks on its ATVs, since most search and rescue operations in October don't involve snow.

The rescuers reached Borders at about 2:06 p.m. on Monday. They started a fire to warm him and then guided him, and his horses, back to the trailhead.

Ash said the operation was yet another reminder to him of how selfless the volunteer search and rescue team members are.

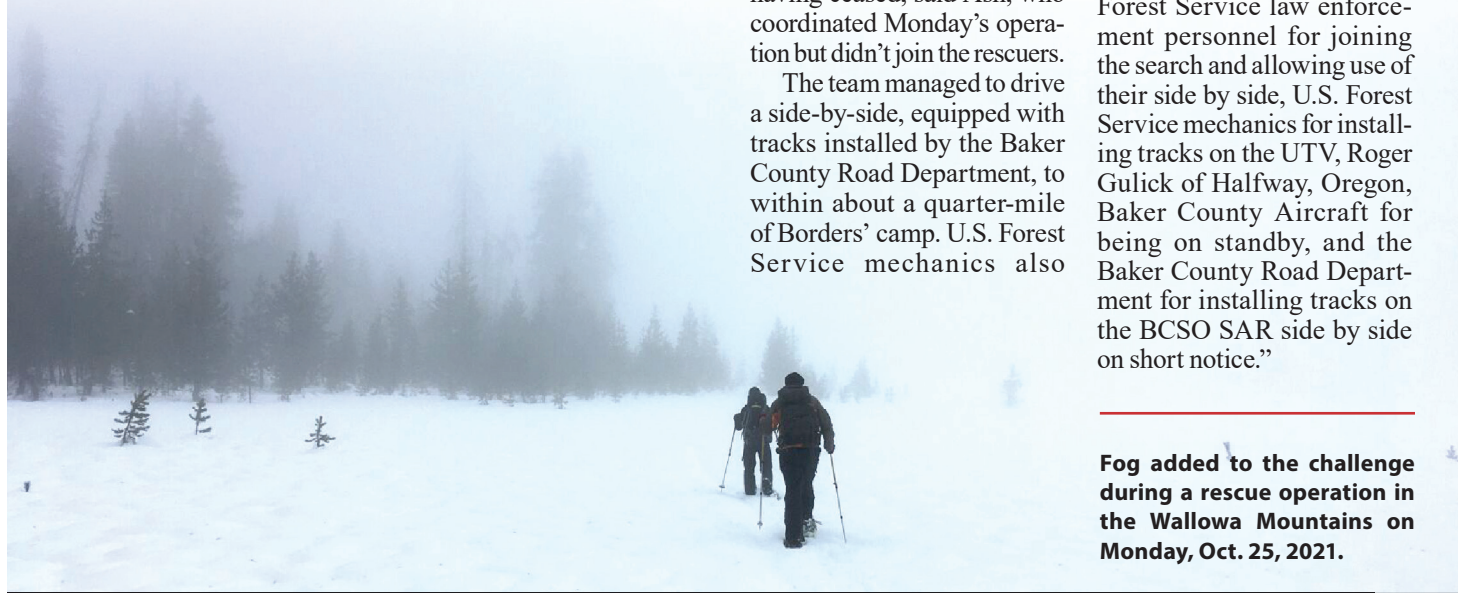
Several other people and organizations also helped, or were available if needed.

"It really took everybody to make this happen this fast," Ash said.

The press release from the Baker County Sheriff's Office stated: "The Baker County Sheriff's Office is extremely grateful for our Search and Rescue volunteers and community partners. Without them, searches like these would rarely result in a positive outcome. These dedicated volunteers donate countless hours along with their own equipment and resources to help others. They respond on evenings, weekends, holidays and in severe weather conditions.

"We would like to express our gratitude to the following community partners: Union County Search and Rescue volunteers for joining the search, Wallowa County Search and Rescue volunteers for being on standby, U.S. Forest Service law enforcement personnel for joining the search and allowing use of their side by side, U.S. Forest Service mechanics for installing tracks on the UTV, Roger Gulick of Halfway, Oregon, Baker County Aircraft for being on standby, and the Baker County Road Department for installing tracks on the BCSO SAR side by side on short notice."

**Fog added to the challenge during a rescue operation in the Wallowa Mountains on Monday, Oct. 25, 2021.**



Troy Blackburn/Contributed Photo

**Jaysen Rodriguez (3349) leads a contingent of Hermiston runners at the Mid-Columbia Conference Championships on Oct. 21, 2021, in Richland, Washington.**

# Bulldogs:

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Hermiston freshman Jaysen Rodriguez is right there as well. He has been on Hartley's tail all season, and was second to Hartley in the MCC Championships last week with a personal best time of 17:17.40.

"He is such a mature kid, and he's humble," Blackburn said of Rodriguez. "He has been a nice surprise."

Blackburn figures the Bulldogs will have to place three guys among the top 21 to get the entire team to state. That batch includes Logan Springstead and Zach Turner, with Pedro Pacheco, Johnny Mills and Grant Anderson figuring in the points.

The Bulldogs will be without their No. 2 runner, Miguel Duron. His family is Seventh-day Adventist, which does not allow activities on Saturday.

"He chose not to run Saturday and we respect that," Blackburn said. "I tried to talk to the league about it, but I may have to go to the state."

In the girls division, Mead is the team to beat, with Hermiston and Kennewick right behind.

The Lions beat the Bulldogs by two points for the MCC title last week.

"We were very pleased last week with how close we were without Liz Newman (family obligation)," Blackburn said. "It changes things with Liz in there. If they run like they did last week, we could be second. After the three of us, there is a pretty big gap. It's about placing and it's about pride. We are done with Kennewick beating us."

Kennewick's Macy Marquardt is the hands-down favorite Saturday. She has run a personal best 17:06.90 this season, and has the second best time in the state behind Ella Borsheim of 4A Bellarmine Prep (16:44.60).

Walla Walla senior Sariah Hepworth also is one of the top 3A runners in District 8.

The Bulldogs have been led this season by sophomore Megan Joyce, senior Alexia Serna, junior Ashley Treadwell and Newman. Jacqueline Garcia Sandoval, Madeline Franke and Lillian Fields figure into the scoring.

Blackburn said he has kept practice light this week with 4 to 6 mile runs.

"Just fine tuning things," he said. "We've also done some speed work. Overall, it hasn't been a killer."

Join Us Virtually for Good Shepherd Health Care System's

# FOURTH ANNUAL Community Meeting



Learn about the Good Shepherd Experience and our accomplishments this past year from CEO Brian Sims and Board of Trustees Chair Sue Daggett.

Video presentation goes **LIVE** from 5:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, November 3, 2021 via Good Shepherd's Facebook Page @GSHCSNews Website [www.gshealth.org/AnnualCommunityMeeting](http://www.gshealth.org/AnnualCommunityMeeting) For More Information visit [gshealth.org](http://gshealth.org)

