

# SEARCHES

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The cost is \$14.95 per month for subscribers who don't want to commit to more than one month of service, according to Garmin's website.

Ash said that although the Sheriff's Office has occasionally received calls after a user accidentally hit the emergency button, he is a proponent of their use.

"They're a very helpful tool, and can be life-saving," he said. "I think it's a great tool in that sense."

Both Ash and Galiszewski also emphasize that other simple — and free — precautions can help backcountry travelers avoid potential tragedy.

They urge people to always let friends or family know their itinerary, and to set a time when they will either return or be able to send an update by phone.

That way, Galiszewski said, people can call police if a person, or party, is overdue.

## 'It was miserable'

Ash's story about the rescue of Borders illustrates that dangerous winter storms aren't confined to that season in the high country of Northeastern Oregon.

Borders, who had four horses, was packing in supplies from Cornucopia, about nine miles north of Halfway in eastern Baker County, to a hunting camp near the Baker-Wallowa County border.

The camp is near Soldier Lake and Sugarloaf Mountain, at the southern edge of the Eagle Cap Wilderness, Oregon's biggest wilderness area at 365,000 acres.

The terrain is typical of the Wallowas, Ash said — steep, rugged, heavily forested.

The elevation where Borders was stranded is about 7,400 feet.

Borders rode out of Cornucopia on Saturday, Oct. 23. The National Weather Service had forecast a major storm for the weekend, and in blizzard conditions Borders struggled to find the trail as he rode toward the camp, according to a press release from the Sheriff's Office.

He kindled a fire Saturday night but was unable to get a blaze started on Sunday morning with



Baker County Search and Rescue/Contributed Photo

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

about two 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 on Sunday, 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 conditions I've ever faced in the mountains. The wind was blowing us out of our footsteps, 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 two 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."

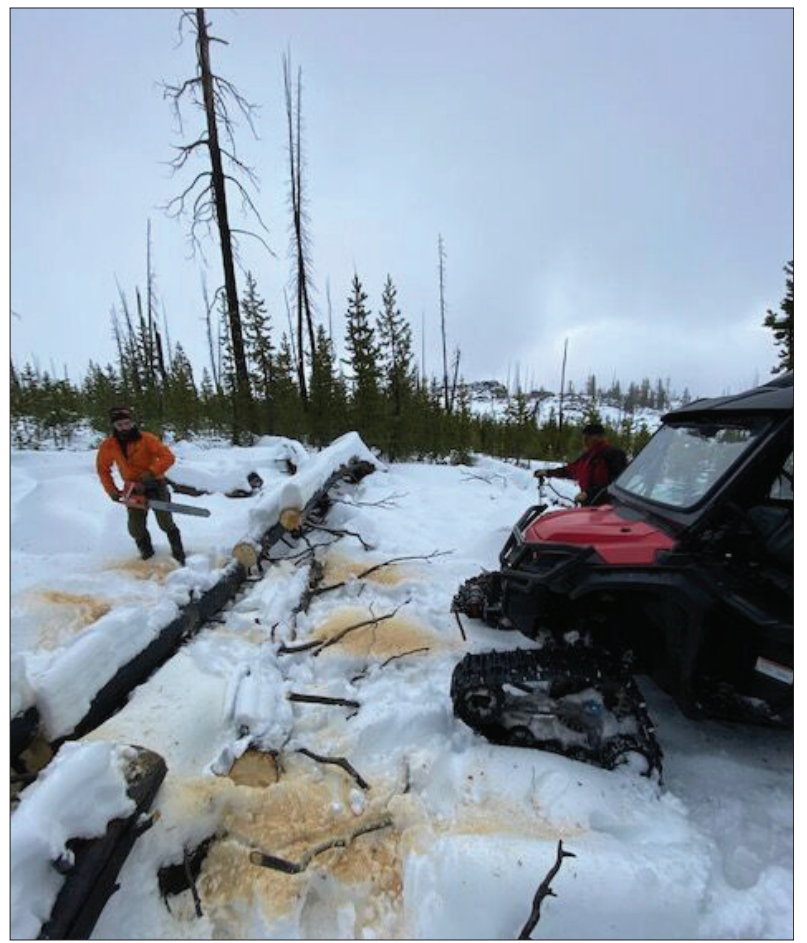
"I honestly don't know if I could have gotten a fire going in that weather," Ash said.

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



Baker County Search and Rescue/Contributed Photo

**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.**

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 ATV 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 Sher-

iff'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."

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## CROSSWORD PUZZLER

- ACROSS**
- 1 Kimono fastener
  - 4 Alcoves
  - 9 Workout locale
  - 12 Brazilian port
  - 13 Ooze out
  - 14 Pooh's pal
  - 15 Lady's room
  - 17 Peruvian animal
  - 19 Swing voter (abbr.)
  - 20 Durocher and Carrillo
  - 21 Canal device
  - 24 Monumental
  - 26 Qt. fractions
  - 29 Some vines
  - 31 Even so
  - 32 Laugh sound
  - 33 Provided provender
  - 34 Spanish meat
  - 36 — vous plait
  - 37 Nashville's st.
  - 38 Female sheep
- DOWN**
- 1 Royal symbol
  - 2 Life story
  - 3 Item in a poker pot
  - 4 Flashy sign
  - 5 Chemical compound

### Answer to Previous Puzzle

A	W	L	F	L	E	W	C	O	P	E
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O	B	S	T	A	C	L	E	E	N	Y
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A	R	E	A	P	L	O	T	C	P	R
W	E	L	L	S	I	D	E	S	P	A

- 6 Not their
- 7 — lang of country music
- 8 Chose
- 9 Get a grip on
- 10 — Kippur
- 11 Big extinct bird
- 16 Netherlands sight
- 18 Behold's mate
- 20 Encumbrance
- 21 Raises
- 22 Kitchen appliances
- 23 England's FBI
- 25 Glassware brand
- 27 Dense, as fog
- 28 Goes it alone
- 30 Perfuming
- 35 Bowls over
- 36 Stockholm carrier
- 40 Talk hoarsely
- 42 Where hackles rise
- 44 Minds the garden
- 47 Ledger column
- 49 Tea kettle sound
- 50 Fraternity letter
- 51 —
- 52 Wiedersehen
- 52 Mexican Mrs.
- 53 Walk softly
- 54 It banned DDT
- 55 Boring
- 58 Overhead train

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