

Rescue operation a success after hiker injured in fall at Sooke Hills

JEFF BELL
Times Colonist

A woman in her mid-30s was rescued from Sugarloaf Mountain near Sooke on Sunday by crews who hiked hours to get her to a waiting ambulance.

"She was a hiker, hiking with her boyfriend," said Kathryn Farr, a search manager for Juan de Fuca Search and Rescue. "She took a nasty fall and broke a lower limb . . . She was in a lot of pain."

Getting the woman out on a stretcher took time.

"The terrain is very, very rugged in that area, quite steep," Farr said. "It was about a four- or five-hour hike out."

The team has a device with a large tire to which a stretcher can be attached. It can be rolled along a trail, easing the load on rescuers.

"It's got a frame on it and you clip it onto the stretcher right in the middle," Farr said. "Then you have eight people on it, four on each side."

The incident began in mid-afternoon.

"We were called out around 3 o'clock in the afternoon and had her in a B.C. ambulance by about 11:30."

Sugarloaf Mountain is north of Kangaroo Road, close to where the four-lane portion of Sooke Road becomes two lanes, and is part of Sooke Hills Wilderness Regional Park.

Farr said that about 30 people from the Juan de Fuca and Metchosin search-and-rescue teams were involved in the operation.

The boyfriend was unhurt. "Her friend was fine and called 911 and supported her until we got there," Farr said.

A 911 call goes to the Emergency Co-ordination Centre and from there, search crews are called out.

"There was good cell reception so we had cell contact with them the entire time."



Farr said conditions got tougher as the rescue effort progressed.

"It was a cold night, but we carry lots of blankets and have great resources in terms of the people," she said. "We have a doctor on our team and paramedics so she was in good care, in good hands."

Farr said two members of the Metchosin Fire Department assisted.

"They had a quad and were helping members down a part of the trail that the quad could go on," she said. "It saved them a little bit of hiking, so they were ferrying people back and forth."

Capital Regional District personnel also played a part in the response, making sure that the rescue effort had access to a secure area of watershed land.

"We bought her out through the watershed onto one of their roads because that was quicker," Farr said. "It would have been longer to come out to Sooke Road."

She said the hikers were well-equipped for their excursion.

"There's no issues there," Farr said. "This was just an accident."

B.C. Treaty Commission says new accord offers smoother, faster road to treaties

DIRK MEISSNER
The Canadian Press

A deal between Indigenous leaders and the federal and British Columbia governments provides a clearer path to reaching 10 new treaty agreements within the next two years and 20 more soon after, says the head of the B.C. Treaty Commission.

Chief commissioner Celeste Haldane said Monday the accord pledges to speed up and transform negotiations.

"Part of the commitment coming out of the accord is that there's the political will to continue to expedite negotiations," she said. "With the commitment to expedite, I would hope that we will see new results, and with that political will and the commitment that's coming from all three parties, I imagine that we will."

Haldane said 10 sets of B.C. treaty talks involving 27 First Nations are on the cusp of reaching the final agreement stage within the next two years and there are 20 other sets of negotiations also close to final agreements.

Ottawa, B.C. and the First Nations Summit, which represents B.C. First Nations in treaty negotiations, said on Saturday they signed an accord that recognizes the need for a different approach to negotiations that results in faster treaties

where all sides spend less time disputing the rights and title of Indigenous Peoples.

The province didn't recognize Indigenous title and saw no need for treaties in 1871 when it joined Canada. Today, there are only a few dozen treaties in a province with more than 200 First Nations.

B.C. started a treaty negotiation process in the early 1990s, but after spending hundreds of millions of dollars in legal and other costs only seven First Nations have reached final agreements.

First Nations Summit spokeswoman Cheryl Casimer said the accord offers negotiators a smoother process that sets the stage for more deals over less time.

She described the current negotiation process as a bad relationship where poor communication and refusal by the federal and B.C. governments to address longstanding issues resulted in slow-moving or stalled talks.

"It's an ongoing dialogue that needs to happen, like a marriage," said Casimer. "There are little pieces all along the way that are finally getting us to where we need to be and want to be."

Casimer said she believes many B.C. First Nations are close to reaching final treaty agreements, but she could not confirm the dozens of potential deals mentioned by Haldane.

"Ideally, those would be nice," she said. "If people are ready and in the queue to finalize the last of their details and be able to sign off, perfect. If the accord affords them the opportunity to do that then that's best for all of us."

Carolyn Bennett, the federal minister of Crown-Indigenous relations, said in a statement the accord signals the federal government is serious about removing obstacles to treaty talks in B.C.

"This new approach reflects a recognition of rights-based approach that will help create an environment that will accelerate and build momentum towards concluding treaties and negotiated agreements in British Columbia," she said.

B.C. Indigenous Relations Minister Scott Fraser said the goal is to negotiate treaties based on flexible, adaptable relationships that don't freeze rights in time.

"I've always figured the treaty process was never etched in stone," he said. "It was supposed to be dynamic and develop with changes that were happening in society, with governments, with law, with United Nations declarations."

But the B.C. treaty process stagnated over the years, Simpson said.

"It has been relatively status quo. It just hasn't kept up where it should be."

Suspect in assault arrested after six-hour standoff in Port Alberni

The RCMP Emergency Response Team tended to a six-hour standoff that ended early Monday in Port Alberni, where a suspect in an assault had barricaded himself in a residence.

Port Alberni RCMP said the situation began about 6:55 p.m. on Sunday with a report of a man calling for help. He knocked on a door looking for assistance when he was pulled away by another man and assaulted.

Police were called, but the victim and the alleged attacker had left by the time they arrived.

Video footage from the area allowed police to identify both people involved. They subsequently tracked the assault suspect to a home about 11:15 p.m., where the suspect was hiding.

The RCMP Emergency Response Team was called at that point. The suspect was arrested without incident after the standoff.

A 39-year-old Port Alberni man is facing charges.

Times Colonist

Boys chased by deer in latest Oak Bay incident

Oak Bay police are once again looking into the issue of interaction between humans and deer, this time after two boys on scooters were chased by a buck along Lulie Street.

The boys were upset but unharmed by their encounter last week, police said.

The B.C. Conservation Service was notified.

Police also reported that a woman riding a bicycle suffered a shoulder injury and mild concussion last week when she was charged and knocked over by a buck near the corner of St. Ann Street and Bowker Avenue.

The two cases follow a September incident in which a woman received minor injuries from being trampled at her home near Foul Bay and Crescent Road. It happened when she opened a gate to let some deer out of her yard, including a fawn.

Oak Bay has plans to use a contraceptive vaccine to control fawn numbers in the municipality.