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Foul play not suspected in two deaths at Sooke River; search continues for missing man

RCMP Cpl. Chris Manseau said it's too early to say how the men ended up in the river
Roxanne Egan-Elliott Feb 2, 2020 12:29 PM

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1 / 1 The search for a missing man continues in Sooke on Monday, Feb. 3, 2020.Roxanne Egan-Elliott Advertisement

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There is nothing to suggest foul play in the deaths of two men found in the Sooke River, according to the RCMP.

Police can't comment on the cause of death, which is up to the B.C. Coroners Service to determine, but RCMP Cpl. Chris Manseau said there's nothing to suggest foul play or that the men were impaired.

"There is no indication at this time that intoxication or anything is a part of this," he said.

The bodies were found Sunday, a day after the search for Cory Mills, Eric Blackmore and A.J. Jensen, all 20, began. The names of the men who died have not been released.

One of the men is still missing.

About 40 people are involved in the search for him, including search-and-rescue volunteers from Juan de Fuca, Cowichan and Ladysmith, as well as Metchosin firefighters and the RCMP's Nanaimo-based dive team.

The three men were last seen about 11 p.m. Friday, just before they left Blackmore's home without saying where they were headed.

The Coroners Service is in the early stages of its investigation to determine how the men died, said spokesman Andy Watson.

Family members were told that the unoccupied truck was found in the Sooke River and the two bodies were located nearby in the river.

Manseau said it's too early in the investigation to say how the men ended up in the river.

"Everybody is focusing on the recovery and the location of that third person," Manseau said.

Anyone who saw a 2004 blue Dodge Dakota on Friday night between about 11 p.m. and midnight, or who was near the 3000-block of Sooke River Road is asked to call Sooke RCMP at 250-642-5241.



Corey Mills, Eric Blackmore and A.J. Jensen went missing on Friday night.

A group of family and friends gathered at the Sooke RCMP station Sunday afternoon, comforting each other after the discovery of the two bodies.

Family and friends started the search on Saturday, and Juan de Fuca search-and-rescue volunteers joined early Sunday morning. A helicopter assisted with the search.

Hundreds of residents in Sooke had been out in 4x4 vehicles checking logging roads and in boats scouring the coastline trying to find the missing men.

Scott Boszak joined the search at 6 a.m. after seeing a Facebook post asking for owners of 4x4 vehicles to lend a hand. Although he didn't know any of the men personally, he said he wanted to help because he's a single father and can imagine what their families are going through.

"Groups us of were dispatched to search different logging roads," he said. "There were at least 100 [4x4 vehicles]."

He went out in a convoy with two other vehicles, and spent more than 12 hours looking for the missing men.

He was upset to hear the news that two of the men had been found dead.

Jensen's stepmother, Carole Rittaler, said Blackmore's father saw the young men playing video games around 10:30 p.m. Friday. Shortly after, he heard the front door close, and they were gone.

They didn't tell anyone where they were headed and family members said it was out of character for them to take off without sharing their plans.

Two command centres were set up, at Lit Up Smoke and Vapour Accessories in Sooke and Shirley fire hall.

Heavy rain hit the area on Friday night and Saturday morning, leading to elevated river levels and difficult road conditions.

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