

Juan de Fuca SAR slogs 4 hours through mud, saves injured hiker off trail

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Local search and rescue assists an injured hiker from the Juan de Fuca marine trail after being called out the evening of May 8. (Juan de Fuca Search and Rescue/Facebook)



Hours of slogging through mud carrying a stretcher to haul an injured hiker off the Juan de Fuca Marine Trail is a standard call for local search and rescue crews. Juan de Fuca SAR did just that, emerging May 9 shortly after 2 a.m. after being called out around 5:30 the evening before.

“We do that all year long. That kind of call is our meat and potatoes call – long stretcher carries on the Juan de Fuca trail,” said coordinator Victoria Clarke.

While they can at times have the help of a helicopter or the Sooke branch of Royal Canadian Marine SAR, the team has to be prepared when those aren’t an option due to weather, daylight and call volumes.

“Our team really has to be able to do these stretcher carries well and it’s good to know that’s maybe what we’re in for.”

During the Wednesday night rescue, the team knew where the hiker was, as is often the case with modern technology in play.

RELATED: Juan de Fuca Search and Rescue puts training to the test (<https://www.goldstreamgazette.com/local-news/juan-de-fuca-search-and-rescue-puts-training-to-the-test-7297142>)

“We know where they are, we still have to find the most efficient and effective way of getting to them,” Clarke said.

In this case, 17 volunteers from Juan de Fuca and Metchosin rescue teams took turns rotating through six positions carrying the stretcher in the four-hour trek over technically tough terrain. At times it included knee-deep mud. It also meant using rope assist for safety of the team and the hiker.

The Juan de Fuca team covers a vast area of diverse terrain, from seaside to heavily treed, and Clarke feel people may not always be prepared.

“I think people underestimate the challenges on this trail, it’s a really difficult trail.”

Incidents on the trail happen enough that BC AdventureSmart created a trail-specific safety video that Clarke always recommends folks watch. Find the video and other safety tips online at [adventuresmart.ca](https://www.adventuresmart.ca) (<https://www.adventuresmart.ca/>).

RELATED: Winter treks prep Peninsula search and rescue for busy season (<https://www.peninsulanewsreview.com/local-news/winter-treks-prep-peninsula-search-and-rescue-for-busy-season-7322299>)

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