

[Print Page](#)

Saturday, November 18, 2006

Last modified Friday, November 17, 2006 11:13 PM PST

Community

Searchers find man by his iPod's glow

Gazette-Times

A lost mushroom picker was spotted and rescued after search teams saw the glow of his iPod early Friday morning.

Cold, tired and complaining of aching feet, 25-year-old Pini Nou of Vancouver, Wash., was spotted by a member of a Benton County Search and Rescue unit in the deep woods of southwestern Benton County at 1:12 a.m., according to acting Benton County Emergency Management Coordinator Peggy Peirson. Nou was lost in the Dawson Creek and Oliver Creek roads area.

The underbrush was so thick, it took the searchers a full 22 minutes to reach Nou, who, lacking a flashlight, had been trying to use the faint glow of his iPod Nano display as a light source. It took several more hours to get him safely out of the woods, and searchers didn't get back home until around 6 a.m.

"And wouldn't you know, this was on my first day as acting program manager," Peirson added.

Nou had joined his mother, an experienced outdoorswoman, for a mushroom hunt.

"She comes down here regularly, and she likes to pick mushrooms," said Peirson. "Her son has never done this before, and she said, 'He's a city boy.'"

After he got separated from her, she spent a couple hours searching for him, then enlisted the help of employees at the nearby Hull-Oaks lumber mill. After they were unable to find him, with nightfall coming, they called for help.

Peirson called up about 20 members of local search-and-rescue units, including Marys Peak Search and Rescue, Benton County Amateur Radio Emergency Services, Benton County Sheriff's Mounted Posse and Corvallis Mountain Rescue at around 7 p.m., and they raced to the scene — Nou was lightly dressed and had very little equipment, and the night was getting cold.

Nou, however, helped searchers by making calls from his cell phone when he could find a signal, describing his surroundings as best he was able.

"We worked with the Hull-Oaks people, who were wonderful," Peirson said. "Very knowledgeable about the area. ... We had little bits of information — it was like a detective case."

In the end, Peirson said the happy ending was something the searchers would treasure — a needed morale booster after the lingering disappointment of the huge and unsuccessful effort to find Brooke Wilburger two years before.

But she added that it's important not to wait until nightfall to call for help when someone is lost — and to never worry about "bothering" the searchers.

"People tend to wait to call us — by the time they call it in, it's dark and you're really under the gun, and it can

be dangerous for search teams to be out there at night as well," she said. "We don't in the least mind getting in our cars and going like mad just to turn around and go home (because a lost person has been found). That's a good outcome for us."

Copyright © 2006 Corvallis Gazette-Times