

Overdue hiker safely rescued from Desolation Wilderness

An overdue hiker has been found alive in Desolation Wilderness.

Nathan Sperring, 29, who had been overdue since Tuesday from his hiking/camping trip, was found Thursday afternoon by search and rescue personnel at his campsite near Dick's Lake in the Desolation Wilderness.

Sperring, according to El Dorado County sheriff's deputies, had done a lot of things right, but overlooked the possibility of rapidly changing mountain weather.

He had not dressed for windy, snowy conditions. Sperring woke up last Sunday morning to find 6 inches of snow on the ground. The weather had cleared some, so Nathan packed up his camp and began to walk out. His tennis shoes and light coat proved to be insufficient for the conditions.

As the weather became more severe, Sperring followed his tracks in the snow back to his protected campsite and set up camp again to wait out the foul weather and the arrival of help. This may have saved his life, deputies said.

On Thursday, multiple SAR teams were flown into the Desolation Wilderness and dropped off in strategic locations. Just after a helicopter dropped off one of the teams and left the area, SAR personnel heard a whistle off in the distance. Sperring had seen the helicopter and was blowing his rescue whistle.