

Drone launched to find man missing in Eldorado forest

By Julia Horowitz, AP

The California National Guard is using a drone to search Eldorado National Forest for a missing San Francisco teacher, marking the first time the Guard has used an unmanned aircraft for a search-and-rescue mission.

The drone will collect images in real time, allowing searchers on the ground to make faster, more informed decisions about where to concentrate their efforts, said Capt. Will Martin, a spokesman for the California Guard.

The Guard previously used the drone to support firefighting efforts in 2013 at Yosemite National Park.

“For the purpose of collecting imagery, it’s unrivaled,” Martin said of drone technology.

The search for Edward Kavanaugh, 45, has intensified in the 12 days since he went missing. Kavanaugh was last seen July 17 driving a motorcycle on a trail through El Dorado County, about three hours east of the San Francisco Bay Area. He was with another driver before cruising off on his own.

Kavanaugh is a popular veteran teacher who works for San Francisco Unified School District. Several staff members and students have gone to Eldorado National Forest to join the search efforts, SFUSD spokeswoman Gentle Blythe said.

Martin said the drone has yet to provide any new leads in Kavanaugh’s disappearance.

Officials have gathered more than 50 volunteers to help sweep El Dorado and neighboring counties by foot, car and helicopter.