

Terrace search and rescue pull missing man's truck from river

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Terrace Search and Rescue volunteer Steve Webb shows the three-pronged hook that was used successfully to pull the truck out of the Skeena River. Dave Jephson of search and rescue said it wasn't supposed to bend but did anyway.

— *image credit: MARGARET SPEIRS*

Terrace Search and Rescue successfully pulled a missing man's truck out of the Skeena River Nov. 7 and is taking a break from the search until members receive further news from the police.

The blue Ford truck is now in the hands of Terrace RCMP who will likely be doing a mechanical inspection on it, says search and rescue member Dave Jephson Nov. 7.

When search and rescue tried to hook it with their first hook, it wouldn't fasten onto the truck because the fast current kept knocking it away from the vehicle, which was found about a kilometre from where the truck went into the water and facing upstream, said Jephson.

A bigger hook with three prongs on it finally managed to get a hold right behind the passenger door and it was heaved out of the water and on shore, he said.

The three-pronged hook, which search and rescue were told wouldn't bend, did in fact suffer a bend from the force of the water combined with the weight of the truck, he added.

The truck was discovered with the sonar, which picked up a shape that did in fact turn out to be the truck but pulling it out of the water became a chore with the force of the current running against it, said Jephson.

Nothing of Steele's was found in the truck and no sign of him has been found, said Jephson.

Search and rescue has searched the river all the way down to Remo and on its way back every time, has kept an eye out for any sign of Steele, said Jephson.

Search and rescue has been in contact with the family, many members of which drove out from Red Deer, Alberta to be here.

Jephson said from the beginning it was seen as a recovery search, believing searchers would not find him alive.

If people don't get out of the water immediately, they're not likely to be found alive later, he said.

Search and rescue is honest and up front with family members about that fact from the beginning, he said.

Search and rescue volunteers, who have been out looking for Dustin Steele since Sunday Nov. 2, are back

to work now, he said.

Steele was last seen in the back of a blue 2013 Ford F150 pickup truck floating downstream around 9 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 1 evening, reported Terrace RCMP Nov. 4.

Their investigation has determined he was with two men, both of whom made it to shore, and the investigation is also determining why the men were on the flats.

One of the men, a 25-year-old “who was with Dustin at the truck was arrested for obstruction on November 3rd and released the same day on conditions,” confirmed Terrace RCMP media relations officer Const. Angela Rabut Nov. 5.

Family and friends of Steele's from Alberta, where Steele is from, have been here for days searching the Copper Flats area along with Terrace SAR and area RCMP.

Steele was in the area working in Kitimat building a hotel.

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