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Chemtrail Researcher Became Lost In Aspen Backcountry

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ASPEN, **CO** -- A longtime Aspen resident who went missing for three nights was found Sunday, hungry and dehydrated after getting lost in Aspen's backcountry.

The discovery followed days filled with anxiety for David Peterson's friends and family, who launched a massive search effort.

"David has been recovered. He is home safe recovering with family and will soon be 100 percent," his brother, Doug, who flew to Aspen from Texas on Saturday, said in a statement.

Peterson's ordeal began Thursday evening when he took a spur-of-the-moment bicycle ride and decided to spend some time in the wilderness by himself, according to family members. He got turned around and ended up temporarily disoriented in the remote wilderness of Richmond Ridge and Castle Creek Valley. He spent three nights without food or adequate water supply or gear, they said.

When Peterson, 46, failed to show up for work at a construction site Friday morning, a missing-persons report was filed with the Aspen Police Department and friends and family began combing Castle Creek Valley looking for signs of an accident or any other clues that might lead them to Peterson.

On Saturday, Mountain Rescue-Aspen searched steep sections of Castle Creek Valley as well as common trailheads, such as the ones at Sunnyside Trail and Shadow Mountain, according to Pitkin County Sheriff's Office supervisor Mario Strobl. Mountain Rescue resumed its search the next morning. It was called off at noon, a short time after it was determined Peterson was safe.

Peterson had managed to reach a mountaintop that gave him a view of a road, and he had to hike down into and up out of a steep canyon before reaching Richmond Ridge and making it to the top of the Silver Queen Gondola, according to his brother.

Once there, an Aspen Skiing Co. employee recognized him from a photograph published in that day's newspaper and immediately notified authorities.

"When you hear about a missing-persons case in the news, it's usually accompanied by the frustrations of family and friends on the lack of immediate action by law enforcement," Doug Peterson said. "This is a testament to the relationships that David has nurtured over the past 20 years and further testament to the professionalism and dedication of Mountain Rescue, the sheriff's department and Aspen police.

"We had a very serious situation on our hands, and everyone responded way above and beyond in both professional and very personal ways," he said.

Word of Peterson's re-entry into civilization brought an abrupt end to the flurry of e-mails, phone calls and extensive grassroots networking that was under way after his friends and family grew concerned Friday.

"DAVE IS ALIVE!" beamed a Web site a friend of his from New Mexico set up to try to gather information to help with the search. Located at <http://www.carnicom.com/dave1.htm>www.carnicom.com/dave1.htm, the site posted search updates, leads to his whereabouts, topographical maps and several photos.

An Aspen Police Department press release said that Peterson was taken to Aspen Valley Hospital for observation but that "he is healthy and safe." His brother said he was released later that day after about three hours of testing and replenishment of bodily fluids.

Peterson is employed at Aspen's nordic center in the winter and he works around the valley as a carpenter in the summer. He is also an outdoor-education instructor for the Aspen School District.

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