

CONTACT:**Philip A. Strouse**

Community Relations
Garfield County Sheriff's Office
107 8th Street
Glenwood Springs, CO 81601
Phone: 970-309-9697
E-mail: pstrouse@garcosheriff.com

**Tanny M. McGinnis**

Community Relations
Garfield County Sheriff's Office
107 8th Street
Glenwood Springs, CO 81601
Phone: 970-309-9248
E-mail: tmcginnis@garcosheriff.com

SHERIFF LOU VALLARIO
GARFIELD COUNTY, COLORADO

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

June 19, 2010

A Busy Weekend for Garfield County Search and Rescue

GARFIELD COUNTY, Colo. – At approximately 6:40 p.m. Saturday, June 12th, the Garfield County Communications Authority received a Denver-area phone call from a reporting party concerned about the welfare of a Denver family of two adults and two small children believed to be four-wheeling on the Flattops north of Rifle Gap State Park. The family had sent a text message to the individual in Denver around 11:00 a.m. that day stating they were headed to the Flattops and would be back down to the Rifle Gap area before dark that evening.

Sheriff's deputies checked the campgrounds in the Rifle Gap, Rifle Falls and Rifle Creek areas to look for the camp trailer the family was reportedly towing. Deputies were unable to locate it or the family. At 9:00 p.m., the Sheriff's Office contacted Garfield County Search and Rescue (SAR) to request assets be on stand-by for a possible search of the overdue party.

At sunrise the following day, a search team of nine personnel, four 4-wheel drive (4WD) vehicles and three All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) met at the Triangle Park area to begin operations. They located the missing party at 9:47 a.m. as the family was driving out on County Road 245 in the Hiner Spring area north of Triangle Park.

The family's 4WD vehicle had become stuck in a snowdrift east of Cow Lake around 2:30 p.m. Saturday afternoon, and the family spent the night in the vehicle. At 7:00 a.m. Sunday, the family left the vehicle in an attempt to walk to Glenwood Springs by heading east toward Blair Mountain.

An hour and a half later, a four-wheeling couple from the Silt area discovered the stranded vehicle then traveled two miles eastward and found the family walking, but in good condition. The Silt couple transported the family back to their vehicle, pulled it from the snowdrift and accompanied the family back to County Road 245 where they were met by the SAR team.

En route back to Rifle, SAR members received word of another stranded party northwest of Triangle Park. The team searched the area and found the Grand Junction family of two adults and three children in Saddle Park north of the GV Spring area.

Stranded due to muddy road conditions and vehicle problems, the family had spent the night in a nearby cabin. All were in good condition and were transported to Rifle by the SAR personnel.

Also on Sunday morning, two SAR members responded to the Coffee Pot area northeast of Glenwood Springs to locate two stranded motorists from the Front Range. The stranded party's two-wheel drive vehicle had become stuck in the mud on Forest Service Road 620 northwest of the Deep Creek overlook. They had spent the night in the vehicle and were in good condition. The SAR team found them at 10:00 a.m. and led them out of the area with the aid of two ATVs and a 4WD vehicle.

Thankfully, all parties were found in good condition despite being stranded overnight in the Colorado high country. Garfield County Search and Rescue highly recommends those who intend on taking vehicles off main routes of travel to provide a third party with activity plans and bring along appropriate gear and supplies in order to be prepared for the unexpected.

The mission of the Garfield County Sheriff's Office is to provide solutions for the people by utilizing and employing strong morals, good character, untarnished integrity, technical knowledge and fiscal responsibility through professional, ethical and equitable conduct.

#