



National Park Service
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National Park Service News Release

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Monday's Search in Katmai N.P. for Missing Aircraft Unsuccessful; Air Search Will Resume Tuesday Morning

Search aircraft continued their efforts throughout Monday to locate a missing aircraft in Katmai National Park and Preserve. The search will enter its fourth day Tuesday morning.

The single engine floatplane, a deHavilland Beaver operated by Branch River Air Service in King Salmon, carried the pilot and three National Park Service maintenance employees and has been missing since Saturday afternoon. The missing employees are Mason McLeod, 26, and two brothers, Neal Spradlin, 28; and Seth Spradlin, 20. The pilot is Marco Alletto, 47, from King Salmon.

Today, searchers returned to the northeast part of the 4 million acre national park, particularly the several river valleys that drain into Kamishak Bay. The expectation was that the plane would have flown up one of the valleys, then along Kulik Lake west toward King Salmon. The weather in the primary search area today was excellent, with largely clear skies and excellent visibility.

Ten aircraft – four helicopters and six fixed wing – participated in the search today. The multi-agency effort includes the National Park Service, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Alaska State Troopers, U.S. Coast Guard, Alaska Air National Guard, Egli Air Haul, and Branch River Air. Other air taxi operators taking clients to the area have also informally joined the search. The National Park Service has a regional incident management team in place at the park's King Salmon headquarters to assist the park coordinate the search.

Most aircraft involved in the search are equipped with GPS tracking devices which allow the search managers to plot areas that were intensely searched on Saturday and Sunday, along with areas that need a closer examination today. This morning, helicopters searched the coast of Katmai from Katmai Bay to Swikshak Bay on the chance the missing aircraft began an unexpected route back to King Salmon on Saturday afternoon; no sign of the missing plane was found.

On Tuesday, search managers expect to send aircraft back to areas that have been less intensively searched in the last three days. This evening, the weather in King Salmon had deteriorated somewhat and rain was falling at 7:30 p.m., although the weather had remained better in the primary search area to the east.

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The search began late Saturday afternoon after the Beaver failed to return to King Salmon. Two planes owned by Branch River Air Service in King Salmon flew to Swikshak Lagoon on Saturday to pick up an NPS maintenance crew working there preparing for the reconstruction of an old ranger station. Three people were picked up by the Beaver at 1:45 p.m., and a second plane left Swikshak 15 minutes later. The second plane, with two employees and pilot on board, returned safely but had to fly much of the way 500 feet above ground level due to deteriorating weather conditions.

An emergency response was initiated through the Rescue Coordination Center on Saturday afternoon. A C-130 from Anchorage and a Coast Guard helicopter searched the area until 11 p.m. Saturday, but found nothing.

There have been no radio or emergency locator transmitter transmissions.

Katmai N.P is about 300 miles southwest of Anchorage.

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