



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

419 Decatur Street  
New Orleans, LA 70130  
504 589-3882 phone  
[www.nps.gov/jela](http://www.nps.gov/jela)

---

## Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve News Release

May 25, 2011  
For Immediate Release

**Contacts:**

**Carol Clark - Superintendent 504-589-3882**  
**Linda Friar - Incident Information Officer 786-385-0067**

### **Francisco Piedrahita found by Search and Rescue Operation**

Dr. Francisco Piedrahita was found this afternoon at Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve - Barataria Preserve unit after four days of intensive search by an interagency search and rescue operation. While providing a media overflight the Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Department helicopter spotted a person matching the missing's description and a ground search team was dispatched. Piedrahita was leaning against a tree approximately 300 yards off of a park trail. Piedrahita was extremely dehydrated but coherent and in fairly good shape.

National Park Rangers and other searchers confirmed they had found Piedrahita and transported him to an awaiting ambulance by ATV. The family members, who had been holding vigil in the park, were able to greet their loved one to the sounds of shouts of joy from over 100 rescuers watching before he was taken to a local hospital. "We are all just ecstatic that he was found in relatively good condition and that the search was successful," said Superintendent Carol Clark.

The search began late in the day on Saturday May 21st and concluded at 3:00 pm Wednesday May 25th. The search teams braved extremely hot and humid conditions and covered terrain dominated by dense, tropical vegetation.

The Intermountain All Hazard Incident Team has been managing the incident for the National Park Service and is also part of a Unified Command established with Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Department. The NPS search effort has been supported by approximately 75 park staff from 12 parks in 12 states as well as Jefferson and St. Charles Parish Sheriff's Departments, Gulf Coast Search and Rescue, Louisiana Search and Rescue, the National Guard and New Orleans Fire Department.

-NPS-