



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Grand Canyon National Park

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Grand Canyon News Release

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Search for Overdue Hikers at Grand Canyon National Park Continues

Grand Canyon, AZ. – The search for two backpackers who have not returned from a week-long backpack trip continues today in Grand Canyon National Park. On Sunday, May 25, 2008, Grand Canyon National Park's Emergency Dispatch Center received a report of overdue travelers, initially identified as Alan and Iris Humphrey of Salt Lake City. The reporting party did not know the couple's exact itinerary. Rangers initiated a search by checking hotel and campground registrations on the South Rim. When they found no record of the couple, an attempt to locate (ATL) was issued in the park and Arizona DPS was notified, resulting in a statewide ATL. An ATL had already been issued by Salt Lake City police. Efforts to find the couple continued with a search of backcountry permits issued in the park and of registration records at North Rim Lodge and campground.

Late in the afternoon on Monday, May 26, rangers made contact with a friend of the couple who was familiar with their itinerary. Through this contact, they learned that the pair, experienced backpackers, had planned to backpack the Royal Arch route and that Iris had maintained her maiden name, Faraklas, and may have obtained a permit under her name. Based on this new information, searchers immediately rechecked backcountry permits for this second name and found a permit issued for May 17 – 23 in the name of Iris Faraklas for two people to travel the Royal Arch route. With knowledge of the couple's itinerary, rangers were able to locate their vehicle at the South Bass trailhead, the entry point for this route, at approximately 7:00 p.m. that evening.

On Tuesday, May 27, National Park Service rangers flew sections of the Royal Arch route as well as adjacent areas known to be more technically challenging. During this initial hasty search, backpackers along the trail were contacted and interviewed to determine if anyone in the area had seen or made contact with the pair. After the initial aerial search was completed, three teams of rescuers on foot were inserted at various points along the couple's route to begin a ground search of the entire loop.

Today, those teams are continuing the ground search focusing on the route itself and on high-probability areas, drainages, routes and primitive trails within the search area. A technical rope team with canyoneering experience from Zion National Park has been called in to access

technical terrain within the search area. The Royal Arch route, while popular with more experienced Grand Canyon travelers, is a difficult route. The 45-mile loop travels through narrow canyons with dense vegetation as well as exposed terrain. Completing the loop requires route finding, navigating short rappels and traveling through areas with no available water. The trip generally takes about a week. During the time the couple is believed to have been backpacking, temperatures within the canyon have fluctuated significantly (ranging from 51 to 107 degrees Fahrenheit as measured at Phantom Ranch) as a result of the Memorial Day weekend storm system that affected the entire state.

The couple have been identified as:

Alan P. Humphrey – 39 years old, 6’1” tall and 190 pounds with blonde hair and blue eyes.



Iris Faraklas – 35 years old, 5’10” tall and 150 pounds with brown hair and blue eyes.



Anyone with information about Alan Humphrey or Iris Faraklas, their itinerary, plans or intended route should contact Grand Canyon’s Emergency Dispatch Center at 928-638-7805.

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