

Deer Lake Search and Rescue

Report on Jackson's Arm search of February 1 to 4, 2019

Friday, February 1:

On February 1st, 2019, late evening, Deer Lake Search and Rescue (DLSAR) received a call from RCMP, Deer Lake, to provide assistance to a 5-person snowmobile party that left Jackson's Arm, NL heading to Great Harbor Deep, NL. While on route, two of the five people, Stan Rice and Wilfred Lovell, both in their 60's, got separated from the group and were now lost.

Due to poor weather conditions, the late time of day, and knowing visibility would be near zero, we decided to wait until 0500 the next morning to head to Cat Arm Road, 113km from Deer Lake, near Jackson's Arm.

Saturday, February 2:

Feb. 2nd, 2019, 16 DLSAR team members with their personal snowmobiles, trucks, and trailers, along with DLSAR's command post, fast response vehicle, snowmobile and medical evacuation equipment (Snowbulance); arrived at the staging area on Cat Arm Road at approximately 0630.

Command was established, team captains were assigned and 4 to 6-person teams were formed. All team captains were briefed as to the LKP (last know position), approx. 52km north west of the staging area, and were to meet up with 3 people of the 5-person snowmobiling party at the LKP. From there all teams were to commence searching in all directions from the LKP. Due to poor weather conditions and extremely limited visibility, the search was slow and time consuming.

All DLSAR teams continued to perform search patterns and check all commonly used trails and snowmobiling routes until dark that day, checking in every 2 hours on InReach systems and satellite phones. Due to the stormy weather, lack of visibility and safety concerns, all teams were instructed to returned to staging area shortly after dark, approx. 1930 hrs. After a short debrief of the day, all members stood down for the day and returned to Deer Lake.

Sunday, February 3:

The next day, Feb. 3rd, 2019, at 0500, SAR members left Deer Lake and proceeded to Cat Arm Road for a second day of searching. The search area was expanded, but due to extremely poor weather conditions, the progress was slow once again.

DLSAR also requested more resources for the second day's search, resulting in the 103-squadron helicopter, Provincial Airlines fixed wing plane with their FLIR (Forward Looking Infer Red) unit, and RCMP spotter plane with five Bay of Islands team members for spotters.

That morning at approx. 1100 hrs. we located one of the two missing persons at approximately 50°15'25" N, 56°57'50" E. His snowmobile had broken through river ice and he had made a snow shelter to get out of the weather. He was hungry, mildly hypothermic but otherwise ok. The 103 Cormorant Helicopter retrieved that person and proceeded to transport him to Western Memorial Hospital.

All teams continued searching for the remainder of that day. Once again, the weather remained extremely bad with very little visibility. So, all teams were instructed to return to the staging area before dark, approximately 1930 hrs. A short debrief was performed and a plan was formulated for the next day. Team members were off task and returned to Deer Lake for the night.

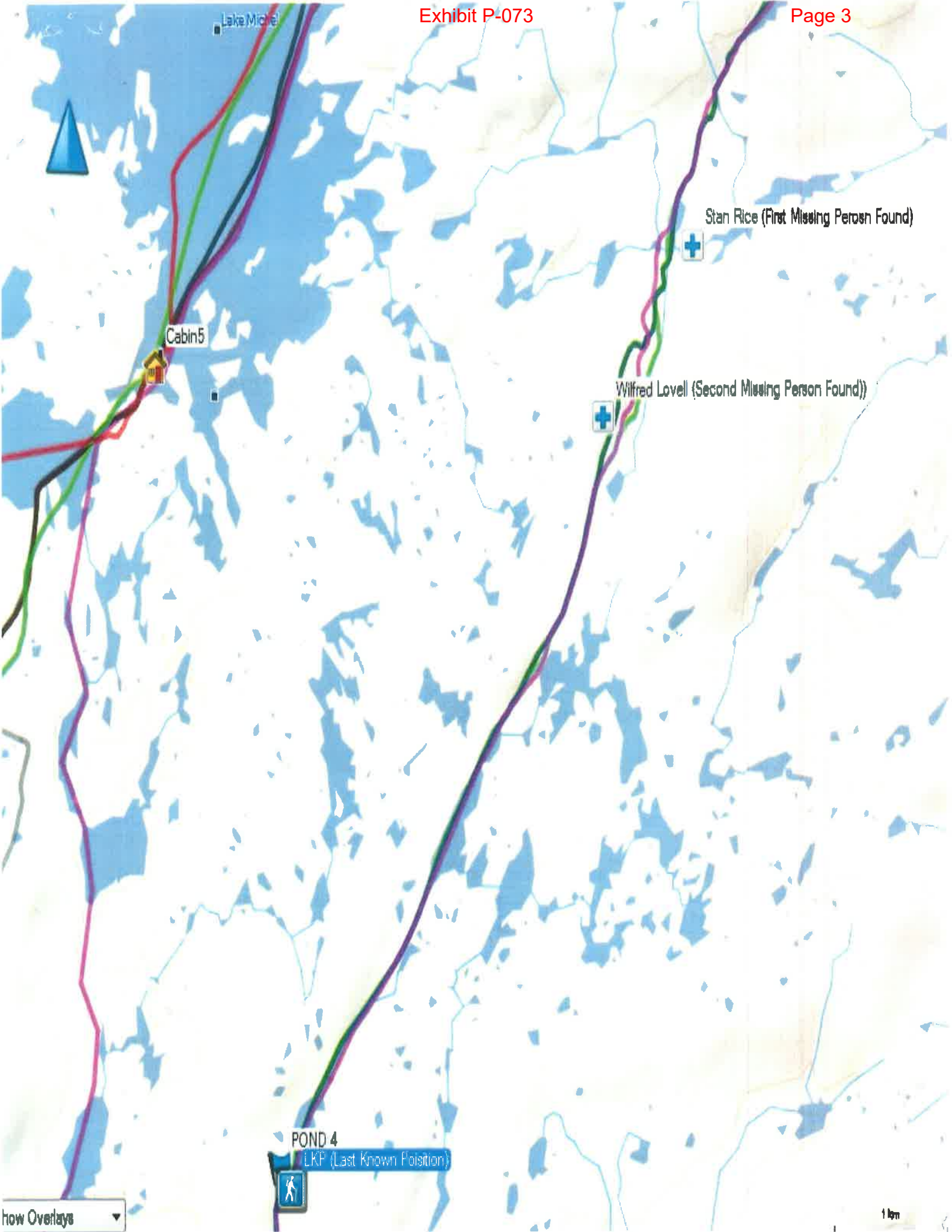
Monday, February 4:

The next day, Feb. 4th, 2019, teams, including members from Bay Of Islands and Rocky Harbor Teams, assembled at the staging area by 0630 to set up more teams and team captains along with some locals to assist our teams in the field. Once again there was assistance from 103 Squadron out of Gander, as well as Universal Helicopters out of Pasadena. The 103 were soon dispatched to another incident and had to abandon the search. The weather started off like usual, stormy with poor visibility, but after receiving more information from the first rescued snowmobiler, we concentrated our efforts in more specific areas.

Around noon of that day, the remaining lost snowmobiler was spotted from the air by the Universal Helicopter crew at approximately 50°14'51" N, 56°58'27" E. From reports, he was outside lying in the snow close to his overturned snowmobile and a snow cave he had built. He was severely hypothermic and non-responsive. Universal Helicopter crew and spotter started to work on the patient and transported him to Western Memorial Hospital where he later succumbed to his injuries.

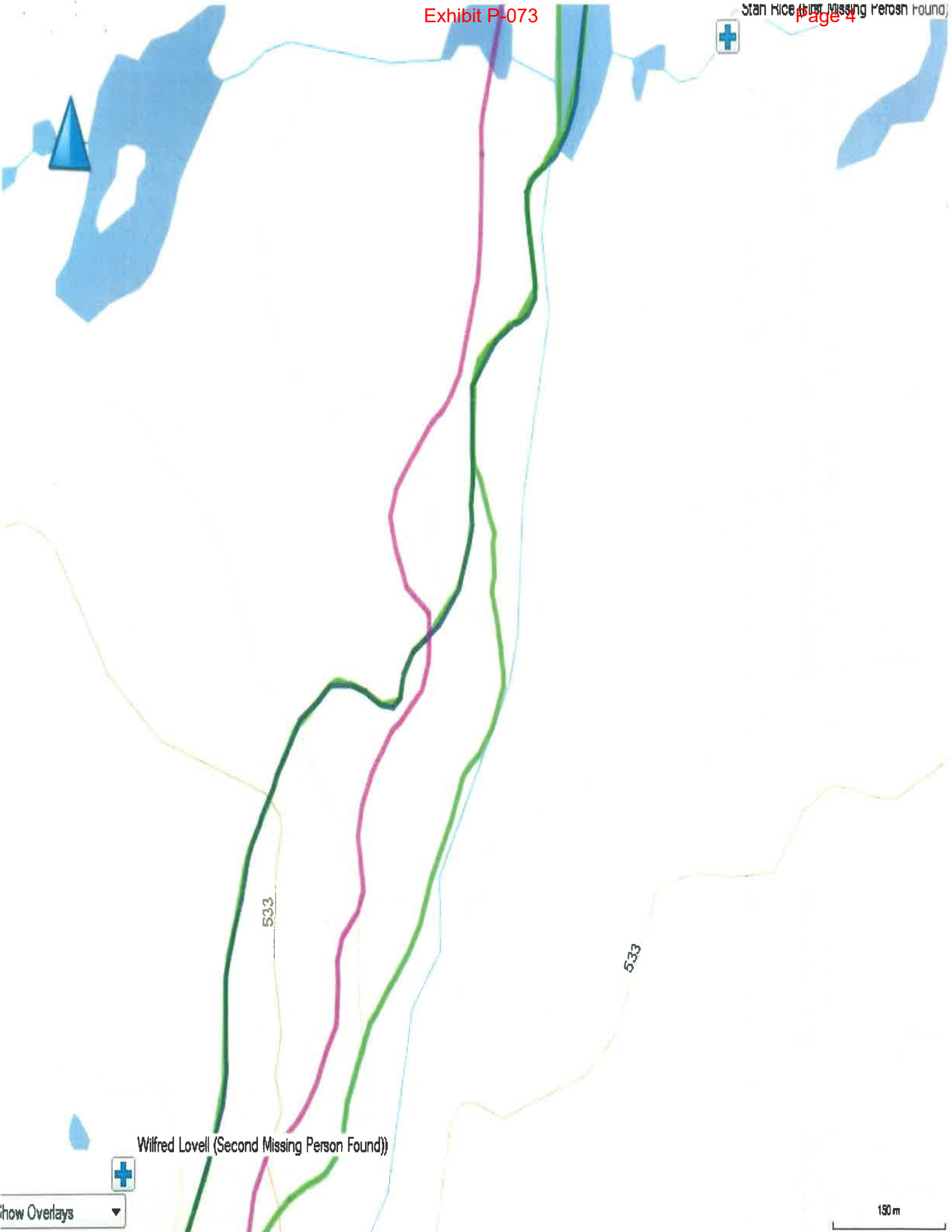
DLSAR then transported an RCMP officer to the scene for investigation and pictures. Once that task was completed, teams returned to the staging area, loaded up all equipment and a major debrief was held. Once all gear was loaded up, members returned to Deer Lake and were off task at 2030 hrs.

As you can see from the attached claims, there was major damage to one piece of equipment and several with minor damage. All expenses were reimbursed by RCMP.



how Overlays

1 km



Wilfred Lovell (Second Missing Person Found)



Show Overlays

150 m

