

Bill Ewasko Search Chronology

compiled by Tom Mahood

The following is a timeline extracted from various official records of the start of the search for William Ewasko in Joshua Tree National Park (JTNP) in 2010. It begins the day after Ewasko arrived in Southern California from Georgia and ends with the beginning of the massive, mutual aid search in JTNP. The day count shown is that from the official records of the search with Day 1 being June 26th, 2010

Thursday, June 24

- 7:00 AM Per Riverside Sheriff's Officer (RSO) Martinez, Ewasko makes phone call to his friend David Rosso, owner of the condo Ewasko was staying at in Rancho Mirage. Ewasko states to Rosso he's on his way to JTNP.
- 8:00 AM Per RSO Martinez, Ewasko places call to his fiancée ,Mary, in Georgia. Martinez stated Ewasko told Mary he was w/b on I-10 in the area of Monterrey Avenue. Cell phone records indicate that his phone was transmitting off of the Thousand Palms Verizon cell tower, which is consistent with the location he gave Mary. He was planning on being out of JTNP by 5 PM and was going to have dinner at Pappy and Harriet's, a restaurant in Pioneertown.
- 9:15 AM Approximate time Ewasko should have arrived at the Juniper Flats trailhead based upon 8:00 AM location, if he drove directly there at normal speed without stopping along the way.
- 10:20 AM Hiker Greg Mendoza arrives at Juniper Flats trailhead to hike to Stubbe Springs. No other vehicles were present at the trailhead.
- 5:30 to
6:00 PM Mendoza returns from his hike to the trailhead and sees a white Chrysler Sebring parked parallel to the curb, pointed westerly. He noted fresh boot tracks heading westerly on Juniper Flats Road.

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Friday, June 25

- 7:55 AM JTNP receives initial report of missing hiker, with Mary as the reporting party. JTNP was told Ewasko was planning to hike to Carey's Castle off Hayfield Road.
- 8:26 AM JTNP receives Ewasko's rental car make, model and license information.
- 8:45 AM David and Cheryl Haber arrive at Juniper Flats trailhead to hike towards Ryan Mountain. They observed one other vehicle at the trailhead, a white vehicle, parked parallel to the curb, pointed westerly.
- 10:30 AM The Habers return to the trailhead and observe the white vehicle still there, with another vehicle also parked there.
- 11:46 AM Rangers report from the trailhead for Carey's Castle that no one had been there for at least a week.
- 1:30 PM Ranger Mike Grayson is dispatched to check for Ewasko's vehicle at the parking areas for Keys View and Lost Horse Mine with negative results. He drove past the Juniper Flats trailhead where Ewasko's vehicle was parked to reach his assigned areas, both coming and going, and failed to see Ewasko's vehicle.

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Saturday, June 26 (Day 1)

- 9:00 AM Ranger Mike Grayson checks Key's View again for Ewasko's vehicle with negative results. He specifically states there were no vehicles at the Juniper Flats trailhead.
- 9:45 AM Park employee Mimi Gorman passes by Juniper Flats trailhead on her way to Key's View to present an interpretive program. She was unsure if there was a vehicle at the trailhead parking.
- 1:15 PM Park employee Gorman passes by the Juniper Flats trailhead on her way back from Key's View and observes a newish white sedan, parked at an angle, with the front of the vehicle pointed towards the paved road (easterly).
- 4:56 PM A CHP helicopter locates Ewasko's vehicle at the Juniper Flats trailhead, parked parallel to the curb, pointed westerly.
- 6:46 PM Ranger Pritchett drives west on Juniper Flats Road from the trailhead with light bar flashing and calling out Ewasko's name on the loudspeaker.
- 8:01 PM Official sunset.
- 8:05 PM Team 1 leaves the Juniper Flats trailhead, along the CR&H trail, headed toward Quail Mountain. GPS tracks show they went in 4.3 miles, not quite reaching Juniper Flats.
- 8:28 PM Official Moon rise (Full Moon on this day).
- 8:44 PM Team 2 is dropped off at the intersection of Juniper Flats Road and the Stubbe Springs trail. GPS tracks indicate they went in about 2.8 miles, generally toward Fan View.
- 9:41 PM Team 2 begins heading back out due to "technical trouble". While back at the Juniper Flats trailhead, several searchers reported seeing lights in the saddle of the closest ridge (this would be about 1 mile due west of the trailhead)

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Sunday, June 27 (Day 2)

6:50 AM A Verizon cell tower at 58399 Serin Drive in Yucca Valley receives a very brief ping from Ewasko's cell phone. The tower records the handset distance as being 10.6 miles from the tower. Due to the antenna configuration of that tower, no bearing information is available. A Verizon technician told RSO Martinez that the length of the ping was extremely short, although the quality was good. Martinez asked specifically regarding the accuracy and was told it was 90% accurate.

That morning the initial search containment area was established to be: Quail Springs Road to the north, Smith Water Canyon on the north and northwest, Johnny Lang Canyon on the north and northeast, and the CR&H trail on the south

Teams, search areas and results for the day:

Team 1: Three man team sent to Quail Mountain. Found red bandanna at base of SE face of Quail Mountain, near the NW edge of Juniper Flats. UTM 7033/6214 (33.99750, -116.23845) They continued down the north face of Quail Mountain into the large drainage, then out NE to Quail Springs Road.

Team 2: Four man team to Stubbe Springs on Stubbe Springs Loop trail.

Team 3: Two man team traveling cross country from Juniper Flats trailhead to ridge where lights were spotted previous night. They covered entire hill system to the west of Juniper Flats trailhead and found nothing.

Team 4: Three man team to Quail Mountain via the Furbush JTNP hiking guide drainage approach.

Team 5: Three man team to Quail Mountain via the Furbush JTNP hiking guide ridgeline approach.

Ranger Moe: Hiked Lost Horse Mine trail.

Ranger Bartzatt: Covington Flats area.

Written records contain no specific team reports for Sunday, June 27.