

Body of missing kayaker recovered

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PIERMONT – The body of a kayaker who had been missing for more than two weeks was found yesterday morning, according to New Hampshire Fish and Game.

Robert Swantak, 58, of Bradford, Vt., was last seen May 1, when he put his kayak into the Waits River, planning to spend the afternoon picking fiddlehead ferns.

But when he did not return later that evening, he was reported missing. Shortly after a search was launched, his kayak was found floating down the Connecticut River in Orford, a life preserver tied to it.

At the time he went missing, the debris-filled Connecticut River was running high and fast because of recent rain and the snow melt.

Although the search for him was suspended at the conclusion of the second day, daily patrols by New Hampshire Fish and Game, Vermont Fish and Wildlife and Vermont State Police have been conducted, according to Fish and Game Lt. Todd Bogardus.

Swantak was found at about 9:30 a.m. yesterday, just above the mouth of the Waits River.

"That had been our primary search area," he said.

The discovery of the body had capped a two-day effort, which included using dogs from New England K9 Search and Rescue on the water Friday.

On Saturday, Fish and Game and Vermont State Police used an underwater camera to search, and yesterday, as a Fish and Game dive team was preparing for an underwater search, one of the boat patrols located the body, Bogardus said.

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