

BUTTE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE MEDIA RELEASE

**JERRY W. SMITH
SHERIFF-CORONER**



DATE : 12/15/11
RELEASED BY : Lieutenant Al Smith
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Forest Ranch – On Sunday, December 11, 2011, the Sheriff's Office was contacted by Forest Ranch resident, 60-year-old Martha Rowe who stated that her 85-year-old husband, Lowell Everett Sutton had been missing from their residence since Monday, December 5, 2011. Rowe reported that she and her husband resided in a "homestead" without electricity, in a canyon about 2 miles from Doe Mill Road in Forest Ranch. Rowe stated she and her husband had lived on the property for the past 42 years. Rowe reported that her husband was dressed in a windbreaker, long pants, and hiking boots. She also stated that his vision is impaired.

Rowe related that she had not seen Sutton on Tuesday or Wednesday but had heard him calling for her from the "canyon" on Thursday, December 8th. On Friday, Rowe again heard Sutton calling to her from somewhere in the canyon. On Sunday, Rowe hiked to a residence on Doe Mill Road to call the Sheriff's Office.

The Sheriff's Office Search and Rescue team along with the Sheriff's Office helicopter responded to the area and conducted an extensive search of the area, but was unable to locate Sutton. The terrain in the area was found to be extremely rugged and challenging, and, according to Search and Rescue personnel, required a 1 ½ to 2 hour hike to reach the site. On Monday, the Sheriff's Office helicopter searched the area using "Forward Looking Infrared" heat detection equipment, but was unable to locate Sutton.

The search was continued today using the Search and Rescue team, Sheriff's helicopter, and search dogs from the California Area Rescue Dog Association (CARDA). Searchers located a deceased male, identified as Lowell Sutton at approximately 12:00 in a remote

canyon in the area. No sign of trauma or foul play is indicated. Mr. Sutton was transported to a local funeral home. Investigation into the cause of his death is continuing.