

CASE STUDY: TWIN TREES SEARCH



ABOUT HUMBOLDT COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

County size: 4,052 sq. miles

Population served:
~67,000 residents

Annual call volume:
dispatched to over 60,000 calls in 2020

When a search for two missing young girls escalated into a multi day effort in March 2019, Undersheriff Justin Braud of the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) knew that their chances of success would largely depend on a well coordinated response. "There are few circumstances more dire than lost children in distress, and when seconds count, having the best trained personnel and best equipment available is non-negotiable," Braud said. "But even if you are lucky enough to get those resources, how can you effectively utilize and manage them? For us, our answer was CalTopo."

As more than 250 personnel from 20 different agencies arrived from all over California to aid in the Twin Trees search, HCSO relied on CalTopo Teams to get everyone up to speed and mobilize resources. Using the mobile app on their smartphones, personnel accessed incident maps and assignments, recorded tracks and clues, and shared their location. The relative ease of using the program and the minimal equipment needed made it simple to scale up and track personnel as the search progressed.

Providing a common mapping platform for all personnel also promoted the seamless sharing of information through the incident. When childrens' boot prints and discarded granola bar wrappers were discovered, searchers marked the precise location of these clues on the incident map. Search managers were then able to swiftly act on this new information, reallocating resources to the area and designating new containment locations. The result was increased situational awareness across the board and a greater ability to adjust priorities as new information became available.

After 44 hours of intense searching, the missing sisters were located, cold and dehydrated but otherwise uninjured. The ability to rapidly integrate outside resources and effectively coordinate hundreds of personnel from different agencies was key to this successful outcome. "CalTopo is a game changer, and should be considered mandatory equipment for any search operations," Undersheriff Braud said. "This technology not only significantly improves organization, but is also a valuable tool for searcher safety and accountability. When lives are on the line, you need this technology."

THE NEED

Rapidly scale up and effectively coordinate and track hundreds of searchers from different agencies for a time sensitive search

THE SOLUTION

Utilize CalTopo Teams to plan and manage incidents of any size, increase situational awareness for everyone involved, and track resources

For more information visit caltopo.com/teams or contact info@caltopo.com.

