



PRESS RELEASE

An Internationally Accredited Agency



D. S. Gillingwater, Chief
Northern Division CHP
2485 Sonoma Street, Redding, CA 96001

Contact: Officer Cal Robertson
Public Information Officer
(530) 242-4300

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 2, 2018

MENDOCINO COUNTY FATAL INVESTIGATION, MISSING CHILDREN UPDATE

MENDOCINO COUNTY, CA. – The California Highway Patrol (CHP), in conjunction with Sheriff Thomas Allman, Mendocino County Sheriff's Office, and other allied agency partners is continuing an active search for missing children, Hannah Hart, age 16, Devonte Hart, age 15, and Sierra Hart, age 12.

The children are missing after the March 26, 2018, discovery of a partially submerged vehicle found at the bottom of a cliff off of State Route 1 in Mendocino. The vehicle contained the bodies of a family of two adults and their three children. The search for the additional three children belonging to the family continues both at the scene, through water rescue and recovery, and other locations including routes of travel.

While we are still in the early stages of this investigation, preliminary physical evidence gathered by the CHP's Multidisciplinary Accident Investigation Team (MAIT) indicates this situation may have been an intentional act and not the result of a traffic collision. At this time, this belief is based on the following:

- A lack of physical evidence found at the scene. No tire friction marks, dirt prints from a vehicle tire, or skid marks were discovered at the scene.
- The on-board computer from the vehicle indicates that the vehicle was stopped on the dirt pull-off area approximately 70 feet from the cliff's edge before accelerating off the cliff. At this distance, the vehicle would not have been able to get up to a significant speed prior to impact.

A statement regarding the speedometer reading of 90 mph prior to the collision does not mean the vehicle was traveling at 90 mph. The speedometer reading could have been affected by the impact, affected by an electrical charge, or could have been unintentionally manipulated during recovery efforts. A comprehensive vehicle inspection is currently underway at this time to determine the vehicle's speed.

-more-

"FOLLOW" US ON
TWITTER



"LIKE" US ON
FACEBOOK

Anyone with information regarding the possible whereabouts of the missing children is asked to call the California Highway Patrol – Ukiah Area office at (707) 467-4000 or the Mendocino County Sheriff's Office at (707) 463-4086.

Additionally, the following allied partners have been providing support and assistance to the CHP as the search for the missing children continues: the Mendocino County Sheriff's Office Search and Rescue, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Portland Police Department, Clark County Sheriff's Office in the state of Washington, Alameda County Sheriff's Office, the U.S. Coast Guard, CalFire, Fort Bragg Fire Department, and the Westport Volunteer Fire Department.

This is an on-going investigation and updates will be provided as new information is available.

###