

Columbia County Search and Rescue members located the body of a 19-year-old Rainier woman inside the vehicle she was last known to be driving. Nichole Sherman appears to have suffered fatal injuries due to a motor vehicle crash. The crash appears to have occurred when Sherman's vehicle left the roadway along her assumed route to a friend's house. Next of kin has been notified.

Ms. Sherman was last seen in the late afternoon hours on November 13. She was reported missing to the Sheriff's Office on November 14.

Deputies, sheriff's volunteers, family members and others have devoted hundreds of hours to finding out what happened. Today, thanks to conditions at the time of the search and observant search and rescue members, deputies were able to recover Ms. Sherman's body, which was still seat-belted into the red, 2001 Chevrolet Cavalier she was reported to have been driving. The vehicle appears to have been involved in a high-velocity crash just off the roadway, where it subsequently came to rest in a creek bed that is surrounded by trees.

"Deputies had driven this route on multiple occasions, searching for indications of an off-road crash," said Sheriff Jeff Dickerson. "We also employed the use of private aircraft flying over the area, but were unsuccessful in our efforts until today. Aided by clear weather and the angle of lighting at the time of this search, members of our search and rescue team were alerted to what turned out to be a tree that appears to have been struck by the Sherman vehicle."

Searchers examined the tree and saw in the gully a red car with extensive damage to the passenger side. Deputies went into the gully and made positive identification of Ms. Sherman.

An Oregon State Police crash reconstructionist is assisting the Sheriff's Office in determining the cause of the crash.

CCSO Search and Rescue Locates Body of Missing Teen

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“Our hearts go out to the family members and fiancé of Ms. Sherman,” the sheriff said. “We express our condolences to them for the loss of their loved one, and we also want to thank our search and rescue volunteers for helping close this chapter of the investigation.”

The case will remain open pending official cause of death determination by the Oregon State Medical Examiner.

In addition to OSP's assistance, Columbia River Fire and Rescue personnel were also assisting on scene. Assistance was also rendered by Columbia 9-1-1 dispatchers.