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Ralph Obenberger
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MONO COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
PRESS RELEASE

Robert Weber
Undersheriff

To: All News Outlets

From: Jennifer Hansen, Public Information Officer

Date: October 2, 2013

RE: Mono County Sheriff Search and Rescue (SAR) responded to a possible downed aircraft

On September 30, 2013, and October 1, 2013, the Mono County Sheriff Search & Rescue (SAR) Team responded to a report of a possible downed aircraft near Matterhorn Peak above Twin Lakes Mono Village. Campers, in the area, reported observing an object, trailing three plumes of smoke, fly overhead at a high rate of speed and then drop quickly. They did not hear any engine noise, but reported hearing a boom, which at first they thought was a car door slamming. Later, they reported observing intermittent plumes of what appeared to be white smoke rising from the Matterhorn Peak area and reported the sighting to the Mono Village staff. The Mono Village staff contacted the Mono County Sheriff's Office.

A SAR member was dispatched with an ELT (emergency locator transmitter) receiver which can hone in on an aircraft's emergency beacon, but no signal was detected. A deputy was dispatched with an infra-red heat detecting device but the results were inconclusive.

On October 1, 2013, three (3) SAR teams were sent into the field with ELT receivers to look for signals from various locations, including Tuolumne Meadows. CHP Helicopter H20 did an extensive air search of the area with no findings. Since no aircraft have been reported missing, or overdue, the search has been suspended. It is speculated that the objects seen may have been meteor fragments or space debris, and the plumes of smoke could have been steam generated from these objects hitting the glaciers or snow fields in the area.

Written and prepared by: Jennifer Hansen, Public Information Officer