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Dirtbiker spends night in woods - Rescuers find man who was lost in mountainous terrain

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Thomas Patrick Kandybe's dirtbike ride was ill-fated from the start.

The 54-year-old Redding man's first attempt Sunday morning ended with a flat tire. His second try resulted in a 45-person search and rescue mission.

A few blisters and sore legs from an estimated 20-mile hike were the extent of his injuries after spending more than 24 hours lost in the mountains west of Redding.

Kandybe was found about 2:15 p.m. Monday five miles northeast of French Gulch.

After switching bikes due to the flat, Kandybe set out about 11:30 a.m.

Sunday and was riding in an area west of Shasta Dam when he took a wrong turn and rode down a steep hill.

The hill was too steep to ride back up, so Kandybe began looking for alternative roads out.

When the avid rider was not home at 9 p.m. Sunday, his girlfriend, Susan Zanin, alerted police.

"She was freaking out, I guess," Kandybe said. "She called everyone." Kandybe spent the night walking through the rugged terrain to keep warm.

"Whenever I got tired, I laid down and got rested," he said, downplaying the ordeal.

He had some water with him but no food and no way to start a fire, Redding police said.

The risk of running into a tree or tripping over a boulder in the dark was more frightening than being lost, Kandybe said.

He described the adventure as "kind of fun." But in the next breath he said, "I wouldn't do it (again) next week." Kandybe tried to ride out again as morning approached but ran out of gas before finding his way.

The Shasta County Sheriff's Department launched a three-hour search for Kandybe about 11:30 a.m. Monday, a full day after his ride began.

Volunteers from Jeep Patrol, Mountain Rescue, Search and Rescue Dirt Riders, and some of Kandybe's friends from Redding Dirt Riders canvassed the roads while a California Highway Patrol helicopter patrolled the area from the sky.

Kandybe saw the helicopter three times in the distance Monday. He could hear riders on the roads around him.

Plans for a second day of searches were under way when a team of riders found Kandybe on a logging road near an area called Sheep's Camp, Redding police Sgt.

Paul Grooms said.

He was separated from his bike, which he had stashed in some brush for safekeeping.

It is unclear exactly which roads Kandybe had traveled.

"I just have to live it down," said Kandybe, who had been warned to always ride with a partner.

He is pretty sure the Redding Dirt Riders will honor him with the "Bad Break" award tonight at a monthly meeting.

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- Caption: Photo Caption: Thomas Kandybe

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