

April 20, 2004,
"State Police Conduct Second Air Search"
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Members of New Hampshire State Police Troop F were back in the air on Monday searching for Maura Murray. Murray disappeared the night of Feb. 9 after being involved in a one-car crash on Route 112 in Haverhill, about one mile east of Swiftwater.

A state police helicopter, hovering at treetop level, battled stiff winds Monday as passengers Detective Todd Landry and Lt. Wayne Fortier searched the ground below them. They slowly searched areas on both sides of Route 112. At times, it appeared the helicopter wasn't even moving as it hovered over a hilly area south of Murray's accident site.

School bus driver and nearby resident Butch Atwood was the last known person to see her alive. After the crash, he offered to call police and EMS for her, but he said she asked him not to. He went to his house anyway to call for help. Between the time he went the 100 yards to his house and the time Haverill Police Department Sgt. Cecil Smith arrived, Murray had disappeared. She hasn't been seen since.

Her cell phone, bank account and credit cards have not been used since the accident.

Troop F Lt. John Scarinza said Monday the helicopter team was searching an area that has been searched previously, but which until now had been covered by snow. The team searched the river area and Bradley Hill Road areas as well as other side roads.

"We certainly wanted to take this opportunity since the snow was off the ground," Scarinza said. He didn't know if the air search would continue today.

"It depends on how much area was covered," Scarinza said.

Flying at treetop level, investigators could see a lot of detail, he said, especially since the helicopter was flying so slow.

"It's time-consuming," Scarinza said, adding that investigators will search additional areas on foot. He didn't know when the ground search would be conducted, but believed it would be soon.

Not only state police, but also members of the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department will be taking part in the ground search. Area fire departments may also be called in to help search. Scarinza said investigators won't be asking for volunteers because the purpose of the search will be to locate any possible evidence.

Regarding psychic profiler Carla Baron, Scarinza said Troop F investigators have spoken to her about the Murray disappearance.

"We spoke with her several days before her TV special," he said, referring to the psychic's appearance on "Primetime" last week. "We in good faith did speak to her."