UMATILLA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

"Conservators of the Peace"

Sheriff Terry L. Rowan — Undersheriff Jim Littlefield

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: November 9, 2026

Agency: Umatilla County Sheriff's Office

Injured Hiker Rescued Near Harris Park Outside Milton-Freewater

MILTON-FREEWATER, OR — On the evening of November 8, 2026, the Umatilla County Sheriff's Office (UCSO), Milton-Freewater Rural Fire Department & EMS (MFRFD), and Umatilla County Search and Rescue (UMA SAR) conducted a coordinated backcountry rescue along the Walla Walla River Trail near Harris Park after two hikers fell down a steep embankment into the river.

MFRFD personnel were already on scene with Kathleen Mahony of College Place, Washington, who had managed to climb out of the river corridor, hike out, and call for emergency assistance at approximately 9 p.m. She reported that her hiking companion, Stephon Schulze, also of College Place, was injured and remained stranded in the river roughly two miles up the trail.

At MFRFD's request, UCSO responded to the scene and activated Search and Rescue to assist in locating and extricating the injured hiker.

UCSO Sgt. Adam Gregory, Deputy Cody Gray and MFRFD personnel hiked two miles up the trail and located Schulze at the bottom of an approximate 40-foot embankment. He had sustained a head injury, possible broken ribs, and exhibited symptoms of hypothermia. Due to the rugged terrain, distance from the trailhead, and limited radio communication, personnel utilized a rescue litter and rope system to raise Schulze 40 feet up the embankment to the trail.

Responders began carrying Schulze toward the trailhead, meeting incoming UMA SAR personnel midway to complete the extrication. At the trailhead, Schulze was transferred to awaiting medical personnel and airlifted by Life Flight to an area hospital for emergency treatment. Mahony was also transported to an area hospital for medical evaluation.

The success of this coordinated rescue was due to an excellent response by the MFRFD team. Thank you for the great partnership!

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