



**Flathead National Forest
Rocky Mountain Research Station**

NEWS RELEASE

September 21, 2004
8pm

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Kalispell, Mont. – Searchers located the crash site of a Kalispell based charter plane carrying a pilot and four Forest Service employees today in rugged Flathead National Forest backcountry, according to USDA Forest Service officials. No one survived the crash near Great Northern Mountain in northwest Montana.

The flight carried forest inventory and communications personnel bound for the Schafer Meadows Guard Station in the Bob Marshall Wilderness. Expected to reach the guard station at 3:30 pm yesterday, the last radio contact with the aircraft occurred at 3:15 pm. Flathead County Sheriff Jim DuPont confirmed the crash site location and five fatalities late Tuesday afternoon.

“From the air, it looked like the crash was not survivable.” Sheriff DuPont said. “We went in with paramedic and coroner assistance, just in case.” According to Sheriff DuPont, the crash investigation will be led by the National Transportation Safety Board. The Forest Service has also assigned an investigation team.

“Words cannot express the sorrow felt by the entire Forest Service family,” said Flathead National Forest Supervisor Cathy Barbouletos. “Our thoughts are with our former colleagues and their loved ones.” One passenger was Flathead forest electronics technician Ken Good, age 58, of Kalispell.

“The ‘office’ for our inventory technicians is the remote, challenging country where research plots are often located,” according to Marcia Patton-Mallory, Director of the Forest Service Rocky Mountain Station in Fort Collins, Colorado. Three station employees on the plane, all involved in forest inventory work, were the following: Ecologist Davita M. Bryant of Whitefish, MT, age 32; Forestry Technician Jodee L. Hogg of Billings, MT, age 23; and Forestry Technician Matthew Ramige of Jackson Hole, WY, age 29.

The pilot of the single engine Cessna 206 was identified as Jim Long of Kalispell, MT, age 60. Long was employed by Edwards Jet Center in Kalispell, the charter contractor.

Forest Service Supervisor Barbouletos said, “Our immediate focus will be care and compassion for the families of the crash victims and support for the Forest Service family.” The Forest Service will work in cooperation with the Flathead County Sheriff’s Office and National Transportation Safety Board in the accident investigation.

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