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Two bodies found on Sonoma County beach belong to missing counselors

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[Updated at 6:35 p.m.] SAN FRANCISCO - Two bodies found in sleeping bags on a Sonoma County beach were identified Thursday as two camp counselors reported missing earlier this week.

The bodies of Lindsay Cutshall, 23, of Ohio, and Jason Allen, 26, of Michigan, were discovered about three miles north of Jenner on Wednesday afternoon when sheriff's deputies were rescuing a stranded hiker, according to the Sonoma County Sheriff's Department.

Autopsies were planned for Friday to determine the cause, manner and approximate time of the deaths. Meanwhile, investigators continued to gather evidence at Fish Head Beach, part of the Sonoma Coast State Beach, where the bodies were discovered.

Their red 1993 Ford Tempo was found near the scene, parked on Highway 1, more than 200 feet above the beach. The vehicle was impounded as evidence.

The soon-to-be-married couple were spending the summer working at Rock-N-Water, a Christian adventure camp in Coloma, in the Sierra foothills about 50 miles east of Sacramento.

The two counselors were reported missing to the El Dorado County Sheriff's Department on Monday after they didn't return to camp. They were last seen around 8 p.m. Friday, when they said they were going to visit friends and would get back on Sunday, said Lt. Kevin House, spokesman for the El Dorado County Sheriff's Department.

"It was just completely out of character for them," House said. "They were always reliable and always conscientious in showing up to work on time."

Records show that at least one small item was purchased in San Francisco on Saturday afternoon with one of the counselors' credit cards, but it was unclear who made the purchase, House said.

Cutshall's parents, who made the initial missing persons report, were in Placerville waiting to hear news about their daughter Thursday, House said.

Authorities said the two bodies appeared to have been on the beach for more than 24 hours when they were spotted by a helicopter crew sent to rescue a 17-year-old Cotati boy, who had fallen about 50 feet while trying to retrieve a purse his girlfriend dropped.

The hiker, who was clinging to a rocky cliff when rescuers arrived, was pulled up by a paramedic attached to the helicopter by a 100-foot rope.

-- Associated Press

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