

Amherst woman lost all night in Bangor City Forest

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Searcher provides on scene medical support to subject.

BANGOR, Maine — A woman from Amherst ended up spending the night in the woods of the Bangor City Forest after she lost her way in Friday night's rainstorm, Sgt. Ralph Hosford of the Maine Warden Service said Saturday.

"She spent the night. She got caught in the storm," the sergeant said of Deborah Roche, 45.

Roche was located at around 7:15 a.m. Saturday by a tracking dog and handler Jen Fiske of Maine Search and Rescue Dogs.

"She was responsive, but not doing well," Hosford said. "She was suffering from severe hypothermia. It wasn't that cold, but it was wet. It was a miserable wet."

Roche was taken to Eastern Maine Medical Center and is expected to make a full recovery, he said.

Police began looking for Roche after she didn't show up for work in Bangor on Friday. Officers located her vehicle in the Bangor City Forest parking lot on Kittridge Road as the sun was setting, but she was nowhere to be found, Hosford said.

"There are oodles of trails that go in every direction," he said.

Search dogs from Bangor police and Penobscot County Sheriff's Department arrived to look for Roche but encountered several obstacles, including the heavy, cold rain, dark skies and several run-ins with porcupines, Hosford said.

Bangor's mobile command post was set up at the end of Kittridge Road Friday night, and local firefighters joined in the search with game wardens.

Word quickly spread to several volunteer search groups that help was needed, which brought out Maine Search and Rescue, Unity College Search and Rescue, Dirigo Search and Rescue, Down East Emergency Medicine Institute and Maine Search and Rescue Dogs, Hosford said.

"It was the dog's first find," he said. "It was a pretty proud moment."

Roche, who had rolled herself up into a ball in an attempt to stay warm, was found on one of the City Forest's many trails, Hosford said.

"It's always good to to bring someone home," he said.