

Forest plane missing

By [Chery Sabol](#)

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A Forest Service-contracted plane was listed as missing Monday night in the Flathead Valley, and planning for a search this morning was under way.

Aboard the Cessna 206 G was an Edwards Jet Center pilot, three U.S. Forest Service Rocky Mountain Research Station employees from Ogden, Utah, and one Flathead National Forest employee, according to the Forest Service.

The last contact with the plane was at about 3:15 p.m. Monday, according to Flathead County Sheriff Jim Dupont.

The plane is on contract to the Forest Service from Edwards Jet Center, according to Denise Germann, public information for the Flathead National Forest.

The plane left Glacier Park International Airport at about 3 p.m., heading to the Schafer Meadows Guard Station, where workers planned an annual vegetation inventory and repair of telecommunications repeater sites in the area, Germann said.

The plane was due to arrive at 3:30 p.m. at a grass landing strip close to the guard station, east of Bigfork on the boundary of the Great Bear-Bob Marshall Wilderness area.

An "all pilots alert" was issued by the Great Falls Flight Service Center.

A search was begun and abandoned Monday when bad weather interrupted.

"We're going to regroup in the morning," Dupont said. The Aeronautics Division of the Montana Department of Transportation will be in charge of the air search, he said.

Tom Snyder, search-and-rescue coordinator for the Flathead County Sheriff's Office, said members of North Valley Search and Rescue were warned Monday night that they would be on standby this morning.

Snyder said the U.S. Air Force had been notified of the missing craft.

There was no transmission from an electronic locator device to help searchers track the plane.