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Lost hikers rescued from remote wilderness

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**HAYWOOD COUNTY, N.C.** — Two hikers lost in a remote part of Haywood County have been rescued after a difficult search in a remote area of Haywood County.

The hikers called 911 Friday and reported being lost, according to Haywood County Search and Rescue.

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The male hikers, whose ages and names have not been released, started hiking at midday Thursday at the Big East Fork trailhead in the Shining Rock Wilderness area, Dona Stewart with Haywood County Search and Rescue, said.

Stewart said a ground search was launched immediately after the hikers called, and it continued since, including overnight.

The hikers were able to make another 911 call for a few seconds Saturday morning indicating that they were still lost, but they had a fire burning.

Stewart said the hikers were located just after 6 p.m. Saturday and have been airlifted and are being transported to an area hospital.

Helicopter belonging to The North Carolina State Highway Patrol, Mountain Area Medical Airlift and NCHART (North Carolina Helicopter and Aquatic Rescue Team), aided in locating and extracting the hikers.

No additional information on their condition is expected this evening.

North Carolina Emergency Management Director Mike Sprayberry dispatched four mountain rescue teams on Saturday to assist in the rescue.

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The Shining Rock Wilderness covers 18,483 acres and has numerous rivers, creeks, waterfalls and streams, and five mountain peaks that rise more than 6,000 feet.

The Big East Fork Trail is designated as a difficult hike.

The high temperature Saturday in Waynesville, the nearest city, was 20, with an overnight low of 0. The temperature and wind chill in the mountains is several degrees colder.



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