



Snohomish County Sheriff's Office **News Release**



Snohomish County Sheriff's Office

John R. Lovick, Sheriff

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE All Media 05/20/2012

(425) 339-5700 Breaking News Pager

Wallace Falls River Rescue UPDATE

Gold Bar, WA

At 1:36 AM this morning, the Snohomish County Sheriff's Office Search And Rescue (SAR) Unit and Gold Bar Fire successfully rescued a thirteen year old Burien, Washington boy from the rocks above Wallace Falls, in Gold Bar, Washington.

The incident began around 5:00 pm on Saturday evening when the boy was hiking with his father and his father's friend. The boy was wading in Wallace River when he slipped on the rocks and went into the water. The boy then went over a ten foot waterfall before he was able to scramble to a rock **ledge, beneath a large overhanging rock**, just prior to going over the main **270 foot waterfall**. By the time rescuers arrived, the boy was wet and crouching on the rock, that was about one foot wide.

The rescue was especially difficult as an overhead rock face restricted a clear vertical decent from the helicopter. **Two rescuers were lowered by the helicopter hoist at a spot about 200 yards below the boy's location. They then climbed up to a spot above the overhanging rock above the boy.**

The first rescuer rappelled down by rope in order to try and reach the boy under the rock overhang. The friction of the rock caused the rope to break and the rescuer fell to the river. The rescuer was saved from going over the falls by his belay (secondary) line. The rescuer made it to the river bank safely.

Additional rescuers were deployed up-river and they eventually made it to the area adjacent to the boy. **While rigging was set-up**, they were able to throw clothes and food to the boy, to help mitigate his hypothermia. At 1:36 AM, he was finally removed from the rock and the ten rescuers camped overnight with him until they were flown from the area by helicopter using an **Airborne Tactical Extraction Platform**

suspended 80 feet below the helicopter at 6 AM this morning. The boy did not require medical treatment at the scene, but was going to be checked later today by a physician.

Final 05/20/12 Update provided at 1422 Hours – Lt. Susy Johnson

Note: Rescuers have secured for the day. Additional information is expected to be available Monday, May 21, if requested.

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