News Release
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Search efforts continue for missing Nebraska man

KŌKE’E – Search efforts continued on Monday for 23-year-old Samuel Martinez of Lincoln, Nebraska, who is still missing.

About two dozen people from the Kaua’i Police Department, the Kaua’i Fire Department—including an Air-1 pilot and personnel from Rescue 3—the Department of Land and Natural Resources, Kaua’i Civil Air Patrol, and Kaua’i Search and Rescue, continued their land and air search operation from about 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Kōke’e State Park near the Kōke’e Lodge was once again used as a landing zone for the numerous aerial checks conducted by Air-1.

Many acres of land were once again searched by foot and air in Kōke’e and Waimea state parks. The areas traversed on Monday included several trails, such as the top ridges of Nu’alolo and Miloli’i.

Kalalau Beach and its campgrounds were also searched, as well as combing through an unmarked trail in a grid-like pattern that starts at the back of Kalalau Valley and leads up to the top of the ridge near the Kalalau Lookout. Additionally, Miloli’i Beach was searched, as well as its valley. The bottom of Waimea Valley to the top of Koai’e Canyon were also traversed.

KFD personnel also drove ATVs through the entire Waimea Valley, including the area near Kukui Trail, and spoke with campers and hunters along the way.

Air-1 also searched the entire Polihale side of Kōke’e.
Investigators were able to track cell phone pings from Martinez’s cell phone at about 4:40 p.m. on May 12 in the vicinity of Waimea Canyon Drive Road. The last ping obtained from his cell phone was around 8:20 p.m. in the same general area of Waimea and Kōkeʻe state parks. Cell phone data was run through the Federal Bureau of Investigation, as well as Civil Air Patrol’s Air Force Rescue Coordination Center.

“Unfortunately, we haven’t found any sign of Mr. Martinez throughout our searches. We also haven’t encountered anyone who has accurately identified him and his whereabouts,” said Investigative Services Bureau Assistant Chief Bryson Ponce. “At this point, there are several possibilities that could have taken place, especially on an island with dangerous terrain in places like Waimea Canyon and Kōkeʻe State Park trails, but we are still hoping for the best.”

Without any further leads, the aerial search for Martinez has been suspended. However, volunteers from Kauaʻi Search and Rescue plan to continue ground search efforts tomorrow.

“I want to once again thank all of the people who showed up during the holiday weekend to help with this search operation,” said Ponce. “We have so many caring people in our community doing everything they can to help bring this young man home.”

Anyone with information about Martinez’s whereabouts on Kauaʻi is urged to call KPD at 241-1711. Those who wish to remain anonymous can report a tip to Crime Stoppers Kauaʻi at 246-8300 or cskauai.org.
Search efforts to find a missing Nebraska man continued on Monday.

Some of the flight paths taken during Monday’s search operation.