



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™
MS AGRICULTURAL AND FORESTRY
EXPERIMENT STATION

MAFES DAWG TRACKS

Have you ever gotten lost? I have, and it is not fun especially when you notice the sun starting to set.

You may think that people on long, multi-day expeditions through the wilderness get lost most often, but this is not true. It is actually day-hikers who Search & Rescue are routinely activated to find. Maybe you are hunting on an unfamiliar acreage or exploring a trail in a remote area. For a work application, this can easily be applied to an individual out performing field research.

BEFORE YOU GO:

- Tell someone, responsible & trusted, where you are going and the route you plan to take – the more specific the better.
- Tell this person a timeframe of when you should return, at what point they should notify authorities to come looking for you, and who to call.
- Pack what you may need or could end up needing. A lot of thought should go into this, with priority depending on the current weather conditions & forecast.

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IF YOU DO GET LOST:

- Call & text for help early (Do you know who & how?) Even if you do not have cell service, it may go through eventually. But if you wait until later, beware that nighttime conditions change everything for the one lost & the rescuer. A rescue can always be called-off, so don't wait.
- Get to a clearing and stay in place. Fifty percent of searches are resolved within 3 hours and 54% of lost people are found within 2 miles of where they were last seen. It is best to stay in place because there is a 93% chance of survival, with only 52% chance if you attempt to self-rescue.

The only time you should continue hiking to "find your way out", is if nobody knows where you are & it may be a long time before rescue or if you are in a dangerous environment.

What direction should you go if continue?

- Downhill and close to a water source.

The reasoning for downhill is this is the area of most old roads/trails are made and will eventually lead to another road and help. Even the most remote location in the lower 48 of United States (within Yellowstone) is only 22 miles from a road.

A water source is always important, but even more so during hot conditions. Death from dehydration is a bigger risk than death from infected water.

Sources:

Survival Med webinar "What Search & Rescue Needs You to Know"