**Media Release**

Date: April 18, 2023

From: Crystal Levitt, Chief of Police

Warm Springs Police Department

Subject: Missing Person Located

On March 5, 2023 the Warm Springs Police Department (WSPD) received a report of a missing person Lee Johnson.  Mr. Johnson was reported to be last seen on the morning of March 4, 2023 leaving his home in the Seekseequa area to go cut firewood.  Mr. Johnson did not return home and had missed plans to meet with family later in the evening on the 4th.

Several days of searching in the areas of Gray Butte/Juniper Butte (Jefferson County) and the Seekseequa area of the Warm Springs Indian Reservation provided many leads, however due to weather conditions in early March, the search had to be suspended for safety reasons.  Multiple teams and persons came to assist with the search for Mr. Johnson.

The Warm Springs Police Department would like to extend a gracious thank you for the assistance in this search to our surrounding neighbors and local resources: Deschutes County Sheriff’s Office Search and Rescue, Jefferson County Sheriff’s Office Search and Rescue, Crook County Sheriff’s Office Search and Rescue, Wasco County Sheriff’s Office Search and Rescue, Aloft Drones, North Sherman County Fire, the Federal Bureau of Investigations, Jensen Huffman and team, Warm Springs Fisheries, Warm Spring Branch of Natural Resources, Warm Springs Emergency Management, Warm Springs Health and Human Services, Missing Murdered Indigenous Relatives (MMIR), along with the citizens of Warm Springs and Jefferson County who came out to assist in the search mission.

As the weather improved several searches continued in the area of where Mr. Johnson went missing, over the weekend of April 14, 2023 the Aloft Drone team came out again, to fly the search area and provided information to WSPD on April 17th indicating a body had been located. WSPD and WSFS went to the location provided by the drone and were able to identify and recover the body of the missing Mr. Johnson.

Although tragedy is never the outcome we hope for in these circumstances, we are thankful to have been able to locate the Johnson family’s loved one, so he can be laid to rest in a good way.  Our heartfelt condolences go out to the Johnson family, as they continue to walk on in the absence of their loved one.