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Sheriff: Mystery surrounds case of missing Colorado hikers

No sign of father-daughter team who planned to trek Missouri Mountain on June



Courtesy Paul Kasemir

Makana, 20, and Michael Von Gortler, 53. Father-daughter pair have been missing in Colorado mountains for more than a week.

NBC News and news services

Mystery surrounds why search teams have been unable to find a father and daughter who went missing during a hiking trip in the Colorado mountains, a Colorado sheriff said Friday.

Chaffee County Sheriff Pete Palmer said Dr. Michael Von Gortler, 53, and his daughter, 20-year-old Makana, a University of Colorado student, went to hike up Missouri Mountain on June 22.

The last time they were heard from was when

Makana texted her boyfriend on June 21 to say they were going hiking, Palmer said. The pair were due to return home June 23.

Missouri Mountain is in the San Isabel National Forest near Buena Vista, Colo. At 14,073 feet high, the peak is one of 53 mountains in the state over 14,000 ft.

Search teams were out in masses, with climbers hoping for a sign on Friday. Searchers have covered at least 800 square miles trying to find the pair, Palmer said.

Investigators planned to meet with family members later Friday to find out whether they needed to look into other possibilities or directions in their efforts, NBC News reported.

Authorities examined their truck mileage and credit card records and found nothing suspicious.

Family and friends described Mike von Gortler, an emergency room doctor, as an experienced hiker who liked to travel off the beaten path.

[Story: Sheriff says no sign of missing Colorado hikers](#)

He has written several articles for niche publications and in one included some personal background.

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"Mike von Gortler is a middle-aged but active guy," he wrote for [BackpackingLight.com](#) in 2006. "The pursuit of wild chanterelles and other edible mountain plants keeps him moving through the uplands while keeping an eye out for the wildlife and wildflowers. Several times a year he can be found atop a Fourteener with his teenage daughter or some friends."

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