



BRAD THURMAN, SHERIFF

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PRESS RELEASE
A25-247 MISSING PERSON INVESTIGATION
APRIL 15, 2026

On April 12, 2026, Cowlitz County residents were hiking on Weyerhaeuser property near Rose Valley Rd and the 1600 line. During their hike they came across clothing and 2 bones. They notified authorities and a photo of the bones was sent to a forensic anthropologist who identified the bones as human.

Detectives from the Cowlitz County Sheriff's Office attempted to reach the remains that night but due to the location and late hour, they could not. On April 13th Detective James Hanberry coordinated a search with the Cowlitz County Coroner's Office and Cowlitz County Search and Rescue. One of the men who had found the remains led the search party to the area. Nearly complete skeletal remains were located as well as multiple items of clothing and personal belongings.

This location was in the middle of an area that Det. Hanberry had identified, through diligent investigation and interviews, as an area of interest in the disappearance of Hailey Athay. Prior searches had been conducted near this area, but no evidence had been recovered.

The remains were turned over to the Cowlitz County Coroner's Office. An analysis by a forensic anthropologist will be completed to determine the cause of death.

A forensic odontologist examined the recovered skull and compared the teeth to dental records for Athay. The odontologist was able to make a positive comparison and identified the remains as those of Hailey Athay.

The exact location will not be released at this time as this remains an active investigation pending cause and manner of death.

Undersheriff Troy Brightbill
Cowlitz County Sheriff's Office

COWLITZ COUNTY



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SHERIFF'S OFFICE

BRAD THURMAN, SHERIFF

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