

Gastonia Police Department

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Additional units join search for missing boy

The search for a missing 6-year-old boy continued through the night at Gastonia's Rankin Lake Park with units searching on foot and with search dogs. Drones were also employed as part of the nighttime search. Preparation is underway to begin the search again on the lake and in the surrounding area. The little boy, Maddox Scott Ritch, was with his father and another adult when he disappeared. He is autistic and non-verbal.

Additional units from around the region have joined the search with hundreds of law enforcement and search and rescue teams involved. State and federal authorities are also involved in the search. Gastonia Police are asking the public to stay away from the area surrounding the park as they continue their search in surrounding neighborhoods and other areas.

The park is closed to the public today with all scheduled activities being cancelled.

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See attachment for updated photo of missing boy.