



## News Release – For Immediate Release August 15, 2019

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### **Fire Services rescues dog from ledge on Red Willow River, reunited with family**

A chance sighting while responding to another incident resulted in a dog named Toby, who had been missing for almost a week, being rescued from a ledge along the Red Willow River on Wednesday.

“Crews were attending a call at the site where the Red Willow and Wapiti Rivers meet when one of the firefighters noticed a dog on the ledge,” said Dan Verdun, fire chief for County of Grande Prairie Regional Fire Service. “The firefighter noted the dog appeared to be stranded and was unable to get back up to level ground or down to the river.”

After dealing with the original call, the Regional Fire Service dispatched its high angle rescue team to assist. They were supported by Grovedale Fire and Wembley Fire who were able to provide a watercraft, which transported firefighters and enforcement services members to the site given the remote location on the river.

“Once we crossed the river, it took an hour and a half of hiking to find a location where we could rig rope rescue equipment to access Toby, who was stranded on a sandstone outcropping cliff,” said Mike Shykora, fire captain. “After he was secured, we brought him back down 80 feet to the awaiting boat and back to the staging area.”

With Toby rescued, the next step was to find his home. Thanks to social media, Fire Services was able to locate his owners and reunite him with his family, which included two young children, ages three and six, who were overjoyed and relieved that their friend had been found.

“The County of Grande Prairie is thrilled that such a happy reunion could take place with the return of Toby to his family,” said Verdun. “We value strong regional partnerships and could not have executed this rescue without the assistance of Grovedale and Wembley Fire Departments and County of Grande Prairie Regional Enforcement Services.”

“We would also like to thank County of Grande Prairie Council for their unwavering support of our service and enabling our members to continue to train to high levels so we can have positive outcomes to incidents like this.”

Toby was last seen on August 7 at Spring Lake, over 100 km away from where he was rescued and was reported missing on Facebook by his family. Firefighters suspect he survived by drinking water from a small puddle on the ledge.

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