

# Colorado cold case solved: Missing Washington woman ID'd as Windy Point Jane Doe



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DENVER — It was a mystery that baffled investigators and a Colorado community for nearly 30 years—Who was Windy Point Jane Doe?

That question was recently answered and now a Washington-state family can seek closure thanks to familial DNA analysis, the Montrose County Sheriff's Office announced Wednesday.

Windy Point Jane Doe was identified last month as Susan Hoppes, a 45-year-old woman who was reported missing from Peirce County, Washington on Aug. 9, 1993.

About a year after she disappeared, hikers discovered her partial skeletal remains in Montrose County on July 7, 1994. She was found on the Uncompahgre Plateau near the Smokehouse Campground on Divide Road, commonly called "Windy Point."

Her cause of death is unknown, but the case is being investigated as a homicide, according to the sheriff's office. Authorities believe Hoppes was brought to Windy Point after her death. She suffered from temporomandibular joint syndrome and scoliosis based on an examination of the remains.

After the 1994 discovery, the Montrose County Sheriff's Office began an extensive investigation, which included the creation of a facial approximation bust that was released to the public in hopes that someone would recognize her, but that didn't garner the leads they were hoping for.

Then in August of 2020, investigators with the sheriff's office learned of new technology in forensic genetic genealogy, which uses family members' DNA to identify unknown individuals.

Soon after, a sample of Hoppes' DNA was given to the Colorado Bureau of Investigation, and they began the process of searching databases for a match.

On April 19, 2022, Montrose County investigators received a call they were waiting 28 years for. A CBI analyst was on the other end and told them they had some "really good news" and confirmed that Windy Point Jane Doe was Susan Hoppes, according to an MCSO news release.

Montrose County Coroner Dr. Thomas M. Canfield has made notification of next of kin to the Hoppes family. And on Tuesday, MCSO Commander Ted Valerio left for Peirce County, Washington to learn more about the woman who has been on the minds of investigators for nearly three decades.

"Over the past 28 years there have been several investigators from different Law Enforcement agencies that were involved with the case of " Windy Point Jane Doe." It is truly remarkable that technology was able to give closure to the family of Susan Hoppes and to all that was involved in the case. It has always been a goal to determine who she

was and what actually happened to her. It has taken a huge team effort and a lots of cooperation from multiple law enforcement agencies,” the Montrose County Sheriff’s Office said in a statement.

Although an identity has been made, several other questions remain. It's not known when or if additional details will be released.