

# Major Case Squad finds remains likely those of missing person Joseph Wilson

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**BUNKER HILL** – The skeletal remains of a young male found on Feb. 15, off Illinois Route 159, south of Royal Lakes have not been positively identified as those of **Joseph Wilson**, but investigators are considering that as a strong possibility.

The Macoupin County Sheriff's Office responded to the area in Royal Lakes after the discovery of human skeletal remains by teenagers playing in the woods. The teenagers reportedly made the discovery and told their parents, who in turn called the sheriff's office.

"Evidence discovered at the scene by investigators from the Macoupin County Sheriff and Coroner's Offices led them to believe the individual likely died as the result of a homicide," Major Case Squad spokesperson Thomas Dixon said in a release.

"The Major Case Squad of Greater St. Louis was activated and investigated the discovery," he said. "The Major Case Squad conducted the investigation out of the Bunker Hill Police Department. The identity of the victim is still unknown, but an initial examination of the remains by a forensic pathologist and an Illinois State Police anthropologist suggests the remains are that of an African American male."

In the spring of 2012 the Macoupin County Sheriff's Office took a report of a missing person in the area just north of the site where the skeletal remains were discovered, Dixon added. That missing person was identified as Joseph Wilson, who was 24 years of age at the time of his disappearance.

**Macoupin County Coroner Brad Targetta** worked in conjunction with the Major Case Squad and is coordinating D.N.A. extraction and identification efforts as they related to the skeletal remains.

Dixon said this particular Major Case Squad investigation was massive in its scope.

"A total of 21 Major Case Squad Investigators, from 19 different police, sheriff's, and coroner's offices aided in the investigation," he said. "More than 50 leads were investigated in the five-day activation. The Illinois State Police Forensic Crime Services Unit and the all-volunteer St. Louis Gateway Search Dogs Unit played a large role in processing and searching the discovery site. The search effort took two days and covered a large rural wooded area south of Royal Lakes, Illinois."

Macoupin County State Attorney Jennifer Watson worked closely with the Major Case Squad during the activation, and has been briefed on the investigative findings, Dixon said. "Those findings include information related to the disappearance of Wilson. Further investigative or possible criminal proceedings are pending the results of the D.N.A. identification efforts."

The Major Case Squad as well as Macoupin County Sheriff Shawn Kahl thanked the residents of Royal Lakes and Bunker Hill for their cooperation and assistance in this investigation.