



Hikers disoriented in white-out

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Cucamonga Peak
1978-013

By Ed Hill

On March 29th Mark Forwalter and John Wytso decided to climb Cucamonga Peak by the south east ridge. They planned to stay on the summit and hike down via Ice House Canyon the next day.

A storm moved in Wednesday evening and dropped three to four feet of snow, and reduced visibility to only a few feet.

On Sunday, April 2, RMRU was invited by the boys' parents to join the search. We were to concentrate on the steep, loose, south face of Cucamonga Peak. The San Bernardino Sheriff's teams would cover Ice House Canyon and the northern slopes. We decided to send a strong team of six men up the route the climbers had planned to take.

Just as our men started up the ridge the Sheriff reported that the climbers had walked out of Ice House Canyon. They were in good shape considering that they were two days overdue.

Talking to the climbers later I learned that they had made the summit Wednesday evening and had camped on it. Thursday they were in a "white-out" condition and had dropped down the upper reaches of Lytle Creek by mistake.

Saturday morning it had cleared enough for them to recognize where they were and they climbed up to Ice House saddle from the east. Sunday they had simply hiked down the floor of Ice House Canyon, by-passing the Sheriff's teams who were on the trail on the north wall.

RMRU is a volunteer search and rescue team that covers Riverside County and assists other teams with search and rescue efforts in other counties. Each member purchases their own equipment and takes time off work, without compensation, to participate in search and rescue missions. Team equipment is purchased from contributions from the community. We are a non-profit organization and are funded by [donations](#) from people like you.