

Young couple overdue

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Santa Rosa Mtns
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By Ed Hill

Deep Creek runs from behind the Sugarloaf Cafe on Highway 74 in Nightingale down to the Desert Research Center near Palm Desert. The upper part of the canyon is a pleasant walk, the lower is a slot cut deep into the rock filled with boulders and small waterfalls. There are two large waterfalls near the upper end of the lower part. The canyon is a favorite haunt of Desert Bighorns who roam the steep rocky walls.

On Sunday, June 25th, a young couple was dropped off at the Sugarloaf Cafe. They planned to hike down the canyon to the Research Center. When they failed to appear that evening, RMRU was called. I rolled up to the cafe in the wee hours of the morning and was told that Bernie McIlvoy, Steve Jensen and I would go down Deep Creek looking for tracks. Jim Fairchild and John Dew would act as relays for us as we got deeper into the canyon. We had no trouble finding tracks in the sandy parts of the creek bed. We found quite a bit of water in the creek. We hiked until 4:00 am and bivouacked in the sand until dawn.

At first light, we were up and tracking. We hit the first big waterfall and could see tracks at the bottom of it. At this time a helicopter was searching the canyon. So we asked if we could be leap-frogged down the canyon. We were flown to the lower end, and we started hiking up the canyon looking for tracks. We found nothing that looked like what we had seen in the upper part. In this part of the canyon we had to swim pools and swarm up small waterfalls to make progress upstream.

Meanwhile a team from the Hemet Search and Rescue Unit had been sent to the Desert Research Station to see if they could find any sign of them. While they were looking, Ted and Dianne walked up and asked for a ride.

It turned out that Ted and Dianne had walked down the canyon to the first waterfall and then hiked south over the ridge into Coyote Canyon which is easier going. At the mouth



Jim Fairchild

RMRU members Bernie McIlvoy, Ed Hill and Steve Jensen left base camp with fully loaded call-out packs.

of Coyote Canyon, they had gone north to the Research Station.

We were flown out from the south rim of the canyon, and enjoyed a good lunch at the Sugarloaf Cafe.

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.