

Hiker fell and injured his back

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By Kevin Walker

Just as I was finishing my lunch hour (that was a first) my dad, Walt Walker, came in with news of a rescue in the Snow Creek area. While we were driving to the roadhead, located near the Snow Creek community, Walt told me that two men in their early twenties were hiking up Falls Creek, when one of the men fell off a lower portion of the large water fall and injured his lower back area, needless to say he was unable to make it out on his own.

Walt and I were the first to arrive at the roadhead. Shortly after that Capt. Ray Canova arrived with the informant. With all information and gear packed, Walt and I climbed into Don Landells' waiting jet Ranger and headed towards Falls Creek. With the temperature climbing into the 112 - 115° range combined with rough air, Don was unable to make the ol' chopper fly slow in the canyon, so making tight orbits over the falls we proceeded to look for a place to set down. While doing so, Walt spotted the man on a boulder near the edge of one of the many cascades that make up Falls Creek. Don was unable to find a place near the hiker, so ... up to the ridge. There was just too much turbulence in the area to set down in the canyon.

As Don headed for base, Walt and I made our way down a (correction: the only) chute leading to the canyon floor. It didn't take long in descending the narrow chute, but we knew if we had to indeed transport the man back up, it would take a long time ' because everything from gravel to fifty pound boulders were loose, and with our help, on the move. As we neared the bottom of the chute we came across what would be our only problem of the day. It was a pair of boulders (automobile-size)



Jim Fairchild

WATER BREAK - It was quite painful for the young hiker to sit down to rest, after failing earlier in a sitting position.

lodged in our way. I then set up a belay, and Walt climbed down past the boulders. just as Walt said, "off belay" a large rock cut loose from above and tumbled down past me and over the edge where Walt had just descended.

After all of the debris stopped sliding, I yelled down to try and get a response. Walt called back up in Chinese to find out what was going on. Luckily he had ducked under an overhang and the rock went on past him. Walt told me to stand by while he went down to check on the young hiker. Jim Fairchild had just called from base camp asking for men and equipment assignments, when to my surprise, Walt and the hiker had returned to the base of the boulder and were ready to be helped back up. Walt said that we would need four more men and call-out ropes.



Jim Fairchild

SAFE TRIP OUT - Bob Savage (background) mans the belay as the bruised up hiker makes his way up the hillside with Walt Walker following.

After that, things went real well, the young man was just very, very sore (I mean considering) and was able to wait. Once help arrived, we assisted the hiker back to hard-resting Don Landells and his chopper. A couple flights out and ... mission complete. One fatality though, a call-out rope slightly crunched, thanks to one particular rock.

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.