

Man injured back sliding on snow

December 29, 1982
Devil Slide Trail
1982-044

By Joe Erickson

We were called to Idyllwild to rescue an individual with an injured back on the Devil's Slide Trail. The trail switch-backs up the steep slopes and in many sections a hiker can see the trail criss-crossing below. Many imprudent hikers will cut trail taking a short cut to the next portion of trail. Robert Schuppe and Michael Schuppe were hiking own the trail midday. Robert decided to slide down the icy snow, on his rear, until he came to an uncomfortable stop in a gully.

Complaining of back pain and apparently unable to help himself out, his friend made his way to him injuring himself slightly. A woman and man were day hiking and came across the injured hiker and brother. They helped as best they could, making a bit of shelter with a tarp, they got a small fire going near him. The weather was getting nastier so the woman continued down. to get help.

And help she got. Some members of the U.S. Forest Service hiked up to aid this young man. He was made as comfortable as possible and they got another fire going to warm the rest of the folks.

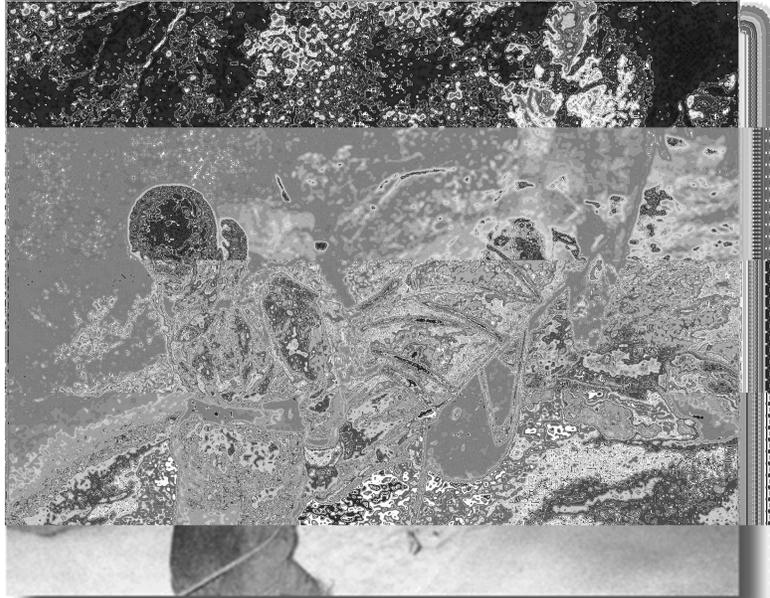
RMRU was called around 3 p.m. We zoomed up to Humber Park hoping to get this guy down and out of the increasing weather. We couldn't make it to the trailhead because the snow was accumulating pretty quick.

The sheriff's deputy drove Kevin Walker, Craig Beasley and I in his 4WD to Humber Park - where we started hiking into what was alternating rain, sleet and snow.

We had called for extra help from the associate members due to a low turn out of members. (The low turn out because many members were still on their way home from the previous two missions.)

As Craig, Kevin and I rounded a turn we could finally see a fire up ahead and hurried on to the scene. What we saw was some cold people trying to warm up and dry off by a good sized fire on the trail. The subject was down maybe 30 feet in a small gully; clothes, sleeping bags, tarps stuffed around him in an effort to keep him warm. Water and some debris were flowing past him further complicating his predicament.

In first aid classes people learn to not move someone with back injuries unnecessarily, but after assessing the situation, Kevin, Craig and I decided this guy was in more danger and discomfort from the cold and wet than from his injuries. We examined him and decided that with his help and much of his own effort we could walk him up to the trail where we had a warm sleeping bag and some shelter on a platform waiting. In ten minutes his wet clothes were off and dry ones on and himself in the sleeping bag.



Jim Fairchild

ICY WHEEL OUT - RMRU members Glenn Henderson and Craig Beasley guide the litter containing Robert Schuppe with possible back injuries down the Devil Slide trail. As they do so they are belayed at both ends by fellow members to prevent slipping on the icy trail.

We had help putting him in the wheeled litter and we all took turns carrying/ wheeling him down the trail and out to an awaiting ambulance.

We went by the hospital after eating a meal and he was being released. He walked to a motel where he and his brother were to be picked up the next day by family members.

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.