

## Lost 16-year-old male

**June 21, 1983**  
**Tahquitz Drainage**  
**1983-022**

By John Dew

A group of 7 teenagers with two adult leaders had arrived at Skunk Cabbage Meadow in the afternoon of Monday for the beginning of a 3 day trip. That evening Patrick Pacherco, a 16 year old, went exploring on his own but didn't return. He was last seen about 6:30 p.m. By 9:00 p.m. the group began searching for Patrick and ran into RMRU member Joe Erickson who coincidentally was camping in Skunk Cabbage Meadow with another group of teenagers. After further searching with Joe's guidance, which was unsuccessful, one of the adult leaders hiked down to Idyllwild to get help.

After the call from the sheriff's office, RMRU team members assembled in the wee hours of Tuesday in Idyllwild to sift through the available information and plan strategy. Patrick had said he was going down to a river when he was last seen. The Skunk Cabbage Meadow area drains toward Caramba and the treacherous Tahquitz Canyon. On the basis of previous experience it was felt that Patrick might try to follow the river out of the wilderness and end up in Caramba. As soon as dawn broke Jim Fairchild and Bill Blaschko were flown by helicopter to where the subject had last been seen. Meanwhile a second team consisting of Randy Iwasiuk and Cameron Robbins were flown to Caramba, the direction the subject was believed to be heading. John Dew remained in Idyllwild to coordinate activity while Joe Erickson was stationed at Saddle Junction to relay radio messages between base camp and the search teams. John Dew called the Sierra Madre Search and Rescue team for backup since so few RMRU members were available.

Jim and Bill worked down from Skunk Cabbage Meadow through scattered patches of snow and finally picked up some fresh tracks that led to the established trail to Caramba. Analysis of the tracks indicated that the subject had come up the trail toward Skunk Cabbage Meadow for a while but had then turned around and gone back in the direction of Caramba. Randy and Cameron in the meantime were questioning campers in Caramba and working their way up toward Skunk Cabbage Meadow.

At the halfway point between Skunk Cabbage Meadow and Caramba, Patrick was found by Jim Fairchild and Bill Blaschko. Over some breakfast Pat described spending a cold and largely sleepless night. He had found the trail but hadn't been

sure which way to go on it (just as had been surmised by the tracking information). Five members of the Sierra Madre team arrived in Idyllwild just as the subject was found. Their response was greatly appreciated even though they were not actually needed in the field. Patrick was in good condition and had an uneventful hike back to rejoin his group who were waiting anxiously at Skunk Cabbage Meadow. The search team members hiked down Devil's Slide Trail under clear blue skies, enjoying the scenery with the satisfaction of a mission completed.

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.