



Lost hiker in winter storm conditions

January 26, 1997
Willow Creek Drainage
1997-006

This would prove to be one of the major searches of the year. A lone hiker set out Saturday in unstable weather, without map or compass, intent on exploring the San Jacinto Peak area. Weather deteriorated and the hiker was instantly in white-out conditions. Disoriented he entered the Willow Creek drainage. Fortunately, he was carrying a cell phone and called for help. RMRU responded late morning on Sunday and put several teams in the field. Blowing snow, poor visibility, and high winds made the search extremely difficult. All signs/tracks were obscured. As daylight faded all Team efforts came up empty. Monday dawned clear as helicopters joined in the search. About 1:00pm, an RMRU team found faint tracks in Willow Creek and then found one of the hiker's snowshoes. In less than half an hour a helicopter, following the drainage, located the man. He was cable raised into the chopper and transported to a near by hospital in remarkably good condition. More than 800 man-hours went into this rescue.

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.