

## Hikers tried to do a four day hike in two days

**November 8, 1999**  
**Whitewater Canyon**  
**UTM 11S 526274, 3764910, NAD27 CONUS**  
**1999-025**

By

Two hikers had help planning their trip from a Forrest Ranger who said it would take about two days to complete the hike. Well, it may have looked good on a map, but it was completely different when they got there. They started their hike in San Gorgonio and planned on hiking down cross-country to the upper section of Whitewater Canyon, then over to the saddle near Kitching Peak and down to the trailhead where their wives were waiting.

The wives waited at the trailhead during the afternoon. They waited as the sun set and continued waiting until about midnight when they decided to drive down and call for help. RMRU's pagers went off in the early hours of Monday morning and we were at the trailhead well before sunrise. The weather was good throughout the weekend but now a frontal system started to let out a light rain at the trailhead.

Fortunately, the two men did something we wish all people would do before hiking. They left a map that was marked with their intended route with their wives. After looking at the map, we determined that it would take much more than two days to travel due to the extreme nature of the off trail hiking. We also knew that, if they were still on their intended route, we would find them somewhere in the middle. The plan was to have San Bernardino County search and rescue teams start from San Gorgonio and head south, following their intended route and we would do the same, heading north from our end.

In the afternoon, the weather cleared in the Whitewater Canyon area and San Bernardino Sheriff's helicopters began searching from the air. They soon spotted the missing hikers only a few hundred yards away from one of our search teams. They were still on their intended route and were headed directly for the search team. They were also about two hours from the nearest road so the helicopters ferried the hikers and rescue team members to the road. The two men were then driven to their wives who reportedly let out



Octavia Rosales, KMIR TV6

An emotional reunion for one of the hikers and his wife.

screams of happiness.

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.