



Acute Asthmatic Attack.

June 23, 2002
Skunk Cabbage Meadow
2002-011

By Ralph Hoetger

At approximately 06:45 I received a call that a mission was under way to give aid to a hiker in Skunk Cabbage Meadow on Sunday morning June 23, 2002 I arrived at Humber Park at about 7:30am. Shortly after Lee Arnson and Mike Wimbrow. Mike Norris from Idyllwild Fire Protection District (IFPD) was already there in the parking lot. IFPD informed us he had already dispatched several people into the field approximately 60 minutes before, to perform medical aid. The subject was allegedly suffering from an acute asthmatic attack. Mike Norris was acting as the Incident Commander and stated that the team he sent up was made up of several CDF firefighters and paramedic from the IFPD and that they had the situation under control. IFPD also called out Mercy Air (Helicopter Ambulance) requesting that they evaluate and evacuate the subject from Skunk Cabbage Meadow if necessary.

Lee and Mike waited for about 20 minutes and decided that as long as they were there they might just as well hike up and see if they could help. I waited in the parking lot for more team members and in about 10 minutes Glenn and Travis Henderson showed up to Humber Park with the RMRU van and radios. Glen said that we should go up as well, so Travis and I made up Team 2 for RMRU.

Travis and I carried light packs and reached the CDF team and IFPD paramedic Mike Yant within 30 minutes of hiking. Lee and Mike were discussing options with the IFPD Paramedic when we arrived about half way up the Devils Slide Trail. Mike Wimbrow made some suggestions to the CDF team how to be more efficiently carry the wheeled litter and gear. Travis and I took the litter wheel and carried it up the trail for the CDF team. Lee Arnson assisted the IFPD paramedic by carrying his medical pack because of a broken buckle.

The Mercy Air Paramedic team who was on site with the subject determined they could not fly her out because the gear that their helicopter carried, the size of the patient, and the thin air at 8,000 ft. Mike Norris via radio then ordered up the CDF helicopter out of Hemet Ryan Airport and RMRU team Doctor Ray Hussey jumped the flight and was air lifted to the scene.

When Travis and I arrived Lee Arnson, Mike Wimbrow, Mike Yant, Ray Hussey and the Mercy Air crew were walking the subject across the meadow to the CDF

helicopter. The subject did not appear to be in any medical distress at that time.

As the mission was wrapping up in the high country, Mercy Air took off and RMRU team members headed off to the Saddle and then onto Devils Slide for the return hike to Humber Park, we all wondered what happened to the CDF litter team. We had been up at the meadow in excess of 45 minutes and still not seen them.

We found out later that CDF helicopter took the subject and her husband down and then made a return trip for the litter and the beleaguered CDF team.

P.S. The moral of this story is, it does not pay to be a gelatinous hiker or an out of shape rescuer. What would we do without helicopters?

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.