



## Three Hikers Injured and Stranded

**January 17th, 2005**  
**Skyline Trail, Palm Springs Tram**  
**2005-002**

by Lee Arnson

What was originally a search for a missing hiker around Cornell peak, turned out to be a rescue for three hikers down the Skyline trail below the "launching pad" at the top of the Palm Springs Tram. The "launching pad" is a term used by RMRU to describe the top section of the Skyline trail before it empties into Long Valley. It is a roughly 30 to 40 percent slope and when covered with snow and ice, becomes a very treacherous section of trail.

On this particular night three people, two men and one woman, attempted to hike from the Palm Springs Museum, to the top of the tram. The group eventually ran into snow and ice and were not prepared for what was ahead. The hikers were approximately 1200' below the top of the trail when conditions became too dangerous to travel any further without crampons and an ice axe. One of the men fell over 100' hitting a tree and sustaining some minor injuries. Team members lowered themselves down the launching pad 200' at a time until there was a total of 1200' of rope being used. RMRU members carried along extra crampons and ice axes for the subjects, who were then brought up the rope to the Skyline Trail. The subjects were then hiked to the tram while several members of the team went back to the "launching pad" to repack the 1200' of rope. Shortly before this mission ended, the team was informed there were three more missing.

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.