



Local Hiker Rescued After Breaking Leg

February 4, 2008
Mount San Jacinto
2008-006

RMRU found 53-year-old Ellen Coleman today, alive after two nights out in a fierce winter storm. After falling and breaking her leg Saturday, she crawled for several hours to take shelter in the small hut just shy of San Jacinto Peak. Rescue crews spotted her early Monday morning and splinted her leg before she was flown directly to a local hospital where she was reported in good shape and excellent spirits.

By Dana Potts

It was the morning after the team had to turn in due to dangerous conditions. Rob May and I were the first to arrive at the command post and we were given the assignment to fly to the summit and check the hut there.

We had blue sky and no wind. We new that on the summit we would find plenty of snow and ice based on the blizzard conditions the night before. We could only pray that Ellen had found shelter in the summit hut. The helo dropped the two of us on the summit and then proceeded to orbit around the shelter. within minutes, the helo crew told us that they could see Ellen peeking out the door.

We put on our snowshoes and made our way down to the shelter. We found Ellen to be in good spirits but she was suffering from a broken tibia, minor frost bite and some hunger from two days without food. We stabilized her leg and were able to get her a free ride compliments of the air crew.

[Photos](#) from Bob Rockwell of China Lake Mountain Rescue.

Read Ellen Coleman's [gripping account of her ordeal](#).

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.