



Hikers Stranded in Snowstorm

May 22, 2008
Fuller Ridge Trail
2008-021

By Chad Marler

On May 22, a report of two lost hikers was sent out to RMRU team members around 9:30 p.m. The report said that two hikers had taken the Palm Springs Tramway earlier in the day and were currently near "Castle Rocks" on the Fuller Ridge Trail cold and lost.

Team One consisted of RMRU members Lee Arnson and myself, both Idyllwild residents who were able to start our way up Fuller Ridge Trail by 10:50 p.m. Approximately 45 minutes into the search, we established voice contact with the lost hikers who were approximately 1/4 mile away. We were pleased to find the lost party, a husband and wife from British Columbia, cold but in good spirits and very thankful to see help had arrived. Along with the hikers was a very helpful PCT through hiker who offered assistance to them before team members arrived.

According to the couple, they had taken the tramway up that morning and then hiked to San Jacinto summit. On this mid-May day, Southern California had an unusual cold weather front that engulfed the San Jacinto summit with thick cloud cover and snow. According to the husband and wife, the near white out conditions was so disorienting that they accidentally took the wrong trail from the peak, in the opposite direction of the tramway. At some point on the trail the hikers were able to get cell phone reception and give 911 their approximate location which proved to be vital in a quick rescue. The other reason why the hikers were found so quickly is that they stayed in place from their last known location.

Extra clothing and lights were given to the hikers and we led the hikers back to the parking lot at the Fuller Ridge trailhead where other RMRU team members had gathered with the team vehicle to provide transportation back to highway 243 where a Sheriff's deputy awaited to transport the missing hikers back to their vehicle at the Palm Springs Tramway valley station. RMRU team members were all thanked by the Canadian couple with handshakes and deep appreciation.

News Coverage

[Read](#) a story on this mission from news radio KFI AM 640, or [listen](#) the KFI story by Michael Clarke.

[Desert Sun](#) article.

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.