



Two Missing Hikers

October 20, 2008
Idyllwild
2008-032

by Chad Marler

On October 20, 2008, around 9 p.m., a call went out to RMRU to search for two missing hikers who informed 911 with their cell phone that they had become lost after trying to cut between between South Ridge Trail and Ernie Maxwell Trail near Idyllwild. Sheriff's helicopter observer, deputy Eric Hannamen, informed me that they had spotted the two hikers approximately 500 yards south from the last house on Circle View Trail. Eric also provided GPS coordinates of the hikers. The party's cell phone battery died shortly after making this call.

I followed Circle View as far as the road would go and ended up at the house that Eric had described. Sergeant Sedwick and deputy Carrasco, and newest RMRU member, Bob Bakos arrived to this location shortly after I did. Because of deputy Hannamen's 500 yard estimation of the hikers location from this house, I called out for the subjects from this location. On my second call, I could faintly hear their return holler.

Bob Bakos and I then took to the steep loose terrain and frequently called out and listened to maintain our heading. After about 15 minutes of hiking, we were with the hikers who had lit a small signal fire which Bob and I carefully extinguished and told the party that they were lucky to contain this small fire in the middle of October.

The hikers were very happy to see us and explained that they made the mistake of trying to cut the trail to save time. They had no idea that they were only 500 yards from civilization and were pleased to learn the hike out would only be 15 minutes. Besides a few cuts on their legs and being tired and hungry, they were in good shape.

The hikers had no map, no food, light clothing, and a small amount of water. Facing the 40 degree night, the party greatly appreciated our timely assistance. The search terminated around 11 p.m.

Note: Bob Bakos drove from Nuevo to attend this mission and had work at 6 a.m. the next morning and still needed to find time to study sometime that night.

Also: Pete Carlson was on his way to this search from Lake Arrowhead but after I established voice contact, I called Pete to tell him we had this one handled.

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.