



Overdue Hiker San Jacinto Peak

January 2-3, 2011
San Jacinto Peak
2011- 003

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Written by Matt Jordon

Late Sunday evening RMRU members were notified of a third mission of the evening, the second in the San Jacinto high country. Initially reported as a missing 80 year-old in winter storm conditions, the mission understandably alarmed team members who were already deployed to rescue [three lost hikers on the Upper Skyline Trail](#).

Immediately following the successful rescue of the hikers on the Upper Skyline, Team members Carlos, Matt, and Bill set off to conquer the Sid Davis drainage and head toward Tamarack Valley. At 9,000 feet midnight temperatures had dropped below 12 degrees and although wind gusts were a reasonable 25 mph, visibility was extremely limited at times. Furthermore, as rescuers trudged by snowshoe into Lower Tamarack Valley, an unforeseen field radio malfunction resulted in frustrating one-way communication from the Tram relay. Motivation to find the lost hiker in life-threatening conditions kept the team going strong until about 5 a.m. Physically exhausted, they bivouacked until about 7:30 a.m.



Carlos After Bivouacking

The first Tram car at 6:30 a.m. brought two fresh searchers (Lee and Donny), who went right out the door and headed for San Jacinto Peak via the Round Valley Trail. After a shaky night in the snow, overnight rescuers continued toward Round Valley where they rendezvoused with the fresh team and regained radio communication. The overnight team continued on to Upper Tamarack Valley while the fresh team headed toward the peak. Additionally, other SAR teams from out-of-county were alerted to this mission, in case we did not find the missing hiker soon.



Lee in Round Valley

Around 10 a.m. the crew of the Riverside Sheriff's Star 9 helicopter offered critical assistance by determining the exact location of our subject (near the base of Cornell Peak). Rescuers all headed in that direction and soon met up with the hiker. They escorted the fit 65 year-old hiker back to Mountain Station (aka Upper Tramway Station) via the Sid Davis drainage, reaching their destination around noon. It turned out that the subject had survived the night by staying in the emergency shelter near San Jacinto Peak from about 5 p.m. Sunday until first light on Monday morning when the storm was over.



Subject Stan with RMRU rescuer Bill

Thank you to all rescuers, Tramway staff, and Riverside Sheriff's Department.

Team members present: Lee Arnson, Paul Caraher, Carlos Carter, Bill Delo, Donny Goetz, Matt Jordon, Dana Potts, Gwenda Yates.

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.