



Missing Hiker Ernie Maxwell Trail

October 21, 2011

Ernie Maxwell Trail, Idyllwild

2011-027

Written by Pete Carlson

At 10:00 a.m. Friday, October 21, 2011, Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit was called to assist an [injured climber on Tahquitz Rock](#). By the time I arrived at base camp four RMRU members were already in the field and one other team member, Paul, was due to arrive in 10 minutes. While I was getting ready to hike up to the Rock a man walked into base camp and told the Sheriff's deputy that his wife had gone for a hike at 9:00 a.m. and was supposed to be back in two hours and that it had now been almost four hours and she had not returned. The missing woman was 77 years old and had had surgery two months ago and was not as strong as she used to be. We told the man to go home and wait in case his wife came back.

Paul and I withdrew the technical gear from our packs and packed them instead with gear that we would need for a search. We then drove to the missing woman's home to start searching from there. Just as we pulled into her driveway the woman came out of her house. She had indeed been lost, but once she had realized that, she turned around and went back the way she came. She had gotten on some logging roads and thought they would meet up with the Ernie Maxwell Trail, but they went the wrong way.

The woman thanked us for being there even though we had not started to search. Paul and I then drove back to base camp at Humber Park to hike up to the Rock, but by the time we arrived a helicopter was coming in to hoist the injured man out, so we waited in base camp until the other team members hiked out.

RMRU team members present: Paul Caraher, Pete Carlson, Glenn Henderson, Mike Herman, Patrick McCurdy, Chad Marler, and 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.

