



Lost Hikers Tramway

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Palm Springs Tramway
2013-013

Written by - Kirk Cloyd

Cinco de Mayo is a day of celebration in the Coachella Valley and for four out of county hikers it was a day to ride the Palm Springs Tram for a day hike to the peak of Mt. San Jacinto. Unfamiliar with the trail system, they became slightly disoriented as night approached and called 911. After several failed attempts from different phones, they reached the 911 operator who was able to get an approximate GPS location from their cell phone and they were given instructions to stay in one spot.

With a confirmed location on the subjects (and knowing that RMRU had already been activated to respond to a search for three hikers that had been missing for multiple days in the San Bernardino's at 0700 hours the following morning) RMRU activated Matt Jordan and Kirk Cloyd to respond to the base of the tram. GPS coordinates from a follow-up call before the phone battery died confirmed that the missing day hikers in fact remained in the Tamarack Valley area. Matt and Kirk rode the tram car up just before 10:00pm and headed into the field. Once on the Sid Davis trail, they began calling for the hikers. As they entered Tamarack Valley, they could hear a whistle being blown.

The disoriented hikers were located, given jackets and gloves to warm up; water to hydrate and one hiker was evaluated for a knee injury he had sustained. Determining that all hikers were mobile, the group returned to the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway just before 1:00am via the Sid Davis trail. Once at the upper tram, the hikers were warmed and made calls to worried family members and friends. Matt and Kirk notified the Sheriff Deputy at the base of the tram and RMRU Call Captain Gwenda Yates that the group would bed down at the upper tram for the night.



Rescuers and four Subjects
Photo by Helene Lohr

These hikers did a lot of things right! They told family/friends where they were going to go hiking, the intended route and expected return time. They had and used a whistle when they heard the SAR team call and most of all, they stayed in one general location, not wondering around or trying to self-rescue when they didn't know the area. The group rode the 7:00am tram down the mountain where Matt and Kirk headed off to the next mission for the missing hikers in the San Bernardino's.

RMRU team members present: Kirk Cloyd and Matt Jordon.

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.