



Two Overdue Hikers

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Tramway San Jacinto Mountains

2014-008

Written by Carlos Carter

At 9 pm I was relaxing on the couch watching TV when the call went out to rescue members for a search. Two hikers were missing at the Palm Springs tram and I was excited to go for many reasons. I did a quick check of the Palm Springs Tram Cam online and saw that there was no visible snow at the Ranger Station. Within 15 minutes I was on my way, and my new storage system worked! Normally, we all have a pack ready to go, but since I'm always using my gear, I got tired of packing and unpacking. I recently decided to use storage containers and pack like items together. I grabbed the containers, placed them in the back of my truck, and left.

Knowing that the search would most likely keep us out all night at 8-10,000 feet with clear weather and temps in the 30s, I knew what to pack once I arrived. My light gear would be the best choice so, for example, I grabbed a down sweater instead of down parka and a bivy instead of a tent. While I was packing up in the parking lot, Glenn arrived with our rescue truck. Two of our newest members, Kevin and Cameron, were on the way.

While in the Lower Tram building we gathered information: Two females planned to go on a hike and return by 4:00 PM, but did not show up to meet their husbands at the bottom of the Tramway. Ultimately, we were called out. The Sheriff's helicopter had spotted the light from their cell phone and provided us with a GPS coordinate. Kevin had arrived by then, and he quickly input the coordinates into his GPS; we now knew the location we would be hiking. To be sure, we also did it the old way by pulling out our maps and verifying the coordinates and trail to take. Although we always carry extra batteries, we also carry maps and a compass. By then Cameron had arrived, so we all rode the Tramway to the upper building known as the Mountain Station, which is at 8,516 feet.

Our plan was to take the quickest route, up a steep drainage towards Tamarack Valley. By now we also were informed that State Park Ranger Todd was already on the main trail in route to find the subjects. Kevin, Cameron, and I headed out and up the mountain

while Glenn worked at the base we had established at the top of the Tramway. Once we arrived at the drainage, there was no well-marked trail, so we guided ourselves with the GPS. Neither new members Kevin nor Cameron had been up this way. Both did a great job of using their GPS and knowing where we were and where to go. We soon received the message from Glenn at base that Ranger Todd was with the subjects and was bringing them down the main trail. We decided to continue up and hopefully meet them to render any assistance needed. We looped over to the main hiking trail through Round Valley Campground and ended up chasing them back to the Ranger's building near Mountain Station.

The main trail down still had some snow which had turned to ice and was very slippery. In total, we hiked 5 miles and by the time we were back at Mountain Station, it was 4:00 AM. Overall, the subjects' actions provide a good example of what should be done when hiking: The subjects had informed someone of where they were going and when they would be back. After realizing they were lost, they stayed in one location for rescue personnel to find them. This is crucial, because when there is partial snow on the ground, the trails are not always easily visible.

As for our new team members, Kevin and Cameron, they did a great job!!!



Hikers with Rescuers
Photo by Tramway Employee.

RMRU Members Involved: Carlos Carter, Cameron Dickinson, Glenn Henderson, and Kevin Kearn.

State Park Ranger: Todd.

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.