



Rescue Skyline Trail

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San Jacinto Mountains
2014-021

Written by Cameron Dickinson

As I was finishing up my sandwich and coffee at a San Diego café a dispatch call went out to the team on Friday night at 8:30pm. This was regarding a search for two missing hikers in the San Jacinto Mountains. When I arrived at the lower Palm Springs Tramway meeting location, Carlos, Kevin, Kirk, Lew, and Ty were already on scene.

Prior to our departure for the search, we were instructed by the Riverside Sheriff's Officer that two hikers were unable to complete the Cactus to Clouds trail hike, and needed some assistance. Lew had already set up base up at the upper tramway and Kirk would position himself on the trail to allow 2-way communication between the searchers. Carlos, Kevin, and I would be going down the Skyline Trail looking for the overdue hikers. We were provided with key information on our missing hikers and their approximate location. At 11:30pm we were off to search for our missing hikers.

In about 90 minutes we reached our hikers off the Skyline Trail, about 2 miles northwest of the upper tramway. When we made contact, it was clear that the hikers were exhausted and dehydrated, yet relatively upbeat and in good spirits. They were too tired to continue with the hike up to the tramway, so Carlos, Kevin, and I decided to stay the night with our subjects until early morning. We provide them with sufficient hydration, food, warm clothing, and sleeping bags. At 5:30am our team and subjects were packed up, and began the hike back up to the upper tramway. On the hike up we were greeted by fellow RMRU member Eric Holden who assisted in carrying our subjects gear to help to lighten their load.

Our subjects were new to hiking, and wanted to blow off some steam by hiking the Cactus to Clouds Trail, which begins from the Palm Springs Art Museum and ending at San Jacinto peak. This trail is very challenging, having the highest vertical feet in a shortest distance in the country (total elevation gain is 10,400 in 15.5 miles in one direction). That is very ambitious for inexperienced hikers to take on an intense, unfamiliar trail, with daytime temps in the high 90's at the lower elevation. They were unprepared, packing minimal water, food, carrying a heavy cooking pan, and heavy

blankets/rectangular sleeping bag, and small insufficient backpacks for this type of hike.

RMRU Members Involved: Carlos Carter, Kirk Cloyd, Cameron Dickinson, Eric Holden, Kevin Kearns, Lew Kingman and Ty Whittersheim.

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.