



Missing PCT Hiker Warner Springs

February 26, 2015
San Diego County Pacific Crest Trail
2015-014

Written by Cameron Dickinson

The Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit received a mutual aid call to assist in locating a male hiker that went missing on the Pacific Crest Trail near Warner Springs in San Diego County. The hiker in his late 20's had planned on doing a solo hike of the Pacific Crest Trail, starting from Anza Borrego State Park and finishing in Campo at the US/Mexican border. Several days into his hike, he planned on meeting a friend at a designated location east of the Warner Springs area to pick up some fresh supplies. When he never arrived his friend became concerned and contacted the Sheriff's Department.

On the initial day of the search, other hikers came across a missing backpack on the PCT trail that included the missing person's identification, sleeping bag, and other miscellaneous gear. This location became the focal point for the search. Other teams from Los Angeles, Orange, Ventura, and San Bernardino counties were called to aid in search, including U.S. Border Patrol and Forest Service.

On day 1 of our call-out, RMRU team members Kevin Kearn and Lew Kingman headed down to assist in the search. After their arrival, they were teamed up with a scent dog and its handler, and searched an area south of the PCT trail not far from where the backpack was located. The second half of their day consisted of organized grid searches with other teams, essentially combing the hillside for any clues or sign of our missing subject.

On day 2, I was teamed up with two local Forest Service employees. Our initial efforts were concentrated in searching a smaller grid area on a hilltop just west of the backpack location. After that area was exhausted, I was then joined up with a dog team from San Diego Mountain Rescue. Our area of focus was around a large cliff area surrounded with heavy Manzanita brush. Again, no real sign of our subject was found.



Search Area
Photo by Cameron Dickinson.

The search took place for several days, with teams canvassing all surrounding areas on the ground as well as by helicopter. The search concluded as rainy weather and high winds moved in. Despite all the efforts of teams and other resources involved, this person has yet to be found.

RMRU Members Involved: Cameron Dickinson, Kevin Kearns, and Lew Kingman.

Sheriff's Aviation:

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.