



Dark Canyon Missing Hiker

July 16, 2017

Dark Canyon, Idyllwild

2017-033

Written by Cameron Dickinson

In the evening of July 16th, 2017, the team received notification of a lost male hiker who was in the vicinity of the Dark Canyon/Azalea Trails area. This would also be the reporting location for our team. Myself and fellow team member Eric Holden would be the first to arrive at our meet up location, soon followed by Tony Hughes and Alex Rilloraza.

Once we arrived, our Sheriff's Deputy would provide us information on our missing hiker, as well as GPS coordinates obtained through hikers pinged cell phone. We learned that our missing hiker was a male in his late teens who had separated from his family during a hike up to the San Jacinto Peak. His mother also called 911, and informed the dispatcher that her son has Epilepsy, and didn't have his medications on him. As we were grabbing our gear, we could hear faint shouts for help in the distance, echoing down through the steep canyon. This was coming from our subject. The fire department was on scene prior to our arrival and was aware of the subject's approximate location. Because of the steepness of the terrain, the fire department didn't have the technical gear to reach and make the initial contact with our subject.

Eric and I would quickly grab our gear, and off we went. Tony would manage radio communications, and Alex would be on standby. Right from the start we encountered steep, soft, and slippery terrain as we worked our way up through the thick brush. As we went up the mountain we came up to wide cliff that required a careful scramble, and not long thereafter we reached a ridge which would get us closer to our subject. After a couple call outs, we were able to make voice contact with him. He was approx. 300 ft below us in a steep canyon down near the creek. Soon we were able work our way down to him. He was good health with no injuries, other than multiple abrasions on his legs and arms. He had no fluids with him, so we provided hydration and food. We asked about his condition and seizures. He felt that he was good to hike out on his own. Because of our concerns that a seizure may occur during the hike, the lack of medications, as well as the steeper terrain, we decided to put a climbing harness on and tie him in with a climbing rope. We would essentially belay him up and out of canyon and down though some of the

steeper sections. We would eventually work back down to the command post to awaiting paramedics and his family.



Subject at Base with Rescuers
Photo by Tony Hughes.

RMRU Members Involved: Cameron Dickinson, Eric Holden, Tony Hughes, and Alex Rilloraza.

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.