



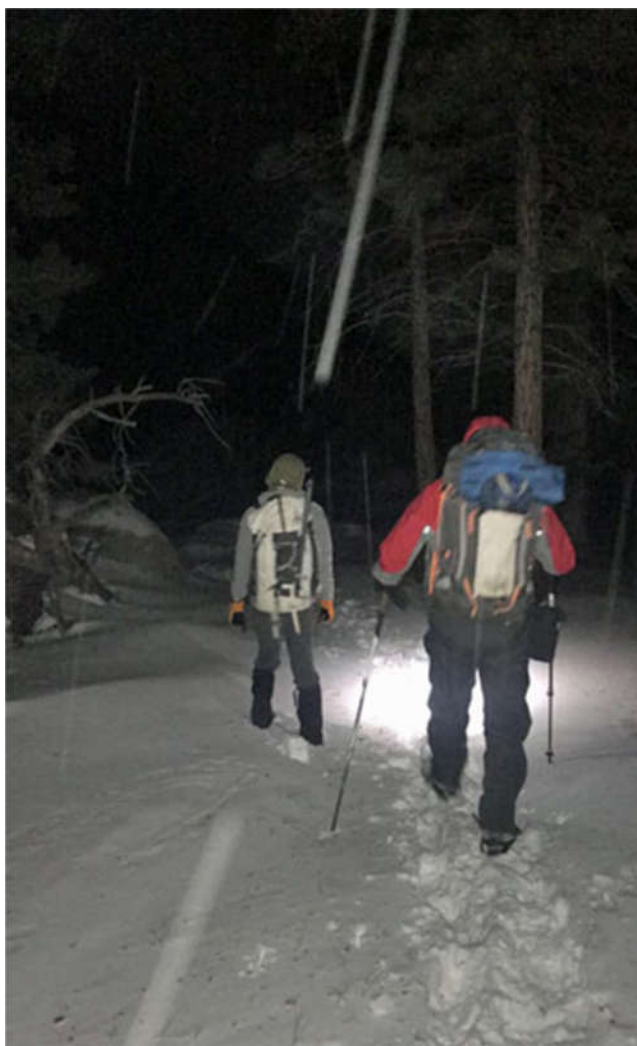
## Lost Hiker Tramway

**December 01, 2018**  
**Tramway to San Jacinto Peak**  
**2018-031**

Written by Corey Ellison Saturday Night.

We received a call out at the RMRU Christmas party for a lost single male subject. Background, the subject had left at approximately 10 pm the night before to complete the cactus to clouds trail. Subject was hiking with three friends. Subject and friends reached the tramway at approximately 9 am. Approximately one hour after passing through Tamarack Valley Campground, the subjects hiking partners continued without him, with the plan that they would meet up at the summit. After reaching the summit the subjects three hiking partners stayed approximately 15 minutes before continuing down to the tram station. They did not see their friend on way back and assumed he had turned back and made way towards the station. After arriving at the tram station and being unable to locate their friend, the three subjects notified emergency Dispatch and Riverside Mountain Rescue was called out.

The initial responding team consisted of myself, Kaitlyn, Gary, And Tyler. We arrived at the tramway around 10 pm. The subjects hiking partners were able to provide a very detailed list of the gear and equipment that the subject was equipped with. This equipment included an extra layer of insulation, headlamp, stove and fuel, and hard shell. With this information we were reassured that the subject would be able to survive the night if need be.



**RMRU members searching at night  
Photo by Kaitlyn.**

With the minimal resources available, we split up what command thought would be the two most likely options for the subject. State parks would make their way to the summit of San Jacinto to check the Summit Hut, And RMRU would head towards law's camp on the chance that the subject got turned around at a junction. After heading out, approximately 30 minutes into the hike our team put on our crampons due to icy conditions. After moving through deep snow on an unbroken trail our team made it to Round Valley Junction at around 1:45 am with no sign of the subject. At this point decision was made to turn back and regroup at the tramway to renew the search in the morning.

Written by Shani Pynn Part Two Sunday Morning

I arrived at the Palm Springs Tramway at roughly 6 am Sunday morning and met up with

Donny and Ray before taking the tram up to relieve the rest of our team mates. At the upper tram station, they briefed us on the current status of the search and we discussed the best way to divide our team and search for the day. Shortly after, Mary with State Parks arrived, and she and Glenn determined our starting plan.

Donny and I were to hike to the peak by way of the Sid Davis trail and search all outhouses along the way as they have been known to be shelters to lost subjects in the past. We would also look for tracks leading down the beginning of the drainages leaving Tamarack Valley in case he had gone down one of them. Ray was to search towards Laws Camp and then down to Humber Park with Dana, who would be arriving shortly.

So, at about 8:30 am, Donny and I set out in to the snow towards Sid Davis. Once we were on the trail, we stopped every few minutes with breaks in the wind to call out and look for signs of our lost subject. Later in the morning we heard Star 9 above us as they called out for him as well. They were not able to stay in the area long due to high winds, but they covered what area they could. During the morning, around 10 am, Command received a report from some campers that a person resembling our subject was hiking towards the peak from Tamarack the previous day. So, we checked and followed fresh tracks in that area as well as checking the outhouses.

Later in the morning, Command received word that some campers had found our subject sheltering in an outhouse near them in Little Round Valley. As a state parks volunteer was closest to their location, he went to pick our subject up and hike him back to the tram. Donny and I hiked to Wellman's Divide to meet up with them on their way back, arriving at roughly 12:30 pm. While we were waiting, we chatted with some hikers and took in the amazing view.



**Morning after storm**  
**Photo by RMRU Shani.**



**Donny talking to Hikers**  
**Photo by RMRU Shani.**

Not long after, at about 1 pm, Royce from State parks arrived with the subject, who was in good health. He had gone the wrong way off the peak and was down in Little Round Valley when he slipped and slid off the trail. Not wanting to hike in the dark, he had sheltered in an outhouse for the night from the wind. He was a little sore from all his

hiking, but not too worse for wear and in good spirits. We hiked back to the Ranger Station with him and Royce by about 2:30 pm without incident and he was reunited with his family at the Tram station shortly after.

**RMRU Members Involved:** Corey Ellison, Gary Farris, Mike George, Glenn Henderson, Dana Potts, Kaitlyn Purington, Shani Pynn, and Tyler Shumway.

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.