



Overdue Hiker

May 1, 2019
Cactus Springs Trailhead
2019-025

Written by Tony Hughes

May 1st was the First Wednesday of the month, which is the night we have our monthly team meeting. I was just getting ready to leave when I received a text around 1:45 PM that there was a lost hiker at Cactus Springs trail head near Pinyon Pines. I changed into my search clothes, grabbed my gear, and started driving.

When I arrived at the parking area there were already several team members on scene. Kaitlyn and Blake had just left about 20 to 30 minutes earlier with the dog team. I quickly scanned the area around the subject's car for prints but was not able to find anything on the asphalt, his car, or in the sand nearby. We all started packing up and getting ready to head up to Sheep Mountain and Martinez Peak to look for the lost 71-year-old male who had not returned. His planned hike should have only taken about 8 hours. He had left the day before and his family called the sheriff when he didn't return that night.

Before I could even finish prepping my pack, we saw a gentleman heading into the parking lot from the trail. I yelled at Glenn "What is our subject's name?". He yelled back "George". I turned around and asked the gentleman if he was George, and sure enough he was. He had spent a cold night in the middle of the forest. He had plenty of food, water, and was in good spirits when he returned to the trail head.



Subject, Michael C., Tony, and Jordan
Photo by Eric Holden.

We got Blake and Kaitlyn on the radio and told them to come back in. This was a quick mission with a great outcome. It was still early so we all headed to Hemet for our monthly meeting. Little did we know at the time this was going to be the first of 3 missions to happen within an 8-hour window.

Some lessons to take away from this mission: 1) Don't hike alone. 2) Let others know your route and estimated return times. 3) Bring enough gear to survive the night. 4) Optionally, invest in a SPOT, InReach or other device to signal for help when out of cell range.

RMRU Members Involved: Jordan Antol, Michael Cara, Blake Douglas, Joe Erickson, Glenn Henderson, Eric Holden, Tony Hughes, Kaitlyn Purington, Tyler Shumway, and Daniel Tran.

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.