



**Missions**  
**July - September 2020**



# Thank You!

To all that volunteer their time and financial assistance....

**Countless people owe their lives**



## OUR SUSTAINING MEMBERS



**July 1 - September 30, 2020**

**BENEFACTOR CLUB \$1,000.00 +**  
Tyler Nix (Homeadvisor)

**SUMMIT CLUB \$500.00+**  
Stacey Wobbe

**PATRON CLUB \$200.00+**  
Jim Kalb | Michael Oldham

**CENTURY CLUB \$100.00+**  
Act of Nature | Carl & Linda Gohr | Kate Manwell  
Network For Good | Nancy Rabin | Richard Harpster

**SUPPORTING < \$100.00**  
Kelli Cristea | Phillip & Anita Hawkins | Patrick Eddy  
Zach Davis | Marydoris Powers

## RESCUE TEAM MEMBERS



**Steve Bryant** - Alta Loma | **Pete Carlson** - Blue Jay  
**Kase Chong** - Hemet | **Cameron Dickinson** - Temecula | **Kirk Cloyd** - Hemet  
**Derek Donovan** - Temecula | **Blake Douglas** - Riverside  
**James Eckhardt** - Riverside | **Corey Ellison** - Laguna Niguel | **Gary Farris** - Palm Desert  
**Michael George** - Riverside | **Donny Goetz** - Los Angeles  
**Josh Gould** - Murrieta | **Glenn Henderson** - Hemet | **Eric Holden** - Temecula  
**Tony Hughes** - Yorba Linda | **Beth Jeffery** - Temecula | **Kevin Kearn** - Huntington Beach  
**Rob May** - Riverside | **Dana Potts** - Corona | **Kaitlyn Purington** - Laguna Niguel  
**Shani Pynn** - Riverside | **Vinay Rao** - San Jacinto  
**Tyler Shumway** - Hemet | **Ray Weden** - Murrieta | **Gwenda Yates** - Hemet

### Support Members

Joe Erickson | Kaylean May | Roger May | Brad Scott | Ty Wittersheim

## IN THIS ISSUE

### MEMBER PROFILES

RAYMOND WEDEN &  
BLAKE DOUGLAS

Page 3

### MISSION REVIEWS

July - September 2020

Page 4

### On the Cover -

Helitac Hover Step Rescue  
North Side: Mt. San Jacinto

Photo: Tyler Shumway- RMRU

### Newsletter Editor -

Gary Farris



## Team Member Profiles

### Raymond Weden

#### Background

I grew up in Orange County enjoying everything Southern California had to offer in the outdoors. When I was about 15 years old I joined the "Outdoor Cub" at my high school. That's right, we had a club where we can miss school and go camping, fishing and hiking! It was with this club where I summited Mt. San Jacinto for this time.

#### On Joining RMRU

I have read about RMRU when they had missions that made the news and I would scroll through their website often with the thought that someday I would like to join them.

I have always worked in the home building industry. One day at work one of my coworkers had a large backpacking backpack sitting in his cubicle. Since it was a random Tuesday I was curious as to why he had that packed an ready to go.

Continued on Page 15

### Blake Douglas

#### On Joining RMRU

I attended my first RMRU meeting in July 2018. At the time, I had recently taught a class called Fire Science, which is kind of a preview of the firefighting career - my new school didn't offer this so I was back to full-time chemistry, and I wanted to continue doing something aligned with public service, but not to the point of quitting my job to do it (these student loans don't pay themselves). RMRU's address happened to be only a few minutes from my new school site, as well as being the only team with a website that had up-to-date mission profiles.

#### First Mission

On paper, my first mission was the Caramba search in early January of 2019, but I think my first "real" mission was a plane crash in the Morongo Pass a few weeks later. I joined Shani and Eric as the first team in the field, and I figured that

with their experience guiding the mission, my task was primarily not to fall behind or screw up. Well, I didn't fall behind, but I did fall on a rock, leading to a massive bruise on my back that I didn't even discover until two days later. My response was about as measured as you can imagine for finding a fist-sized black spot on your skin.

#### Most Memorable Mission

Hard to pick a single "most" memorable mission; once we're in the field it seems like each mission has its own nuances or surprises, like getting shocked by Star 9 or finding cabins that aren't on any map. One of the more memorable ones from recent months was an OES for Mt. Baldy in December 2019. Donny, James and I were sent up to one of the slopes just east of the peak leading to the Lytle Canyon drainage, which we then had to descend to a fire road to get picked up. Out of around 11 hours in the

Continued on Page 15

# Mission Reviews

July - September 2020

*The following pages contain a selection of first hand accounts of RMRU missions written by the team members involved.*



## Lost Hiker San Jacinto Peak

July 1, 2020

San Jacinto Peak Area

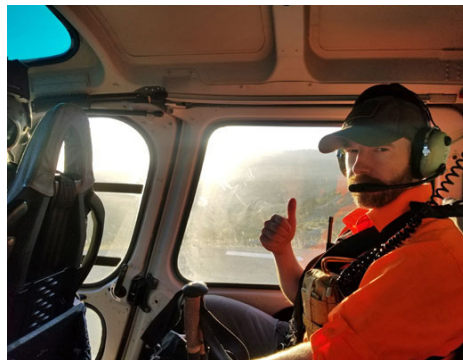
Written by Blake Douglas

RMRU was activated on the evening of July 1st for a missing hiker on San Jacinto Peak. Glenn, Cameron, James, and I, responded to the Idyllwild Ranger Station to speak with the subject's hiking partner.

The hike was meant to be a challenging birthday celebration; the subjects had intended to complete the "Cactus to Clouds to Cactus", or C2C2C. This involves hiking the Skyline trail to the Tram, following Round Valley and Wellman trails to San Jacinto Peak, and then reversing course and returning to Palm Springs. Cactus to Clouds, alone, is considered one of the most challenging hikes in the country, and C2C2C is an elite undertaking that requires excellent physical conditioning and planning. Fortunately, our subjects had an abundance of both.

After reaching Wellman Divide,

our subjects dropped their packs and hiked to the peak (which is an entirely normal practice for experienced hikers). Upon reaching the peak, they took slightly different routes down the steep, rocky scramble back to the stone summit hut. When our reporting party reached the hut, his partner was nowhere to be seen. After a brief search, he returned to the stashed packs, and when his partner failed to appear, he left a note in the partner's pack, hiked to Idyllwild, and called search and rescue.



Blake Flying in to Round Valley,  
Ready to start hiking.

James and myself were flown into Round Valley at sunset, where we briefly scouted the camps, then hiked to Wellman Divide to ascertain the condition of the subject's pack; whether it was there, or

gone, would determine our next steps. After a few minutes of searching in the gathering dark, we located the pack, undisturbed. Given that our subject was reported to be an experienced hiker, but unfamiliar with the San Jacinto mountains, it was difficult to determine what this could mean; perhaps he had never returned to this area, or perhaps, like so many others, he had become lost in the general Wellman Divide area, and simply missed the pack. Speculation was unhelpful at this point, and James and I proceeded to the peak, while Glenn and Gwenda called for additional RMRU members to respond in the morning.

Upon reaching the hut, we conducted an extensive search and call-out between the hut and the peak, again finding no sign of our subject. Our orders were to proceed west down the Deer Springs and Marion trails; during the search of this area, we found a single camper in Little Round Valley, who had seen no sign of our subject. We reached the Marion trailhead around 1am, neither of us feeling particularly in-character



## MISSION REVIEWS JULY - SEPTEMBER 2020

when it came to our usual vigor, and ready for a few hours of sleep at the RSO Mountain Station in Lake Hemet. The mission had gone OES at this point and we were expecting other teams to begin arriving around 6am.

Morning dawned scenically but with a poor outlook. Star 9 was socked in with fog in Hemet, and while we were able to secure the participation of Desert Search and Rescue and Sierra Madre Search and Rescue, this was looking to be a true needle-in-haystack search of the entire San Jacinto Wilderness, an effort that would surely require at least a dozen ground teams with air support if we were to assure thorough and timely coverage of all the possible routes our subject could have taken.

Happily, around 9 am, we received word that the subject had been located in Whitewater. As we were beginning to suspect, he had fallen, though uninjured, somewhere on the north side of the peak, gotten cliffed out (unable to go back the way he came) and after finding his shouts for help were unheard, he decided to descend via Snow Creek. This is an awesome testament to his route-finding and physical ability, let alone considering that he had no gear, food, or water whatsoever.

What went wrong:

The primary cause of this mission was the subjects losing sight of each other during their descent from the peak. On unfamiliar, steep, or low-visibility terrain, it is essential that team members remain in visual contact; radios or

callouts can supplement, but not replace this.

The secondary cause was the lack of a phone, InReach, radio, or other means of location and communication. While dropping packs prior to a summit is a common practice, it is essential that one always retains essential equipment on their person, for situations exactly like the one encountered here.

#### **RMRU Members Involved:**

Kase Chong, Cameron Dickinson, Blake Douglas, James Eckhardt, Corey Ellison, and Glenn Henderson.

#### **OTHER Teams Involved:**

Desert Search and Rescue and Sierra Madre Search and Rescue.

### **Lost Hiker Norco**

July 3, 2020

Ingalls Park, Norco

Written by Cameron Dickinson

Ingalls Park in Norco is a popular, heavily trafficked trail network that is nestled in semi urban environment surrounded by residential tracts of homes and a golf course. A male in his middle 70's wanted to hike up the 1.6-mile trail to the well-known Pumpkin Rock, while his wife and daughter would spend some time shopping Home Depot.

When the father did not come back from his hike, they decide to call 911 after waiting and searching for him over a couple of hrs. I happen to be hiking at Skyline Trail in Corona when the team receive the call. Luckily, I was relatively

close to Ingalls Park, and would arrive there in 30 minutes after our initial call. Team members Josh and Blake would also join up in the search.

While Blake was hiking and speaking with other hikers to see if they had seen or encountered our lost hiker, Josh and I would head over and hike up to Pumpkin Rock and search the surrounding trails. While out on our search, our team would receive another call of a missing hiker in the Idyllwild area mountains. Blake would break away to participate in that search, while Josh and I would continue with our search.

We were genuinely concerned that our lost hiker was out there with no water, cell phone, and the hotter temperatures. But not long after we initiated our hike, we would receive a call from our Deputy on scene that our hiker was found in a residential neighborhood, safe and sound. It turns out that our hiker simply missed the turn off in the trail on his way back down from Pumpkin Rock.

#### **RMRU Members Involved:**

Cameron Dickinson, Blake Douglas, and Josh Gould.



*Prusik Knot*

## Lost Hiker Caramba

July 3, 2020

Tahquitz Peak Area

Written by Vinay Rao

With many popular get-away locations (beaches, no fireworks, etc.) closed for the July 4th weekend, RMRU anticipated that this would be a busy weekend. Wow were we right! On July 3rd, RMRU was activated for three nearly concurrent searches. This description is for the search in the Idyllwild area.



Subject flying out.

A group of about ten hikers that were camping in Idyllwild and decided to begin their hike from the Devil's Slide Trail to the San Jacinto Peak. Due to differing levels of hiking ability the group began to separate early in the hike. Due to the lost hiker's ("subject") unfamiliarity with the area, it appears that she may have headed towards the Tahquitz Lookout when she reached Saddle Junction.

Of course, by the time she made it the Lookout she was not able to find anyone else from her group. After enjoying the views for a while, she began her descent. Her path of travel took down towards the Chinquapin Flats area which does loop back towards Devil's Slide, but unfortunately being un-

familiar with the area, she veered off trail and headed east following Tahquitz Creek. Her path took down towards the infamous area – Caramba Overlook, the exact opposite direction from where she should have gone. After hiking for quite a while, she decided to call her son who called 911. RMRU team members responding to this second mission, were Blake, Shani, and Vinay ("the Team").

After staging base in Idyllwild, the Team started up Devil's Slide at approximately 10:00pm. RSO Aviation had previously flown over the subject's location and given the Team a GPS waypoint and, most importantly, told the subject to STAY PUT. We made it quickly up Devil's Slide and continued onto the Caramba Trail area. However, the trail essentially disappears, and the heavy underbrush of whitethorn made going difficult. The Team continued past the Caramba South Landing Zone and down towards the beginning of Tahquitz Canyon where we began to do a series of shout-outs. At some point during this we could faintly hear the subject shouting back. However, because of the high flow of water in the Canyon and significant echoing, locating the subject became a challenge.

Luckily, the Team had good radio communication with CSO (Community Service Office) Jeff Funkhouser at base and he had cell phone contact with the subject. Using a series of relay communications, the Team was able to find the subject at 3:45am. Given that the weather was cool but very tolerable and most importantly that

the subject was un-hurt and stable, the Team decided to hunker down at that location and wait for first light.



Blake, Shani, Vinay, and Subject at Base.

While the Team was resting, CSO Jeff Funkhouser did a fantastic job of arranging for RSO Aviation to pick up the Team and the subject at the Caramba LZ (Landing Zone) as soon as the first Aviation team came on duty. At 6:30am, the Team and the subject made the short hike to the LZ and waited for the Helicopter to arrive. First Shani and the Subject were picked up around 9:00am for the short ride to the Keenwild Ranger Station in Idyllwild.

Then the Helicopter came back and picked-up Blake and I and flew us out. Another successful mission and we even got in some good hiking and night-time route finding.

### RMRU Members Involved:

Blake Douglas, Shani Pynn, and Vinay Rao.



Alpine Butterfly Knot

## MISSION REVIEWS JULY - SEPTEMBER 2020

**Lost Hiker Morgan Trail**

July 3, 2020

South Main Divide – Cleveland  
Nation Forest

Written by Tony Hughes

The third mission of the day started around 9:30 PM when a dehydrated hiker on the Morgan trail needed assistance. Star 9 flew over to confirm the subject's location and RMRU was dispatched to the Morgan Trailhead off South Main Divide in Cleveland National Forest.

I arrived on scene around 10:30 PM and met Cameron and Josh, both of whom had been on the first mission of the day at Pumpkin Rock and were driving to the second mission at Humber Park when they got word to split off and head to the Morgan trail while other team members continued to Humber Park. Corey and Kaitlyn were also coming to meet us.

Cal Fire, 2 Sheriff's deputies, and an ambulance were already at the trailhead when we arrived. The subject was on the trail a little over a mile from the trailhead. The Deputies and a few members of Cal Fire had already hiked into the subject and were giving him fluids by IV. We

we are anticipating a carry out and Cal Fire assembled their stokes and wheel and Cameron, Josh and I walked in with the litter team.

We had traveled about 3/4 of a mile when the team with the subject came walking our way. The subject was able to walk out with the help of the IV fluids. All teams

reversed course and walked with the subject to the waiting ambulance.

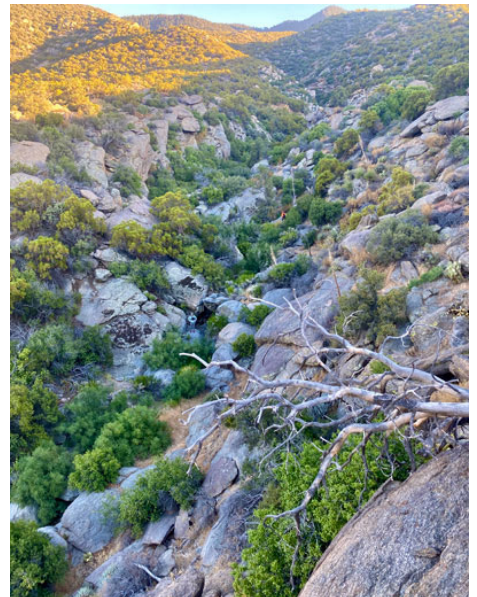
This mission is a good reminder to never hike alone and do not underestimate the heat, especially now that it is getting hotter out.

**RMRU Members Involved:**

Cameron Dickinson, Corey Ellison, Josh Gould, Tony Hughes, and Kaitlyn Purington.

**Star-9 Searching.**

cane which was at home. The area around the car is extremely rocky and rugged so it would have been impossible for her to get too far away.

**Big Search Area**

We continued the search the next morning with search dogs, sheriff's helicopter Star 9, DSSAR, Joshua Tree Search and Rescue (JOSAR) and RMRU. We did a much more intensive search radiating out from the car with no success.

The investigation has been assumed by sheriff detectives.

**RMRU Members Involved:**

Cameron Dickinson, Blake Douglas, James Eckhart, Michael George, Beth Jeffery, Glenn Henderson, Eric Holden, Tony Hughes, and Tyler Shumway.

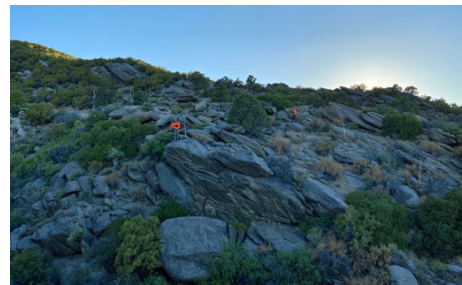
**Pinyon Search**

July 9, 2020

Pinyon Pines Area

Written by Glenn Henderson

The team was called out on Thursday at 2 PM to search for a missing 75-year-old woman with possible early onset dementia. She was reported missing Tuesday morning and her car was found stuck on a rock on Thursday afternoon in the Pinyon Pines area.

**Searchers looking down into  
Canyon.**

We reported to the Pinion Pines fire department as our basecamp. Teams were sent out on multiple trails that were near the car as well as the road the car was found on.

Desert Sheriff's Search and Rescue (DSSAR) personnel were also on scene and were deployed to the area. Our subject was reported to having trouble walking without her



## Fallen Climber

July 12, 2020

### Tahquitz Rock

Written by James Eckhardt

On Saturday, RMRU trained technical raises and lowers on Suicide Rock, and on Sunday we received a call for a rescue on Tahquitz. The two subjects had been climbing Traitor Horn, a classic route on Tahquitz. The leader of the party apparently fell, but due to high winds, the belayer and leader could not communicate. This prompted the follower to call for rescue.

RMRU arrived at Keenwild to prepare for helicopter transport of gear and personnel to Tahquitz. Before picking us up, Star-9 flew to Tahquitz to look for the climbers; the climbers were spotted safe at the top of the route and signaled that they did not need rescue. While we are always prepared for a technical rescue, we were happy to hear the climbers did not need assistance.

RMRU Members Involved:  
Kase Chong, Cameron Dickinson, Blake Douglas, James Eckhart, Michael George, Donny Goetz, Eric Holden, Vinay Rao, and Tyler Shumway.

## Missing Hiker

July 13, 2020

### Long Valley, San Jacinto Mountains

Written by Blake Douglas

RMRU was activated at 8:15pm on Sunday night for our seventh mission in July. We reported to the Idyllwild Ranger Station for an

overdue hiker in the high country. Our subject had reportedly begun hiking the Skyline trail starting at 1am that morning. As part of a large group that intended to reach San Jacinto Peak, then descend to Idyllwild and drive back to their hotel in Palm Springs.



Subject, James, and Blake take the easy way down.

One of those trips that lends meaning to the phrase "hiking is like fun, but different". Upon reaching the Long Valley Ranger Station at the top of the Palm Springs Aerial Tram, our subject declined to continue, sensing that he was approaching his physical limits. To put this in context, he had just spent 10 hours hiking 8000 feet of elevation over 9 miles, with the lower sections of the trail exceeding 85 degrees temperature even at 1am. Hiking the Skyline trail in July and August is strongly discouraged for exactly these reasons.

The subject remained in contact with his group via walkie-talkie radio, but with diminishing quality. He drafted a plan to exit Long Valley via the Willow Creek Trail, descending to Idyllwild via Devil's Slide. Around 3pm his group had their last communication with him, in which he said he was on a trail, but it was not Willow Creek. This was the information we began our

search with at 10:30pm.

James and I initially planned to head up Devil's Slide, cross about half of Willow Creek, and then descend to Caramba, since RMRU has observed many lost hikers ending up in this area since our founding, and we had just had a rescue in Caramba the week before. However, upon arriving at the turnoff for Caramba, we stopped and carefully re-evaluated our information, and determined that we had no direct evidence the subject was in Caramba, and with the current trail conditions in that area and his physical exhaustion it was unlikely he would have made the cross-country trip necessary to find the recognizable parts of the trail. Instead, we would continue onward to the tram, loop to Wellman Divide, and descend back to Saddle Junction. Since the two of us were the only search group, this would greatly increase our coverage of the trails as well.

Upon reaching the Long Valley Ranger Station at 2am, we saw no sign of our subject and had heard no response to our callouts. We were about to head up to the main tram building when James did one more callout, and our subject responded from barely 100 feet away. After making his plan to exit via the Willow Creek trail, our subject had found his way to the High trail toward Wellman Divide. The upper part of this trail is largely rocky and much more difficult to follow than the generally sandy and distinct trails throughout the rest of Round and Long Valleys, and our subject ended up in a patch of manzanita.



He decided to return to the Long Valley Ranger Station and see if he could take the tram down in the morning, and shortly after returning to the station he found a nearby uninhabited labor camp with tents and sleeping bags, where he bedded down and got several hours of sleep. While James and I were ready to hike out immediately, we were not about to turn down the chance for a few hours of unexpected sleep in clean tents on air mattresses.

We took the tram down the next morning. In my 18 months with RMRU, this was my first time finding the subject on a search-type mission.

#### RMRU Members Involved:

Blake Douglas and James Eckhart.

### Hiker Lost

July 18, 2020

Humber Park

Written by Editor

RMRU was called out at 10pm for a hiker that had become separated from his friends coming down to Humber Park from the Peak. Only a couple of members had started to respond when at 10:20pm he walked into Humber Park and the Sheriff's Deputy call us to return home.

#### RMRU Members Involved:

Kase Chong and Blake Douglas.



*Figure 8 Follow Through  
with Tie off*

### Autistic Male Missing

July 20, 2020

Banning Area

Written by Glenn Henderson

The team was called out for a missing autistic 18-year-old boy in Banning. He had taken his bike out and had not returned. The bike was found a half mile away on a dirt road but no sign of him.

When we arrived, we gathered information and then made 6 search assignments and started sending out teams. Desert Sheriff's Search and Rescue also arrived with 6 members and were sent out too. In about an hour DSSAR radioed that they had found him.

They had taken their Jeep and were following the dirt roads where they met up with a truck with two people that were helping to search for the boy. DSSAR told them to go west on the road and they were going to go east. West won as the truck came back in ten minutes with our missing boy. DSSAR brought him back to base where he was united with his family.

#### RMRU Members Involved:

Cameron Dickinson, Blake Douglas, James Eckhardt, Glenn Henderson, Beth Jeffery, and Vinay Rao.

#### DSSAR Members:

Sharon Ollenburger, Kevin Wahlstrom, Jason Roberson, Allen Langenbahn, Mike Smith, and Chris Miller.

### Day Walker Lost

July 29, 2020

1000 Trails RV Park, Pine Cove

Written by Editor

RMRU was called out at 2pm for a Day Walker who left the RV Park and did not return. Star-9 was out flying around looking for him when we got called. They spotted him over near Marion Mt. Campground. He was stuck on a hillside and could not go up or down.

They had two TFO (Technical Flight Officers) on the helicopter, so they lower one down to the subject. He put the subject into the hoisting harness and the subject was raised up. Then they hoisted the TFO back up and few everyone to Keenwild Helipad. RMRU members were turned around at 2:20pm and went home. A big thanks to RSO Aviation for a great job and saving us a lot of time and effort.

#### RMRU Members Involved:

Cameron Dickinson, Blake Douglas, Josh Gould, Eric Holden, and Vinay Rao.

### Lost Hiker High Country

August 7, 2020

San Jacinto Peak

Written by Vinay Rao

After a quiet two weeks, RMRU received a call about a lost male hiker near the Mt. San Jacinto peak. Responding team members were Glenn and myself. Given the location of the subject, RSO Aviation took us up to the Peak where the subject's cell phone was pinged when he called 911. The team assisted pilot Chad Marlatt

and TFO Jerry Osterloh in doing a visual search of the area.

Due to the wind conditions at the Peak, the pilot was not able to maintain a hover but skillfully circled the areas several times. We were unable to locate the subject despite the TFO using the speaker system to call out to the subject. We did see several other hikers on the trail to Peak. We then decided to land at Round Valley where Glenn and Vinay were dropped off to hike the roughly 2.5 miles to the Peak and do a ground search. Aviation left the area to return to their base. While they were at base, they changed TFOs out, Jerry for Ryan Burke.



**Apple Fire from Star-9.**

Approximately a mile up the trail, the team ran into four of the hikers that we had seen while circling the area who were on their way down. They indicated that they had seen the subject and gave us a good description of him. We called this information to Aviation who, coincidentally, had just received word that the subject was headed down Marion Mtn. Trail after apparently meeting up with some of his party who had hiked up to the Peak with him.

Aviation returned to Round Valley and picked us up. While returning,

we did a visual search of the Marion Mtn. Trail for the subject. While conducting this visual search, we were told that the subject's wife had separately called 911 to indicate she was heading down a trail and believed she was about 2 miles from a parking lot. She did not give the name of the trail and the 911 call center was unable to reach her cell phone on subsequent calls.

So... we then proceeded to search some of the other trails in the area and after about 20 minutes of looking we located her close to Humber Park on the Devil's Slide Trail. After making sure (using the speaker system) she was ok, Aviation and the RMRU returned to Hemet Ryan Airport.

**RMRU Members Involved:**  
Glenn Henderson and Vinay Rao.

## **Research Missing Woman**

**August 8, 2020**  
**Pinyon Pines Area**  
Written by Glenn Henderson

July 9th the team was called out at 2 PM to search for a missing 75-year-old woman with possible early onset dementia. She was reported missing Tuesday morning and her car was found stuck on a rock on Thursday afternoon in the Pinyon Pines area.

Due to new evidence found near our 73-year-old missing female search the team responded and set up new search assignments. After an extremely long and hot day no new clues were found. Two

HRD (human remain dogs) were also given assignments but no alerts were noted.

**RMRU Members Involved:**  
Steve Bryant, Cameron Dickinson, Corey Ellison, Glenn Henderson, Eric Holden, Kaitlyn Purington, Shani Pynn, Vinay Rao, and Ray Weden.

## **Lost Person**

**August 14, 2020**  
**Cleveland National Forest**  
Written by Blake Douglas

RMRU was activated at 6:30pm on Friday August 14th, on the cusp of a major heat wave across inland Southern California. Our subject was in the Cleveland National Forest, in the vicinity of Tenaja Falls. This was my first callout to this particular part of the county.

Initially this was shaping up to be a search, with our subject's last known location being in the San Mateo Canyon Wilderness, on the Bluewater Trail approximately midway between Tenaja Falls and the Rancho Carillo Fire Station. The difficulty of accessing these locations, the uncertainty of the subject's true location, starting point, or destination, and terrain interference with our communications, caused us to change our plans in-route several times. It was nearly 9pm when Cameron and I were finally able to contact Star 9 overhead, who relayed that they had visual on the subject approximately 4 miles west of the Fisherman's Camp Trailhead. James and Corey, who had initially responded to the opposite side of the can-



## MISSION REVIEWS JULY - SEPTEMBER 2020

yon, would re-route, and run base while Cameron and I retrieved the subject.

Despite the remote location, the trails were well-marked and maintained, and the hike was relatively easy. The only complications were the enduring heat (I do not believe it ever went below 80 degrees) and the abundance of large spiders. I do not particularly have a problem with spiders, but these guys build their webs directly across the trail and I did not want one on my face, thank you.



**Cameron Cleaning Wound on Subject.**

We found our subject directly on the trail, responsive and in good spirits but not in the best shape. Out of several injuries, his most significant were lacerations to both forearms, one of which had fully penetrated the skin, and had not been thoroughly cleaned or treated for six hours.

According to the subject, he and his hiking partner had become dehydrated in the early afternoon, and the subject felt too weak to continue, while his partner had dropped a full pack and hiked out. Fortunately, our subject had encountered a local hiker who provided him with water, so his dehy-

dration was no longer debilitating by the time we found him.

While a helicopter retrieval would have been convenient at this point, the canyon was too dark and brushy to risk it. After retrieving the partner's pack, we began a slow and steady hike back to the trailhead, arriving around 3am without further incident.

#### RMRU Members Involved:

Cameron Dickinson,  
Blake Douglas, James Eckhardt,  
and Corey Ellison.

## Research for Roy

August 22, 2020

### North Fork San Jacinto River

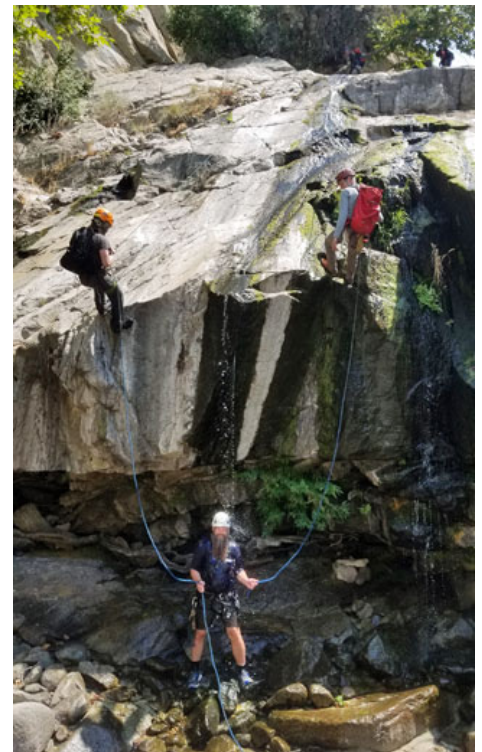
Written by Eric Holden

The team got together to continue to search for Roy back from mission 2020-010. The purpose of this search was to try to hit the entire North Fork of the San Jacinto River very carefully. The team met at 6am off the Highway 74 before carpooling up to Fisherman's Point along the Old Control Road. With Ray working comms from the road above the entire team began hiking down to the river.



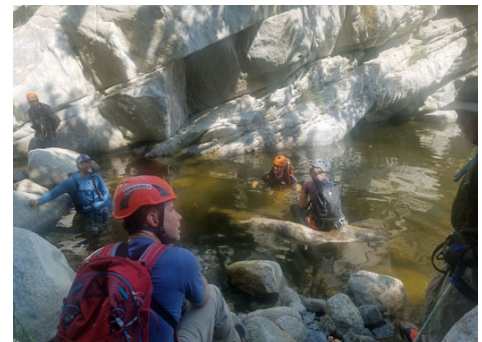
**Blake searching in brush along North Fork.**

From there we spread out and searched all the way up to where Webster Trails comes in. We then search from there all the way



**Blake and James on double repel with Tony Belaying.**

down to the 74 following the river the entire way.



**Taking a cooling off break in one of the pools.**

There are multiple waterfalls up to 120ft that required rappelling in the water to continue down the canyon. Since it was a hot day no one minded getting wet. Unfortunately, no sign of Roy was found.

#### RMRU Members Involved:

Cameron Dickinson,  
Blake Douglas, James Eckhardt,  
Corey Ellison, Michael George,  
Glenn Henderson, Eric Holden,  
Tony Hughes, Kaitlyn Purington,

## Hiker Lost

**August 27, 2020**  
**Dripping Springs,**  
**Cleveland National Forest**  
 Written by Tyler Shumway

I got a call from Gwenda Thursday night at 9:00 pm to do a hoist for a lost hiker out of Dripping Springs. I made it over to Hemet Ryan by 9:15 pm and geared up. Vinay arrived shortly after to provide backup.

Pilot Manny Romero and Technical Flight Officer Jerry Osterloh gave a quick brief that we had a 17-year-old male hiker who was off trail and out of water. No injuries were reported.



Tyler getting ready to go on Hoist.

We flew to the subject's location which was a rocky outcropping surrounded by chaparral. Aviation was able to lower me down and I contacted the subject without incident. I performed a quick assessment and provided a bottle of Gatorade. I then outfitted the subject with helmet and harness and briefed him on the hoist. Aviation extracted both the subject and I and landed near Vail Lake to an awaiting Deputy who would take the subject from there. Mission was over by 10:30 pm.

Subjects Plan:

The hiker was attempting the Agua Tibia Loop which is a 20-mile trail that starts out of Dripping Springs Campground. He began his hike at 3:00 pm with 4L of water and plenty of food. Temperatures were over 100 degrees that day. He was making his way down the Wild Horse Trail when he lost the trail and started bushwhacking. He then ran out of water by nightfall and did not have a headlamp. He was unable to locate the trail and called 911.

**RMRU Members Involved:**  
 Vinay Rao and Tyler Shumway.

## Another Hiker Lost

**August 29, 2020**  
**Dripping Springs,**  
**Cleveland National Forest**  
 Written by lake Douglas

RMRU was activated at 11pm on Saturday, August 29 for an overdue hiker in the Dripping Springs area. Cameron Dickenson and I were the only members able to respond.

The Dripping Springs area is, by the standards of mountain rescue, a low-hazard environment except for heat illness during summer days. Callouts to this area are generally due either to the aforementioned heat problems, or to relatively simple navigation errors such as lacking a light source after dark.

On arrival I was greeted by a large turnout of Riverside Sheriff deputies including the dog team, and we coordinated over the small

amount of available information. Our subject was not from the area, and had no apparent destination, but we had a phone ping located on the trail, less than half a mile from the trailhead. The best course in these kinds of circumstances is usually to check out the ping coordinates and proceed based on what we find there. Most often, the ping is accurate, and the subject is quickly located. Cameron was in the process of getting the truck, so I proceeded on foot with the dog team.

The subject was located at the ping coordinates, having gotten lost late in the afternoon, and then losing his only light source when his phone battery died. We walked him out without any complications.

Missions like this serve as a reminder to pack the Ten Essentials, and to follow the "Two is One, One is None" protocol for critical supplies such as lights and navigation.

**RMRU Members Involved:**  
 Cameron Dickinson and Blake Douglas.

## Single Lost Hiker

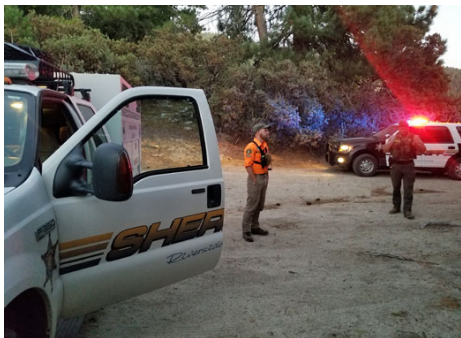
**August 30, 2020**  
**Seven Pines Trail Area**  
 Written by James Eckhardt

On Sunday evening at 5:30pm, we received a call for a lost hiker who was off trail between Fuller Ridge and Seven Pines. Cameron, Vinay, Blake, and I responded to the Seven Pines trailhead, which is still closed, but provided easier access to the subject's location. While we



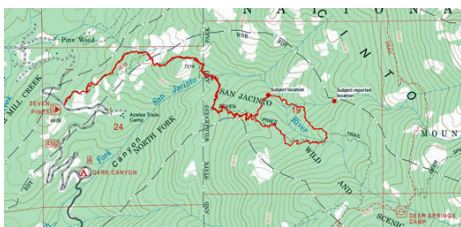
## MISSION REVIEWS JULY - SEPTEMBER 2020

were driving to the trailhead, Star-9 flew over the subject's location and alerted him that a ground team was on the way. Star-9 was not able to see the hiker.



Blake and Sheriff at Base before Mission.

Blake and I arrived at the trailhead and began our hike up Seven Pines trail. Our plan was to hike up to the elevation of the subject's last known location, as per a cellphone ping, and contour into the drainage. With Cameron and Vinay behind us by about ½ a mile, we cut off trail and did a callout. Thankfully, it was a still night, and we received a faint reply.



Rescue Members Tracks to Subject and back.

The location of the voice seemed to be much farther down canyon than we expected, but we hiked towards it and continued callouts. After crossing some steep and rocky terrain we made it to the subject. After assessing him, we hiked up to the trail, met with Vinay and Cameron and hiked back to the trailhead.

The subject had hiked to San Jacinto Peak via Marion Mountain trail

and lost the trail on the way down. He continued off trail down the North Fork of the San Jacinto River and then called 911. Dispatch instructed him to stay put, however the subject continued down canyon until he heard the helicopter. At some point, he fell and mildly sprained his ankle. Upon hearing the helicopter, he moved to higher ground, however tree cover and clothing that blended with the terrain prevented the helicopter from spotting him.



Cameron, James, Subject, Vinay, and Blake at 1am.

While we were fortunate to have a quiet night to do callouts and hear responses, moving after dispatch had instructed the subject to stay put could have greatly complicated the search. Unless in immediate danger, it is important to stop and stay put once you realize you are lost and have provided your location to emergency services. If the subject had stopped, this would have prevented the minor ankle sprain and would have allowed us to locate him more quickly.

#### RMRU Members Involved:

Cameron Dickinson, Blake Douglas, James Eckhardt, and Vinay Rao.

## Foothills Search

September 06, 2020

Menifee Area

Written by Vinay Rao

Early Sunday morning, RMRU was activated to begin a search for a lost person in the Menifee area. The team met at 6:00am at a residential area where the individual lived and briefed with SERT (Sheriff Emergency Response Team) and officers from the Menifee Police Department.

Members of the Riverside County Search Dogs – Mike Delannoy with K-9 dog "Journey" and Ember Delannoy with K-9 dog "Canyon" – had already begun the search earlier in the morning. During the briefing, the Command Post (CP) received word from the K-9 team that they had located the individual. Unfortunately, she was deceased.



Beth, Cameron, Josh, Vinay, and Raymond at Base.

RMRU team members Vinay and Cameron (Team 1) along with two deputies from the Menifee PD were sent to the individual's location to assess the terrain and

determine whether she could be brought out via a litter or needed to be hoisted out via the RSO Star 9 helicopter. After consultation with the Command Post we determined that a litter was the best way to go and team members Beth and Josh (Team 2) and several RSO deputies came to her location with the necessary equipment. We worked together to bring the deceased person down and the mission was completed before the extreme heat of the afternoon set in.

Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit wishes to express its condolences to the family and friends of the deceased person.

#### **RMRU Members Involved:**

Cameron Dickinson, Josh Gould, Beth Jeffery, Vinay Rao, and Raymond Weden.

## **Butte County Search**

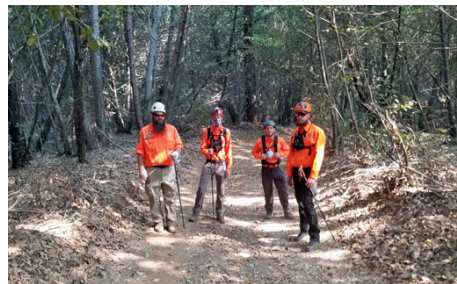
**September 18, 2020**

**Burn Area in Butte County**

**Written by Josh Gould**

On September 14th, RMRU and all other rescue teams in California were notified of a county in Northern California needs help with searching the scar area of the Bear Fire (North Complex Fire). Butte County has been hit by another fire. Our team quickly started putting together schedules to coordinate when and who would be able to go help. Eric, Tony, Tyler, James, and I were the first available to respond. Friday September 18th, the five of us headed about six hundred miles north. Friday night we arrived at the command post

to check in and get an overview for the next couple days. The command post and campgrounds were located at Loafer Creek Campground, the southeastern part of the burn scar.



**Tony, James, Tyler, and Josh on dirt road in unburned Search Area.**

On Saturday morning, we were given a briefing of what to look for and the areas we would be searching. RMRU was put on a task force with a couple of other SAR teams. We all stayed on the same team within the task force. We had the task of inspecting an area that had not been searched by any team yet and believed to be untouched by the fires. While clearing our areas, we marked any signs of fires close to structures and any hazards that could cause injury or restrict access to the areas.



**Tyler, Tony, Josh, and James getting Lunch Sacks at Command**

Once our area was cleared, we set out to help another team on our task force to clear their area. This area was hit by the fire. We were tasked to record the structures and to label them if they needed a follow up search within the footprint of the house or not. During the

search, we were able to help get out animals in need of food and water. Once this area was cleared, we set off back to the check in area and gave a debrief to our Task Force Leader. We then headed back to base camp and checked in with command and relaxed and recovered for the next day's work.

On Sunday morning, we were given another briefing with an update to the overall search. This new area was also in the burn scar area. These plots of lands had few buildings and lots of land. We searched the plots for building that may not be on our maps and any hazards.



**RMRU Truck with Butte County Dirt.**

Once cleared, we checked in with our Task Force Leader to see if any other teams needed help. Or entire Task force was wrapping up at about the same time. We wrapped up and headed back to command to check in. We were finished early enough to where we would be able to get back home not too late. We packed up and headed back.

On the way home, we were told the search would be downsizing due to the incredible turn out of assisting search teams. The area was covered faster because of the help of all the teams that turn out. The time frame of help went from two weeks to just five days. Our members that were on standby for the week and next weekend ended



MISSION REVIEWS JULY - SEPTEMBER 2020

up being called off.  
Our team had a total of 10 members willing to make the track up to the northern part of our state to assist another team. Thank you everyone that went and was willing to go. Great job to all the first responders involved with this search.

**RMRU Members Involved:**

James Eckhardt, Josh Gould, Eric Holden, Tony Hughes, and Tyler Shumway.

**Evidence Search**

September 26, 2020

**Burn Area in Butte County**

Written by Eric Holden

RMRU was called out to assist the Banning Police Department with an evidence search. We met at 7am and assisted with the search and were able to help them with their investigation. We were done in a few hours.

**RMRU Members Involved:**

Kase Chong, Cameron Dickinson, James Eckhardt, Michael George, Josh Gould, Eric Holden, Shani Pynn, Vinay Rao, Tyler Shumway, and Raymond Weden.

**Raymond Weden Profile**

(continued from Page 3)

He let me know he was on RMRU and there was a mission going on. As soon as work was over he was going to go help. From there I decided it was time for me to join the team.

I have been a member of RMRU for just over 6 years now. I am currently on my 3rd year as board member for the team as well. In this time I have been on more call outs than I can recall.

There will always be a few missions that I will remember for the rest of my life. The missions that are on the forefront of my memory are the ones where you know beyond a shadow of a doubt you save a life. Some missions are fairly routine in that someone gets off trail momentarily and you assist in guiding them back on track. Other missions you find yourself helping people that are in dire need of your help and without it they would be in serious trouble. It is those missions I remember as the reason and motivation to press on through the night with bruised limbs and sore muscles. Totally worth it.

**Blake Douglas Profile**

(Continued from Page 3)

field, I think our assigned search area took about an hour. All three of us ended up on the news footage that evening, which meant we had to buy the team ice cream at the next meeting. I picked up a bucket of the cheap stuff.

**Experience and Teamwork**

Like many of our subjects, I definitely overestimated my outdoor experience prior to joining. I'd done some hiking, some wilderness camping, some climbing, but not anything approaching the level demanded by our missions. I'm indebted to the patience and instruction of practically everyone on the team for the amount of learning I've experienced. I particularly enjoy being at that Socratic junction where "I know that I don't know" - that there's still so much left for me to do.

**On Balancing Team and Life**

I'm fortunate to be at a place in my life and marriage where I can contribute my efforts to RMRU without significantly compromising anything except my wife's patience with my perpetually inaccurate estimates of when I'll be home. To date, I think my tally of missions is somewhere around 60. Part of the reason I feel inspired to respond so frequently, and for my wife to support this, is the fact that our missions are not just public service, but they have a definitive result; I know that I helped that person or saved that life; it's invaluable to know that what I'm doing has real meaning.



**Mountain Rescue Association**

*Consists of 100 teams  
with over 2,500 search and rescue volunteers  
located in the United States and Canada.*

*RMRU joined MRA in 1961 is a regular member.*

*RMRU hosted the MRA California Regions  
Tracking Recertification in March 2020*

# ABOUT RIVERSIDE MOUNTAIN RESCUE UNIT

**FOUNDED 1961**

**MEMBER MOUNTAIN RESCUE ASSOCIATION 1963**

**GOVERNING BODY: RIVERSIDE COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT**

**MEMBERS: ORIGINAL: 6 | CURRENT MEMBERS: 31**

**ANNUAL BUDGET: ORIGINAL \$200 | CURRENT \$15,000**

**MISSIONS: TOTAL OVER 2,000 | AVERAGE PER MONTH: 4.2**

## RMRU BOARD MEMBERS 2020

**Glenn Henderson - President**

**Ray Weden - 1st Vice-President | Eric Holden - 2nd Vice-President**

**Shani Pynn - Secretary | Kevin Kearn - Member at Large**



## BECOME A SUSTAINING MEMBER



### SUSTAINING MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Your Donation is deductible from both your state and federal taxes

RMRU tax ID number for Not-for-Profit status 95-2497048

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

#### Membership Types:

- ☐ Benefactor Club \$1,000 +
- ☐ Summit Club \$500
- ☐ Patron Club \$200
- ☐ Century Club \$100
- ☐ Supporting Club < \$100

**Please send your donation to:**

**Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit  
43950 Acacia Street  
Hemet, California 92544**