

Training Winter Snow Shakedown

January 7-8, 2017
Tamarack Valley
2017-T01

Written by Eric Holden

Every year the team has our Winter Shakedown. This is a training where we go through and test our gear to make sure it is all ready for the numerous winter missions we get. This year was a small turn out due to an MRA meeting happening on the same day. Five of us set out from the tram at 6:30 am towards Tamarack Valley.



RMRU Pysched about Training
Photo by Eric Holden.

The weather started with Freezing rain, turned into sleet that was followed by snow all within an hour of setting out. For anyone that has hiked in weather, they know, freezing rain is by far the worst conditions. Top that with 30-40 mph winds and it made for a fun start.



Here comes the Sleet
Photo by Eric Holden.

We reached our campsites within an hour and setup where we would be spending the night. Tony and myself started building our Quinzhee (Snow cave) while everyone else set up their tents. Eventually everyone helped with the building of our quinzhee and by the end it could fit all five of us.



Tony and Donny building Kitchen
Photo by Eric Holden.

After all our gear was stored we brought out our pickets, ice axes, and ropes and setup a few anchoring systems. Lots of talk and practice on ice axe arrest, Boot-Axe Belay, and deadman snow anchors.



RMRU Training in Snow
Photo by Eric Holden.

After our technical training, we transitioned into Avalanche beacon usage. One team member would bury one of our beacons and the rest would need to work as a team to find either one or two beacons buried in the snow. While on our mountains we don't really have avalanche terrain, the team is frequently called in to Out-of-County missions where avalanches are of high possibility.



**RMRU Winter Kitchen (Cameron, Donny, Matt, Tony)
Photo by Eric Holden.**

After an afternoon of training we had a great dinner as we packed in some unorthodox back-country food. Pub burgers and sausages. Big thanks to Tony for carrying an Iron skillet up the mountain.



**Dinner in Style
Photo by Eric Holden.**



Why RMRU Packs are Heavy
Photo by Eric Holden.

After a great dinner, we bedded down for the night. Tony and myself all snug in our snow shelter.



Good-night Tony in Snow Shelter
Photo by Eric Holden.



**Eric, Will this thing work?
Photo by Tony Hughes.**

We woke in the morning to freezing conditions but beautiful weather. Another great breakfast consisting of Smoked Gouda, Egg, and Sausage breakfast burritos. We destroyed and distributed our snow shelter and kitchen and then returned to the tram. One more winter shakedown completed.

RMRU Members Involved: Cameron Dickinson, Donny Goetz, Eric Holden, Tony Hughes, and Matt Jordon.