

Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit

Canyoneering Kern River

July 25, 2020

FUN 2020-001

Written by Eric Holden.

Nine RMRU members got together to do some canyoneering in Salmon Creek and Seven Teacups out of Kernville as a fun, off the books training. The first canyon, Salmon Creek, involved 5 rappels with the last being a 100-foot free hanging rappel off a 30-foot chock stone. All of this is great training for walking off trail and down canyon bottoms. Also, the technical rope work is great training. By the end of a canyoneering trip everyone is comfortable doing repels in bad conditions, like a heavy rain or snow. Even if the air is warm, the water is cold, so everyone had a full wetsuit on for the length of the canyon.



Salmon Creek Chock Stone, James starting Repel.



Eric under Chock Stone going Free Repel.



Corey on Free Repel.



Eric heading into the Pool.



James at end of Repel in the water as Josh looks on.

After a long day of canyoneering and a float in the Kern River we all went back to our campsite for the night. Just as we were about to start up the campfire we heard “HELP!!! HELP!!! CALL 911, BROKEN LEGS!!” being shouted from a climbing crag known as the Kernville Slabs. We all just looked at each other “Time to Roll!” and while everyone started getting gear, I called 911. After about a 5-minute talk with emergency services I started up after the rest of the team. I made sure everyone on our team knew that we were not Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit, but just a group of climbers coming to aid. Once we reached the base of the crag, we found our subject scooting down the trail being helped by family members.

Turns out he had climbed the 50-meter route and was being lowered off the anchors with a 70-meter rope. To be lowered down he would have needed 100-meter of rope. And unfortunately, his belay partner was not tied into the other end and the rope went through the belay device. He took a 30-meter fall to the base of the rock and had a compound fracture of one leg and sprained the other ankle.

We did a medical assessment on him and there was no sign or symptoms of spinal injury. He was very determined to get down to the ambulance so we helped out with a nice splint and helped make sure the path was clear of rocks, spiky bushes and any other obstacles as he continued to butt scoot all the way back down to the trailhead. About an hour later we passed him off to EMS with great thanks all around. Even though we tried to hide our affiliation with RMRU, as we were not acting as part of the team called out by the Sheriff, they quickly could tell that we were a well-organized rescue machine, and not just a bunch of random climbers.



Group back at camp after Rescue.

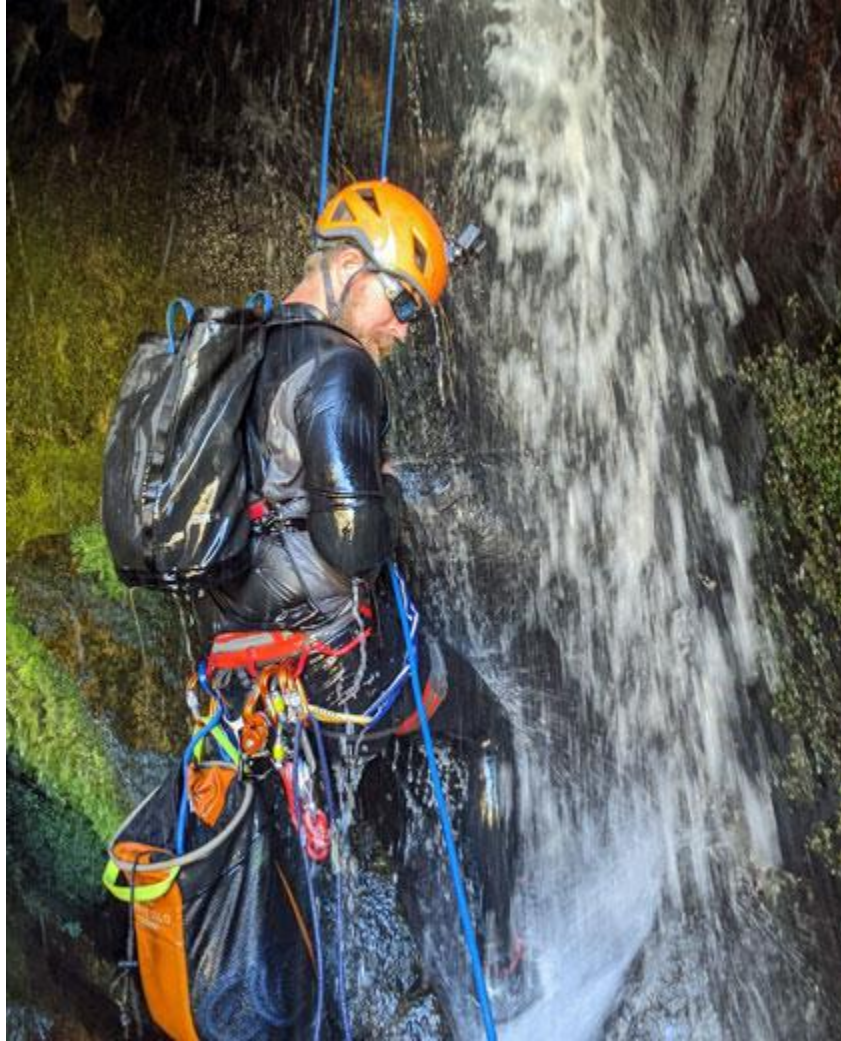
We got back to the campsite for some much needed, R&R before heading down Seven Teacups the next morning. The 7 teacups, ironically named “Dry Creek” is a wet and wild tributary to the Kern River with about 10 rappels, many being in direct waterfalls and some places you just run and jump down into the next Teacup.



James starting a wet Repel.



Blake on Repel in the Waterfall.



Josh in the water with Rope bag on Repel.



Shani at end of Repel unhooking rope.



**Some of the Teacups do not require a repel, just lots of guts to just go for it and jump.
Michael George in the air.**

A wonderful time was had by everyone before heading back to Riverside County to start rescuing people in our own area of the woods.

RMRU Members: Kase Chong, Blake Douglas, James Eckhardt, Corey Ellison, Michael George, Josh Gould, Eric Holden, Shani Pynn, and Tyler Shumway.