



Man and three boys missing

November 11, 1980
Mt. San Jacinto
1980-051

At 11:00 PM only 17 hours after having an all night technical mission (see No. 1980-050), we received a call from the Banning office of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department for a Search and Rescue mission in the San Jacinto Mountains.

The team met and set up base camp at the base of the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway. Once there, we were informed by the deputy that a 41 year old man, his two sons, and a friend of the boys were overdue in returning from a day hike from the upper station of the tram to Mt. San Jacinto and back. The group was not equipped to stay out for a night, and with temperatures dipping down into the low 30's it could be tough for the group. With Jim Fairchild and Rick Pohlers not feeling well, it was decided that Jim would stay at the lower station with the rescue van, and Rick and Mary Bowman would run base and radio relay from the upper station. A team of four, consisting of Don Chambers, Tony Loro, Craig Beasley and Joe Erickson would hike for the peak and check the summit shelter and the surrounding area. Bernie McIlvoy and Kevin Walker were assigned to search to the Hidden Lake junction, and then around to Round Valley. Both teams started hiking a little after 1:00 AM and continued through the night. just before dawn the Chambers team reached the summit with no major clues being found. While Don's team grabbed some snack food and rested, Joe Erickson now joined up with Bernie and Kevin, started for the Wellman divide to try and cut tracks at the junction. After resting, Don's group started up again carefully searching around the summit and the Mt. San Jacinto trail junction. Slightly after 8:00 AM they spotted what looked like the right type of tracks heading down the trail that leads west to Little Round Valley. it wasn't long after that, when Don, Tony and Craig found the group hiking back towards the summit.



Jim Fairchild

RESCUERS AND RESCUEES - The faces of the father, his two sons and a friend, do not really show just how tiring it was to spend a cold night out in the wilderness. Encircling the group are RMRU members Craig Beasley, Tony Loro and team leader Don Chambers. Don's team found the party below the summit of Mt. San Jacinto.

Don's group immediately broke out the stoves and started heating water for hot chocolate and hot oatmeal. While the group stoked up on the food, they told of how they had reached the summit in the previous afternoon and when they started back, instead of going east to the tram, they went towards Little Round Valley. Well after dark they had reached Deer Springs. Since they did not have flash lights and there was no moon, they could not read the trail signs. They finally stopped and spent the night huddled up near a sign. When there was enough light to see in the morning they realized that they were going towards Idyllwild instead of the tram. With that they started back towards Mt. San Jacinto. It was just below the San Jacinto saddle when the two groups converged. So, after resting, Don's group started back for the tram. At about noon a very tired but happy group arrived at the upper station to be met by relatives. With all secured, a fairly tired group of rescuers headed for home.

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.