

Overdue male youth

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Tahquitz Canyon
1981-029

By Craig Beasley

There I was, sitting at my desk drawing up some geologic maps when ring... ! I picked up the phone and heard the increasingly familiar "Hi Craig, this is Mary (McIlvoy). You have a mission - can you go?" Having told her yes, she informed me the plan was to meet at the Banning substation at 5:00 a.m. to begin searching for an overdue male youth in the infamous Tahquitz Canyon. Five o'clock would come awfully early, so geology would have to wait till some other day.

RMRU assembled at 5:00 a.m. at the substation and rolled to Ann Dolley's (our usual helispot for Tahquitz Canyon missions) to meet Don Landells at 6:00 a.m. We split into three search teams, Bernie McIlvoy and Craig Britton, Kevin Walker and Rick Pohlers, and Bob Attride, Mark Rhoads and myself to cover the lower, middle and upper portions of the canyon, respectively. Don arrived on schedule as usual and deposited the teams in the appropriate places.

The assignment for each team was to search down canyon attempting to cut tracks of the overdue teenager. With all teams down in the canyon, radio communication was marginal so Don flew Walt Walker to a high point on the ridge to act as radio relay between the field teams and base. A few prospective tracks were turned, none of which yielded a concrete lead. While approaching the ends of our assignments, the Sheriff was notified that a boy fitting the description of our subject had been seen in Palm Springs earlier that morning. We continued our assignments and having turned nothing, coupled with the earlier sighting of the boy decided our job was done and we headed for Carrow's in Banning for lunch.

A special note for those who have known and appreciated Tahquitz Canyon for years past - it is no longer the same. Due to the absence of ground cover because of last year's fire, the ground essentially let loose in this month's (September 7th) intense rains. A torrent with incredible force must have ravaged the canyon to cause the radical changes that have occurred. Boulders six feet in diameter are piled where there were none, twenty foot tall trees are now horizontal, and perhaps the most devastating change, RMRU's favorite swimming and diving pool has been reduced to a four inch deep trickle as the pool has completely filled with sand. The large flat rock we camp on during our annual Tahquitz Canyon training is covered with large boulders and our shade tree rests upon the rocks. It was quite disheartening to say the least to find that the ascent out of the

canyon prior to arrival at the camp site is no longer necessary as it is now merely a short jump into a large sandbox that used to be the best swimming hole in the canyon. All we can do is hope for a good winter that will produce a run off strong enough to clean the sand from all the pools and return our favorite spot to its well remembered condition.

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.