



Two did not return from short hike

September 2, 1985
Lawler Lodge, San Jacinto Mtns
1985-039

By Rob Gardner

The weather was mild as a small group of RMRU volunteers began to gather at Lawler's Lodge. A Riverside Sheriff's Office (RSO) deputy explained that three adults had picnicked at Lawler's Camp earlier in the day. He said that after the three people ate, two had gone for a short day hike, and failed to return. The third person reported the incident to the RSO, who then called out RMRU.

With Walt Walker at base camp as Ops Leader and Mary Bowman at the radio van, searchers hiked to the Point Last Seen (PLS). Tracking the subjects was complicated by the numerous amount of people that had left tracks in the area earlier in the day. Also, the darkness of the night and the ground covering made tracking difficult.

The searchers split into two groups. Mel Krug and Kathy Davis proceeded to search the area surrounding the PLS gradually enlarging the area of search. Steve Bryant and Rob Gardner proceeded down the main drainage, which is a general area of interest to many day hikers. Footprints and litter were obvious as Steve and Rob continued down the drainage, calling out to the subjects in the dark, shining flashlights into the shrubs, and looking for any evidence of the overdue couple.

The shouting paid off when the couple suddenly called back from the darkness. They were quickly reached and found to be in good condition. They had curled up under some trees and covered themselves with leaves and pine needles, to keep warmer.

The two said they had lost track of the time and their location as they hiked earlier in the day. They did not have any idea of the direction of their picnic site. They stopped as it got dark and remained where they were. They had fallen asleep, and were awakened by Steve and Rob shouting out. The lady was particularly tired but both people made the hike back up the drainage, with the assistance of the RMRU. Mel and Kathy hiked over to assist and a bit later Glenn Henderson and Kevin Walker arrived to assist.

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