

Seven year old boy missing from campground

August 7, 1999
Black Mountain Campground
1999-016

By Pete Carlson

Friday afternoon seven-year-old Allen, his Mother, two brothers, and a friend went camping in the Boulder Basin Area. It was Allen's first camping trip and they were having lots of fun. Saturday morning around 8:15am they were playing in some boulders when Alan thought he heard a waterfall and went to find it. His brothers and friend went back to camp 100 yards away. His Mom asked, where is Allen? They told her and she went to get him. After 15 minutes she could not find him and went to find a ranger. At 10:45 RMRU's pagers went off.

Base camp was set up next to Alan's camp and by 12:00 noon the first teams were in the field looking for tracks from the Point-Last-Seen (PLS).

I arrived about 1:00pm and choose an assignment 2 ½ miles from the PLS to go down a ridge yelling and looking for tracks. We drove a dirt road to the beginning of the ridge and as we started out we were team 7, with 6 two-person teams already searching. I had a newer member with me and explained what our assignment would be to him. We started down the ridge to a rock outcropping about ¼ of a mile down the ridge. When we got there we could see the whole area where Allen could have gone; it was about 15 square miles.

We gave our first yell, ALLEN. After 10 seconds we heard, What do you want? It was coming from 1,200 feet below us and across on the next ridge. We yelled again and the answer was, I am coming to you.

We tried to yell to Allen to stay put and we would come to him. We called base and ask for more people in our area that we had voice contact with the subject.

We started a traverse down and across to the next ridge. It was very steep and some 3rd class climbing. We tried yelling every five minutes, but Allen did not answer again. After 30 minutes we were on the next ridge down about 400 feet. This time Allen answered, but he was no longer on the ridge but in the bottom of the canyon we had just crossed. So we started going back down from the ridge into the canyon. This time Allen answers every time we yelled. After a 20-minute decent into the canyon we got visual contact with Allen. Shortly after we were together.

Allen was calm and not scared at all. He said he was thirsty and hungry. It was now 8 hours that he had been lost. During this time we had gotten Steve DeJesus from Landells Aviation with a helicopter to help with an air search. He flew over us and we asked him to find a spot where he could pick us up. While we gave Allen kool-aid and food, Steve found a spot on the ridge where he could do a 1 runner touch down on a large boulder. We told him it would take us 45 minutes or more to get to it, so he went to pick up other teams that were all over the mountain and take them back to base.

After 20 minutes of food and water we started the traverse and climb to the helispot. It ended up taking over 1 hour to get to the boulder through the thick brush and up the steep slopes. Steve then returned and picked the three of us up and took us back to base around 5:45pm. This was a text book search and it went just like it should have. We had 8 teams in the field and 2 more just starting out when



Jim Fairchild

first contact was made with Allen. Teams were on the tracks and others were out cutting ahead for tracks and others were out, like my team, just yelling. It was true team-work that made this search a success. Everyone from base camp to field personnel deserves credit for this find.

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.