



## Two PCT Trail Workers Overdue

**December 15th, 2004**  
**Garner Valley**  
**2004-034**

by Travis Henderson

On Wednesday, December 15 a group of ten or so volunteers set out to do maintenance and clean up on a section of the PCT near Garner Valley. The group set out in the morning, at different times, and were supposed to hike a little ways until they hit the PCT. Once at the PCT they were going to head south to do their work. Two members of the party, Ben York, 80, and Doris Peddy, 78, apparently didn't recognize the PCT when they got to it and began heading north. The rest of the group realized that something was wrong when the two didn't return for lunch. Calls were made to the Sheriff's Department and RMRU was activated that evening.

After setting up base, searchers looked around Ben and Doris' cars to try and determine what their tracks looked like. Unfortunately many people had been walking around the cars and leaving their own prints. It was also not known exactly what their prints looked like but a member of the work crew knew that Ben had on a new pair of boots. A print was found that had a very deep tread so it was thought that it might be Ben's.

RMRU members on the first field team were Patrick McCurdy, Henry Negrete and Travis Henderson. Also on Team 1 were Joy Barba and Steve Sanford from the Riverside County Search Dogs. Team 1 was driven up a bumpy dirt road to within a quarter mile of the PCT. There, they set out in a strong, cold wind and began trying to find any tracks heading north on the PCT. Team 1 searched very carefully and painstakingly for any sign of Ben or Doris's prints. The dogs were eager to go on their own but were held back for fear of disturbing any tracks. Earlier in the day a man on horseback, with a mule following, had made two attempts to locate Ben and Doris. After the horse and mule had gone down the trail twice there were not many prints left. No prints matching what was thought to be Ben's were found.

After a half-mile or so of slow, methodical searching Joy mentioned that her dog had been pulling unusually hard and asked if the dog could be released to try and sniff out where the subjects were. It was agreed that since no tracks were being found the dog would probably not disturb any sign so the dog was released to follow its nose. Within one minute of being released barks were

heard and the dog was dancing around and running back and forth. Ben and Doris were found. They were in good condition but without flashlights. They were each handed one and after a short hike they were inside warm vehicles and headed back to base.

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.