



Tramway Race

September 28th, 2005
Palm Springs Tramway
2005-026

by Will Carlson

The mid-afternoon sun was upon me and sweat was pouring off my face like a waterfall. My legs were screaming out in pain as I quickly traversed upward to the overdue hiker. With voice contact this one (the rescue) was as good as in the bag.

The call went out to meet at the lower parking lot of the Palm Springs Tramway to search for an overdue hiker. The hiker was said to have started hiking the day before, and hadn't returned. Team members Ray Hussey and Patrick McCurdy were already in the field and in voice contact with the hiker, so my dad and I headed up to assist with a large group of members right behind us. We flew out of the Tramway and reached the area where voice contact had been made.

From the top of the Skyline Trail we realized that because of an echoing voice, Ray and Patrick were not in the correct drainage. With a helicopter inbound we knew we would be hard pressed to make the rescue, but we went for it anyway. Knowing the area really well, my dad and I headed down just below the rock bands to traverse over and up to the missing man's location.

This was the second time this year I found myself racing a helicopter by foot. Remembering my success back in April helped me push harder and harder. Within minutes, however, the helicopter was hovering above the missing hiker. The find was lost, but there was still a chance for us to reach the man. Teams headed in the direction of the hovering helicopter and missing hiker. I was within 100 feet of the man when the helicopter performed a hovering pick-off. With the man safely down to the tramway parking lot we returned to the upper tram, and possibly to another mission.

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.