



## Tahquitz Rock Body Recovery

**January 24, 2006**  
**Tahquitz Rock**  
**2006-01-24**

by Glenn Henderson

We received a call about 12:30 p.m. on Tuesday, January 24. The Forest Service was using GPS units to map the trail around Tahquitz rock when they came upon the body of a young man that had obviously fallen from a great height.

At the time of this find, the sheriffs department received a call of a missing person from the Idyllwild area. Putting the two calls together the sheriffs department called us to help with the recovery.

When we arrived at the accident scene, we found former team member Melinda Lyon with the forest service there as part of the mapping team. It was nice to see old friends but not under these circumstances. It was determined that the deceased was indeed the missing person from Idyllwild. He was known to be an expert rock climber and often did free solo climbs on Tahquitz. We think he was climbing Open Book, a 5.9-rated route. We believe he fell about 300 feet, near the top of the climb.

Free solo climbing does allow a great amount of freedom but does not allow for any mistakes by either yourself or Mother Nature. Our climber had been missing since the day before. It had been very windy, which could have caused a problem, but we will never know what really happened. Daylight was rapidly burning out so we packaged our climber and began the long trip out. We were able to get to Lunch Rock before daylight gave out. It was another 2 hours to do belays from tree to tree to slowly lower the litter down the steep slope to the Ernie Maxwell trail and back to the parking lot in Humber Park.

RMRU personnel on the mission were Deano Esades, Lew Kingman, Pete and Will Carlson, Brad Scott, Patrick McCurdy, Gwenda Yates, Bruce Sanny, Jim & Grace Manues, Terry Greenstein, and John Dempsey.

We also owe a special thanks to Forest Service personnel Lee Beyer and Jim Russell. They were there when the climber was found and stayed to help with the evacuation. They were exceptional help. They got on the litter from the start and refused to accept any breaks, working the entire time from the start of the carry out all the way to Humber Park. Thanks for your help, it was greatly appreciated!!

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.