



Search For Missing Female Hiker

March 19, 2007

**Dear Springs Trail, San Jacinto State Park
2007-004**

by Glenn Henderson

Around 10 p.m., Sunday Night, Deputy Gery Barba , our liaison with the Sheriff's department called me with a "heads up" that we were going to get a call from dispatch for a missing hiker on the Deer Springs Trail. Dispatch called right away and said the missing hiker had been spotted by Star 90, (the Sheriff's helicopter unit). They also gave us the LAT / Long and she had been told via loudspeaker to stay put.

I thought "Great, a quick in and out. Get her and still get home for a little sleep." It didn't work as I hoped.

paged the team out and called Idyllwild team member Lee Arson, to get to the trailhead, meet up with the deputy on scene and take off to get her. Lee called me and relayed that the husband had notified authorities his wife, Karen Keller, was overdue from a hike to Suicide Rock via the Deer Springs Trail. Lee headed up the trail followed by Henry Negrete and then myself. Gwenda Yates was running base and sent more teams up the Marion Mountain drainage where we should be able to get her between the two sets of teams.

It was a nice cool evening with little wind, a great night to be hiking. We got to the area she was supposed to be in around 12:30 a.m. doing lots of calling out but no answer. We search for another hour but still no answer. We finally called Star 90 to fly up and shine their light on her but they could not lift off due to a cloud cover that had Hemet Valley socked in. We searched until 4:30 and then worked our way back to base camp. As teams grabbed a couple of hours sleep more team members arrived for the morning assignments.

We were up and moving about 6:30 and started sending teams in on different assignments, some re doing what had been done the night before. We were becoming concerned that she may have fallen during the night in the Marion Mountain drainage as there was a lot of water running and it has some steep, slippery waterfalls.

Star 90 was finally able to lift off about 9 a.m. and went back to the place last seen but could not locate her. They started a search pattern as we on the ground continued our own assignments. About 10:30 Star 90 radioed that they spotted our missing hiker heading out on the Deer Springs Trail at a very fast pace. They used the loudspeaker asking her to stop or acknowledge them but she would not stop. Fortunately team member Deano Esades was on board having hitched a ride up with Star 90 from Hemet.

Star 90 flew ahead of our subject and Deano was let out to intercept her. When he did he radioed that it was our overdue hiker and that she was in good shape and wanted to hike out. Deano said ok and hiked out with her. All field teams were then called back to base.

Team members involved in the search were: Jim Manues, Grace Manues, Dave Webb, Jacoba Vanleeuwen, John Dempsey, Dana Potts, Patrick McCurdy, Lew Kingman, Jim Bakos, and Jeff Toscas. Sheriff's Department personnel in addition to Gery, were Brian Whitaker and Andy Ybarra.



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.