



Lost Hiker at Night

October 22, 2007
Santa Rosa Peak
2007-022

by Lee Arnson

Monday, October 22, 2007 was quite possibly the windiest day on record in Riverside County. At around 9:00 p.m., Gwenda Yates, our team president, called me and asked for me to respond to the Cactus Spring trail head in Pinyon for a helicopter rescue involving a stranded hiker on the North side of Santa Rosa Peak.

I met team member Kevin Walker in Mountain Center and could hardly open the door to the rescue van because of the wind. Kevin and I were both confused as to how we were going to run a helicopter mission in these conditions.

As Kevin and I pulled into the parking lot we both noticed that the helicopter was waiting for us and that there was no wind. We proceeded to be briefed by the pilots and were told they only wanted one rescue member to be flown in to do a night hoist rescue. The other member would stay at base in the parking lot in case backup assistance was needed.

As luck would have it, I was the one chosen to go into the field. I quickly packed the team's sit harness, an extra helmet and our med-pack because we did not know if the subject was injured or not. Flying off into total darkness, using only night vision goggles, was very exciting.

The subject was located by the pilots using the GPS coordinates they had charted earlier in the evening when they had spotted the stranded hiker. We were able to fly directly to the hiker, and hover about 100 feet above. I was lowered down and the pilots flew off so I could make voice contact with him, who it turns out, was only about 100 yards away.

I approached the subject who told me his name was Pierre and that he was not hurt. I helped him get into the sit harness and he was hoisted into the helicopter. I soon followed, and we all flew back to base. This mission was yet another example of the many I have been fortunate to be involved in where the helicopter pilots saved the day with their unwavering skills.

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.