



Two Hikers Lost in North Fork Canyon

**January 9, 2010
North Fork Canyon
2010-001**

Written by Ralph Hoetger

The call went out to RMRU just after midnight. Sleeping soundly, I missed the page. Two subjects were missing in the area of the North Fork drainage. The reporting party, the mother of one of the hikers, stated that on Friday, January 8th at approximately 1000 hours her daughter went with a male friend to hike up to the North Fork water falls. At 1600 hours the mother had received a call from her daughter stating that she and her friend were lost somewhere in the hills east of the North Fork drainage. The mother became worried, knowing that her daughter and friend were ill-prepared for a night in the foothills. The mother had then called Hemet Police and the Riverside County Sheriff's helicopter (Star 90) was called out after dark. Star 90 had been unable to make visual contact with the subjects.

A sheriff's deputy was waiting at the subjects' car, which was parked just off of the north side of Highway 74 near the Hemet/Idyllwild fire control road. Kevin Walker set up base while team members began to arrive. At about 0100 Nick Nixon and Chuck Springer started looking for the subjects' tracks. They picked up their tracks quickly and followed them up the fire control road and then onto some unmapped mountain bike trails. Nick and Chuck tracked the subjects about 1.5 miles up one of the trails until it appeared that the subjects had taken off cross country in rugged, brushy terrain. Nick and Chuck did a good job tracking and stayed with the tracks through the rest of the night.

About that time Lee Arnson decided to go back to Idyllwild and "clear" some of the trails and power line easements below Idyllwild. Since he was by himself he decided to call me at 0230 and see if I was available to partner up with him. I joined the search at that time. Lee and I cleared the trails, power line easements, and roads below Idyllwild Arts Academy, and then returned to base. By then other RMRU members were arriving at base and it was determined that we would try to get some sleep until sun-up.

At sun-up we formed additional teams and returned to the field. Lee and I were

assigned to hike up the west side of the North Fork drainage. Will Carlson headed toward Hemet/Ryan Airfield for a possible air search in Star 90. Lee and I passed through the fenced area of the Metropolitan Water property and started to hike up their maintenance road. We hiked for about an hour, moving along the west side of the North fork drainage, gaining elevation as we went. We yelled out the subjects' names, hoping for a contact. At approximately 0730 we came around a bend in the canyon and almost ran into the subjects. They were tired, thirsty, and hungry, but otherwise OK. Lee and I hiked them out and returned them to base to waiting family members and the mission concluded on a happy note. GOOD JOB RMRU!

Members present: Lee Arnson, Will Carlson, Michael George, Lew Kingman, Tom Mahood, Grace Manues, Jim Manues, Patrick McCurty, Tom Meyers, Nick Nixon, Chuck Springer, Jeff Toscas, Kevin Walker, Les Walker and Dave Webb

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.