



3 Missing Hikers

May 7, 2013
San Gorgonio
2013-014

Written by Pete Carlson

Three hikers left the Heart Bar Campground near the Fish Creek trailhead in the San Gorgonio Wilderness to climb Mt San Gorgonio on Sat May 4. When they did not return they were reported missing around noon on Sunday May 5. The San Bernardino Search and Rescue Teams started a search that day and continued on Monday May 6. They asked Riverside if we could search the lower part of Whitewater Canyon and the PCT in that area for any signs of the missing hikers on Tuesday May 7.

RMRU and Desert Search and Rescue (DSAR) met with the Riverside County (Civilian Emergency Response Team) (CERT) at the road going into Whitewater Canyon to make a search plan. RMRU sent 4 teams into the field to cover different areas of the canyon and DSAR drove around to check out another area called Raywood Flats. Two RMRU teams headed right up the Whitewater Canyon on the PCT and then split up, one going up the Canyon bottom and the other continuing on the PCT.

Two other RMRU teams drove to Mission Creek Trailhead to start into the Canyon and up the PCT higher up. Lee, Helene, and Craig came in from Mission Creek and headed up the PCT. Matt and Pete came in from Mission Creek and went up the Main Canyon to the junction of the South Fork and the North Fork. These 5 members all had 30+ pound packs with overnight gear and cover around 15 miles during the day. The weather started out with heavy clouds and rain, but ended up clearing a bit and actually getting fairly warm.

Everyone finished their assignments by 4pm with no sign of the missing hikers. As it turned out the hikers had started down the upper Whitewater Canyon, but not gotten very far. They were found by helicopter sighting on early Wednesday morning May 8 and in pretty good shape for having been out for 4 days and 4 nights. They got to the summit late on Saturday and it was getting dark and cold as they came down to a section of the trail that had ice on it. They attempted to go off trail and drop below the ice, but they never found the trail again and became lost.

RMRU team members present: Lee Arnson, Pete Carlson, Kirk Cloyd, Glenn

Henderson, Matt Jordon, Helene Lohr, Chad Marler, Frank Snider, Craig Wills, and Gwenda Yates.

Other Units: Desert Search and Rescue (DSAR) and Civilian Emergency Response Team (CERT).

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.