



PCT Hiker Rescue

May 1, 2014
Black Mt Campground Area
2014-014

Written by Glenn Henderson

We received a call from dispatch that there was a PCT (Pacific Crest Trail) through hiker that was out of water in the Black Mountain area. The through hikers are doing the PCT in one long push, 2500 miles from the Mexico border to the Canadian border. They all have trail names and we were looking for Santa's Helper.

Gwenda Yates and I met up with Les Walker at base. Cal Fire was on scene with two fire trucks plus an AMR (American Medical Response) ambulance. We also had team members Kevin Kearn, Eric Holden and Matt Jordon heading to base. We stopped them and had them all head to Snow Creek to meet up with DSAR (Desert Search and Rescue) to head up the PCT from there hoping to catch Santa's Helper in between us if he was still moving down the trail. Our subject has activated an emergency locator so we had a LAT/Long to go to. Les and I headed down the PCT toward the given location and saw some of the Cal Fire crew heading back to base.

We had only been on the trail about 45 minutes when we heard our Sheriff's helicopter Star 9 radio that they thought they could see him. At the same time Les and I saw a single set of tracks leading to where Star 9 was circling. It took about 10 minutes to hustle over to Star 9's area and sure enough it was Santa's Helper. It was easy to see how he got his name. He had a long white beard. He was in pretty good shape but was extremely cold and had lost his energy to hike. He was a 70 year old from Tennessee and had already hiked the Appalachian Trail in 2007. He said he felt that the altitude was affecting him and that he knew there were even higher elevations to come in the Sierra's so if he could get out he was going to quit and go home. We helped him walk to where Star 9 had landed. Then we loaded him plus Les and me into the helicopter. We all flew back to base and turned Santa over to AMR. AMR checked him out and transported him to a hospital. He was released the next day with a clean bill of health. The mission was wrapped up and everyone headed back home at 6:00 PM.

RMRU Members Involved: Glenn Henderson, Eric Holden, Matt Jordon, Kevin Kearn, Les Walker, and Gwenda Yates.

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.