

Tahquitz Rock Recovery

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Idyllwild
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Written by Eric Holden

The team had just spent about 6 hours on Long Valley Dome working on high angle technical rescues when our cellphones started alerting us of a fallen climber on Tahquitz (Lily) Rock. We quickly packed up our gear and took the tram back down to our vehicles. On our way to Humber Park we learned that the climber, Bryan Rockwood of San Diego, was killed during the fall and we were now on a recovery mission instead of a rescue.



RSO looking at Accident Sence
Photo by Eric Holden.

As we arrived at Humber, the Sheriff's Aviation unit was inspecting the accident scene. Two RMRU members and two coroners were inserted via hoist to lunch rock while the rest of us came up the climber's trail with additional gear. With the great assistance from two fellow climbers, we were able to get the deceased down from the off the rock face

and airlifted out.

We would like to express our thanks to the climbers that assisted with the recovery and our deepest condolences to the friends and family of Bryan.



Les being Lowered
Photo by Eric Holden.

Analysis of the accident: After speaking with multiple witnesses this is what we believe happened. Bryan and his partner were climbing Sahara Terror, a 5.7 six pitch route on the Northwest Recess of Tahquitz Rock. At some point in the climb Bryan was on lead and the piano size slab he was on came loose causing his death. Miraculously no other climbers were injured from the rock fall. This route is known to have loose rock and has claimed lives before.

RMRU Members Involved: Lee Arnson, Kirk Cloyd, Mike George, Glenn Henderson, Eric Holden, Lew Kingman, Rob May, Dana Potts, and Les Walker.

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.