



Missing Hiker Mt Baldy

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San Gabriel Mountains
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Written by Kevin Kearn

RMRU responded to an Office of Emergency Services (OES) request to assist the San Bernardino County Sheriff on Wednesday morning. San Bernardino SAR teams were searching for a 72-year old missing male in the vicinity of the southern side of Mt San Antonio (Elevation 10,068', AKA "Mt Baldy"). He was out hiking with his brother on Tuesday when the two got separated on the way down in late afternoon. His 70 yr-old brother walked out at 6:30am Wednesday morning after rescuers had searched all night for the two.

I was the only RMRU team member able to respond and it was difficult to get through morning LA traffic to the Sheriff's command post established at the Manker Flats Fire Station. The weather was clear and temperatures were in the 60s. Although winds seemed light, they were increasing as Santa Ana winds were expected later in the day. I checked into the command post at 10:00am and was put on standby. At least 8 teams were in the field and I would join up with three personnel from Sierra Madre Mountain Rescue who were still in route.

Shortly after my arrival, an elderly man was spotted vicinity of Goode Canyon, where my newly formed team, once assembled, was to search next. Things evolved quickly after some initial difficulty verifying that the elderly man was indeed our subject. While descending, he apparently missed the turn off the western ridge on the Mt Baldy Trail that follows into the draw toward the green ski hut. Instead, he drifted down the north slope of the ridge into the heights above Goode Canyon. Before the slope he was on became too steep for him to safely descend any further, he stopped, exhausted in this spot.

The helicopter on station that spotted him did not have a hoist, so while coordinating for a hoist-equipped aircraft, I was redirected to prepare to get picked up at an LZ and support the extraction. With winds quickly approaching, a Cal Fire Helicopter with paramedic already on board was tasked to support the mission. Still unsure if winds would allow the hoist, I joined the freshly arrived team from Sierra Madre that was

staging to quickly move up the Baldy trail and then descend to the subject in Goode Canyon ahead of teams that were redirected and approaching from below.

Fortunately for everyone, the pilots were able to hoist the subject before the winds made it impossible. We returned from our staging area and the subject was reunited with his family at the command post at 1230 hours. Both of the brothers were exhausted but in good condition.

RMRU Members Involved: Kevin Kearns.

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.