



Missing PCT Hiker Fuller Ridge

August 4-5, 2017

Fuller Ridge and Strawberry Cienega

2017-037X

Written by Pete Carlson

Training was going to be looking for the Irish PCT hiker missing since April. Eric and I decided we would go up early on Friday and set up camp and do some searching before the rest of the team came on Saturday. We each carried 2 gallons of water, so we could have a dry camp on the Fuller Ridge and search from there with day packs. With heavy packs we started up the Fuller Ridge Trail around 9am to our camp about 3+ miles up the Ridge. By 11am we had camp set up and after eating some food took off up the Fuller Ridge looking for likely places to search where someone might have slide off the trail in heavy winter snow.

We went up to where the trail turns 90 degrees and heads off the Ridge towards the Deer Springs Trail. From here we started back and would climb down drainages and look around. We came to one drainage on the West side that looked promising, so we went down farther than the others. We found a sleeping bag maybe 400 feet down the drainage. We continued another 400 feet down but found nothing else. We did not think the sleeping bag was his, but we packed it out anyway.

After more searching of drainages, we decided that without going way down each one we would never know if someone slide down or not. Since each one would take several hours to check out we decided to go back to camp and wait for others on Saturday to have teams search them. Once back in camp we found out we had a call out to help with an on-going search in Joshua Tree National Park on Saturday. No other members would be coming to help us.

We decided that we would stay at our camp for the night, there were going to be many other teams helping in J.T. and the two of us would not make much difference. We also talked to another member Cameron who said he would come join us on Saturday. It was decided we could not do much on the Fuller Ridge with just 3 members, so we would hike out at first light and meet Cameron in Idyllwild at 8am to search the Strawberry Cienega Drainage, which was a perfect assignment for a 3-person team.

The 3 of us hiked up the Devils Slide and over to the Strawberry Cienega Trail. We hike

down to the Cienega and just pasted it we dropped over the side and started down towards Humber Park. It was steep in many places, but we found ways to get down everything. We spread out as we came down looking for signs of anyone coming down. It was an enjoyable drainage to descend, but we did not find any signs of the missing PCT hiker. We will continue to search different areas in the months to come. Our thoughts go out to his Family and Friends and we hope we can resolve his missing case in the future.

RMRU Members Involved: Pete Carlson, Cameron Dickinson, and Eric Holden.

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.