

Rock Fall Fatality

August 26, 2017
Tahquitz Rock
2017-042

Written by Eric Holden

At 1530 we get a call out for a large rock slide on Tahquitz Rock, Multiple climbers down. Instantly my pulse picks up wondering about the details, how many, how far are they on the rock, etc. Our normal monthly meeting would be cancelled and all team members to report to Humber Park.

We would later find out that Jon Zuniga and his brother were climbing in an area known as the Larks. Rockfall occurred and seriously injured Jon's partner. Unfortunately, Jon was killed by the rockfall. By the time I arrived on scene Cal-Fire had already responded and was able to miraculously airlift out the injured climber. He had been pinned at the legs between a tree and fallen rocks near the top of the Larks. Members from RMRU, Cal Fire, and the Riverside Coroners hiked up to the base of the climb and recovered the deceased and brought him back down to Humber Park.



Rescuers waiting to start carry out

Photo by Eric Holden.

We have had a few fatalities in this area over the past few years due to loose rockfall. When climbing anywhere near the North Face of Tahquitz take extra caution as there are quite a few loose rocks in the area. We don't know if this was natural rockfall or pulled off while climbing, but we would like to remind all climbers to take the time when working a route to inspect all potentially loose rocks. When in doubt, don't touch it.



**Rescuers doing Carry Out
Photo by Eric Holden.**

Our thoughts and deepest condolences go out to Jon's friends and family.

RMRU Members Involved: Alex Rilloraza, Cameron Dickinson, Corey Ellison, Eric Holden, Glenn Henderson, Mike George, Raymond Weden, Shani Pynn, Tony, Hughes, Tyler Shumway, Wayne Smith.

Other Agency's Involved: RSO Coroner, RSO Aviation, Cal Fire.

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.