



Two Lost Hikers

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Ansel Peak, PCT
2017-044

Written by Glenn Henderson

We got a text message from Call Captain Gwenda Yates at noon that two people had called in that they were lost. Using cell phone technology, dispatch located them on the east side of the Pacific Crest Trail. This is in a closed area due to a forest fire four years ago. Didn't know why they were there but I met Cameron Dickinson at the Hemet Sheriff's substation and picked up one of our rescue trucks and headed to the Lake Hemet Sheriff's substation in the San Jacinto Mountains.

Sheriff's aviation Star 9 tried 4 or 5 times at different times in the afternoon, but the winds were 60 to 70 miles an hour and impossible to even get close to the location. From the Lake Hemet Sheriff's Station, we drove to the Zen Center planning on hiking up the trail from the Zen Center to the PCT and then north where we would drop off the PCT to the east. So much for plans as once Cameron and I got on the trail we discovered that there is no longer a trail due to the fire. It is burned and grown over making it impossible to find any semblance of a trail. So, it was cross country and a steep upward climb for over 1000' to the ridge near Ansel Peak.



**Looking back down at Zen Center
Photo by Eric Holden.**

Once we got to the ridge top and looked down we both thought we were in for a long night. It was again, overgrown and vertical. We figured we had to drop down 1000 feet going cross country and about a mile to where we thought our subjects were. It took almost 2 hours to complete this, but we were rewarded when upon our first call out we got an answer. We could see our subjects on the other side of a drainage still a quarter of a mile away. They saw us and started to work their way over to us.

Good news as they both seemed uninjured. We finally met up with Frank and Cuiman. They said they had ridden the Palm Springs Tram up to the mountain and hiked to San Jacinto Peak but got lost on the way back down. Yes, I'd say they got lost. They were over 8 miles from where they were supposed to be and in an impossible drainage to ever get out of.

After checking them out, giving them some water and food, we decided to hike straight up and regain the PCT. This was very steep and rocky but proved to be the right decision. As it turns out Cuiman and Frank do a lot of hiking together and were in superb shape. Cuiman was especially motivated to get out as she said, "It was really cold last night, and she had not sleep at all". Also, she had talked to her husband who was frantic that she was lost. It was hard to keep up with her.



**Rescuers coming up with Subjects to PCT
Photo by Eric Holden.**

We finally gained the PCT and followed its faint outline to where we first crossed it going down. As we reached this point we met up with Eric Holden on top of the ridge. He had hiked up and was running radio relay to keep us in contact with Dana Potts who was running base. Eric led us all back down to base, finally arriving at 8pm.



Rescuers and Subjects on Trail

Photo by Eric Holden.

We turned Cuiman and Frank over to Deputy Schroder who drove them back to the Palm Springs Tram. The rest of us drove the vehicles back to our garage and home.



Rescuers and Subjects at Base
Photo by RSO Deputy.

RMRU Members Involved: Cameron Dickinson, Glenn Henderson, Eric Holden, and Dana Potts.

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.