



Batista Canyon Search

August 27, 2018

Batista Canyon Hemet Area

2018-016

Written by Kaitlyn Purington

On Monday, Aug 27, at around 10pm at night, Dispatch received a call from a frantic and disoriented nephew. The nephew had claimed that his uncle and he were out near his uncle's mine claim in Batista Canyon near Tripp Flats. When Riverside Sheriff's Department responded, to the nephew, they found the nephew near the uncle's vehicle on Forest Road 6S22 below Little Cahuilla Mountain.

According to the nephew, the vehicle's window had been smashed in the nephews attempt to enter and hotwire the car to get help. After this attempt failed he called 911. The nephew who was at the time under the influence of drugs, was quickly sent to the hospital as the department tried to piece together the bits of information from the nephew.

After calling the uncle's relatives, the department was able to put together a more complete story. The uncle, an avid miner and jewelry maker, had taken this short trip with his nephew. The uncle was experienced in spending the night outdoors and would often leave for a few days at a time to spend at his mine. The family reassured the department that this was normal.

RMRU was notified that night and was told that a search would be carried out in the morning of the 28th for the uncle. The department did a preliminary search during the night for the uncle. Since the story was still being pieced together, the department decided a morning search would be the safest and most effective for RMRU.

On the morning of the 28th, Steve, Kevin, Eric, and myself responded to the Hemet Sheriff Department at 0800 hours where we were debriefed. After that, we drove to a location to see if we could observe the truck through binoculars. After a bit of trouble being able to see over a small hill. Steve, Kevin, Eric, and I, were driven by one of the deputies to the location of the truck. We rode in the sheriff's vehicle as a helicopter team had determined that the road was not suitable for the RMRU truck the night before.

When we arrived at the location of where the truck was the night before, it was no longer

there. The uncle had driven away sometime between our arrival and the night before. A few days later, the Sheriff Department got word from the Uncle's family that he had contacted them and that he was okay.

RMRU Members Involved: Steve Bryant, Eric Holden, Kevin Kearn, and Kaitlyn Purington.

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.