



Two Stranded Hikers

April 6, 2019

South Ridge Trail, Tahquitz Peak

2019-018

Written by Cameron Dickinson

A call went out to the team late on the night of April 6th, 2019, after two females called 911 and reported being stuck on the side of a steep icy slope close to the South Ridge Trail just east of Tahquitz Peak. Both females were somewhat well equipped for the colder conditions, however one wasn't equipped with adequate traction (crampons, micro spikes, etc.) to walk on the icy and snowy terrain. They made the right decision to stay put and wait for searchers to reach them and guide the out safety.

I and two new members in Training (Vinay, and Derek) were first to base and we became team 1. We also had another mission going on at the Tramway and lots of member out in Joshua Tree doing Technical Rock Training. Riverside County Sheriff's Aviation had previously done a fly over, located our subjects, and relayed the coordinates back to our Deputy. We started up the South Ridge Trail and hiked up to an overlook near the Tahquitz Peak Lookout Tower. As we look to our east down in the canyon, we can spot a light from below. Looking at their location on our GPS device, we can see that the light put the location in proximity to our hikers. We shouted down the them and confirmed that these are the hikers that we were looking for. They said they were OK and warm, just need help getting off the ice.

We found ourselves on a steep, rocky, and iced over hillside. We decided to stop here because the two hikers were OK and I was with two new members in training and they did not feel comfortable going into the ice. Remember another mission going on and members in Joshua Tree. We decided to wait for Team 2 who was made up of members who could hike safely on the ice. As rescuers we need to always be sure we are safe before trying to help others. As Team 1 (First members at base) we had made contact and confirmed the subjects were OK, just stuck. Now it would be up to Team 2 to get them.

Written by Tyler Shumway

Josh and I responded to a call out for 2 hikers stranded on the Tahquitz Traverse. We had just finished a multi-day technical rock training in Joshua Tree and made our way to South Ridge Trailhead just at dawn. Dana Potts and the Sheriff Deputy on scene briefed us about 2 hikers who were stranded overnight on steep terrain on snow and ice. They had food, water and enough gear to stay warm with no injuries reported. Team 1 had made contact but need more highly trained snow and ice members. They did have micro-

spikes and poles but given the current conditions of the traverse and no trail broken, ice axe and crampons are required to safely navigate.

Josh and I (Team 2) started our hike up South Ridge and made our way to Tahquitz Peak. We stayed on the ridgeline after the fire tower until we were directly above their known location. With crampons and ice axe we were able to safely descend to the hikers.



Josh coming down slope to Subjects
Photo by Tyler Shumway.

They were tired after spending the night in a tree well in steep and icy terrain but otherwise in good spirits. The hikers were doing the PCT and their goal was to exit via S. Ridge to resupply in town. However, it was getting dark the night before and they found themselves in icy conditions on the traverse to Tahquitz Peak.



Looking down from where Subjects spent the Night
Photo by Tyler Shumway.

They had come from Chinquapin Flats, so we decided to hike them out to Humber Park via Devils Slide. With the warming temperatures and morning sun the snow had softened considerably and allowed us to chop and kick steps for the subjects to safely navigate along the traverse back to the PCT. We made it down to Humber Park without incident.



Josh, Subjects, Tyler, and Dana at Base
Photo by Sheriff Deputy.

RMRU Members Involved: Chad Becker, Cameron Dickinson, Derek Donovan, Josh Gould, Dana Potts, Tyler Shumway, Vinay Rao, and Ty Wittersheim.

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.