



Lost Peak Hikers

April 7, 2019
Wellman Divide
2019-019

Written by James Eckhardt

We were enjoying an evening of climbing and socializing after a productive day of technical rock training with the team at Joshua Tree when a team member received a message through their inReach device to call Gwenda. Donny and Blake had to drive to the park entrance to get signal and came back with the news that we had a rescue for three lost hikers at the tram. Since team members not at the training were already responding to another mission, we would need to cut our stay at Joshua Tree short.

We (Blake, Donny, Tony and I) arrived at the top of the tram at around 11:30PM. Tony stay at the top to run base from our radio room in the back of the Tramway. Blake, Donny and I began hiking to the location of the subjects, a few hundred feet below the Willow Creek Trail near the state park boundary.

When we reached them, we warmed them up with hot food as they were cold from just wearing shorts and light jackets. We learned the subjects had hiked towards San Jacinto Peak but turned back due to lack of adequate clothing for the still snow-covered trails. On their way back they lost the trail and finally found a spot with cell phone service and called for help.

Due to the difficulty of the hike back up to the tramway, the trail was covered in snow, we instead headed to Saddle Junction and down Devil's Slide trail, arriving at Humber Park around 6:00AM.

The lesson from this rescue is to always carry enough clothing, food and water to survive an unplanned night on the mountain. Additionally, always carry a headlamp and some form of navigation.

RMRU Members Involved: Blake Douglas, James Eckhardt, Donny Goetz, and Tony Hughes.

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.