

Injured PCT Hiker

May 7, 2019
Fuller Ridge Trail
2019-028

Written by James Eckhardt

We got a callout for a PCT hiker that injured his ankle on Fuller Ridge. I punched the coordinates into my GPS and noted the location was about 100 yards from my last rescue on Fuller Ridge (see mission 2019-013). That was my first rescue with the team, and I was excited to go back to the area with less snow cover. Blake, Deputy Dunlap and I were first to respond and expected to hike from Black Mountain to the hiker. We had more team members on the way (Ray, Eric, Cameron and Michael Cara) who would follow behind with more gear.

As we were preparing at the trailhead, Star-9 communicated that they had been able to make it above the clouds and had found the hiker. Star-9 went to reconfigure for a hoist, and we drove to the Black Mountain Lookout Tower for a hoist pickup. We decided that I would perform the hoist, as I was recently trained (the previous Saturday) and knew the area. This would be my first solo hoist, another first for me on Fuller Ridge.



Deputy Dunlap, Blake, and James at Hoist Location
Photo by Deputy Dunlap.



James waiting for Star-9 to be Hoisted Up
Photo by Deputy Dunlap.

After hoisting into Star-9, we circled what we thought to be the subject's camp, and I hoisted down. I contacted the camp we had thought the subject was in, but they knew nothing about an injured hiker. I began to make my way to the GPS point and met our subject hiking up the trail towards me. After briefly checking on his ankle, he could walk and it appeared to only be a very minor sprain, I packaged him in the screamer suit, and Star-9 hoisted him up. I sent up his backpack, and then I was hoisted.

The subject was hiking the PCT, had fallen on some of the remaining snow, rolled his ankle and dropped his gear into a stream. He had recovered all his wet gear and made his way to a camping spot on the trail. He spent the night and upon testing his ankle in the morning, decided he couldn't hike out.

When hiking in remote areas, it is important to be prepared for the unexpected. Snow is still present at high elevation, so hikers should carry micro-spikes and know how to use them.

RMRU Members Involved: Michael Cara, Cameron Dickinson, Blake Douglas, James Eckhardt, Eric Holden, and Raymond Weden.

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.