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**Training Aug 8-9, 2009**

**High Mountain Familiarization**

**By Pete Carlson**

We met at the Palm Springs Tramway at 7am, to ride upon the 7:30 food carrying car to the High Country, before the first public car at 8am. NOTE (Thanks to the Palm Springs Tramway for letting us ride up early, they are a great group of people and always very helpful to RMRU) We first hiked up the trail to Round Valley to be sure everyone got to see it in the daylight. Lots of times we are hiking this at night which makes things look a lot different. Once there we took GPS readings and entered the Ranger Cabin co-ordinates into our GPS units so in a winter storm at night we can now walk right to the Cabin.

Next we headed over to Tamarack Valley again marking the GPS way points into our units. Then we took the old trail up to the new trail connecting at the top of the boulder field. Then on to Miller saddle and Miller Peak, before heading up the old back side trail to San Jacinto Peak. We had lunch on the Peak and at this point the day hikers (Steve Bryant, Patrick McCurdy, Dave Webb, Lew Kingman, and Carlos Carter) started hiking back to the Tramway.

Nick Nixon (day hiker), Tom Mahood and I continued down to the Folly Saddle where we dropped our packs and hiked up to Folly Peak. Back to our packs we went cross country to Drury Peak where Nick headed off to the Shirley Saddle and back to the Tramway. Tom and I went down to Little Round Valley to meet up with (Lee, Chad, and Les) coming in from Idyllwild to spend the night.

The next day around 11am we split up, Tom and I heading up Shirley Peak and then down to a saddle between Shirley and Jean peaks. From this saddle we could drop straight down to Wellmans Divide in about 1/3 of a mile. As we dropped down we spotted 8 deer, including 3 bucks with large antlers. Then all that was left was an easy 3 mile, 1 hour hike, back to the Tramway arriving about noon. It was a great hike, good familiarization and (Tom and I) climbed 6 10,000+ foot peaks in nice cool temperatures. We now descended down to the desert and 105 degree temperatures.

**Pete points out an important landmark**



**Chad, Lee and Pete on Marion Summit**



**Pete at the base of Marion Summit**



**A view from the trail dropping down into saddle Junction**



**My Mountain Familiarization Training from Idyllwild to the Peak**

By Les Walker "RMRU Rookie"

As Pete has covered most of the technical details of our training, I will just add in the smaller details of my experience from the Idyllwild side. L. Arnson and C. Marler were my partners and guides on this training, and let me tell you, they know this mountain range. They pointed out potential short cuts from main trails to other trails if needed in a rescue situation to cut response time to victims. Another great bit of information passed along to me was the locations for good radio reception along the main trail from Saddle Junction to Wellmans Divide. Beside this valuable information, they educated me on local folklore, history of certain locations and important landmarks along the way to the Mount San Jacinto Peak.

I think for me, as a RMRU rookie the biggest lesson taught to me, other than the what and where of the mountain was the need to know where you are in your fitness level. With a full pack, an 11 mile hike from Idyllwild to the Peak and then down to little Round Valley can be a full day, then add on another day just like that on the return. This hike is a very real life example of what a full mountain search could contain. I moved at a good pace but not at the pace of Arnson and Marler, thus letting me know I have to train hard to be at the level of that team.

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.