



Training October 10, 2009

Tracking Training

By Tom Mahood

On Saturday, October 10, 2009, members of RMRU met in Garner Valley for tracking training. Present were Lee Arnson, Joe Erickson, Michael George, Mike Herman, Tom Mahood, Chad Marler, Chuck Springer and Les Walker. The training was lead by Chuck Springer and Tom Mahood, but everyone pitched in various ideas and techniques. The (cold) morning began with a review of basic tracking techniques and tools, such as tracking sticks. Different tracking philosophies and concepts were discussed, as well as night tracking techniques. As with most endeavors, there are forms to fill out, and so the proper way to fill out a tracking report was covered, along with the importance of accurately sketching the print in question, or the use of digital photos.

Just over two weeks prior, there had been a successful RMRU search for a missing mountain biker, which involved considerable tracking efforts. This incident provided substantial discussion and relevance to the training.

Morning was concluded with two teams following previously laid tracks over several hundred yards. The sandy soils of Garner Valley, with areas of pine needles, made for some challenging tracking. Yet all did very well.

After a break for lunch, Les was instructed to “get lost”, something he showed great aptitude at. He drove his vehicle up the road a bit and proceeded to simulate a lost hiker. After sufficient time for Les to get appropriately lost, the rest of the team arrived at his vehicle and proceeded to track him. Chuck and Tom decided to arrive at the vehicle after the rest of the team to allow them to take full charge of the situation and initiate the search from the very beginning. Although Les proved very cagey, wandering around bushes and leaving assorted clues along the way, the team eventually discovered him sitting comfortably on a ridgeline, thus ending his “lostness”.

All in all, this proved a good warmup for the MRA Search and Tracking recertification testing upcoming this March.

The Tracking Teams



Tracking Sticks in action!



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.