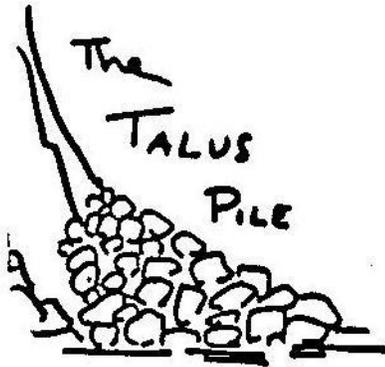


NUMBER 156

December 2013



CHINA LAKE MOUNTAIN RESCUE GROUP

P. O. BOX 2037
RIDGECREST CA 93556

TRAINING SCHEDULE

Nov	2	Owens Peak-Ferguson Route	Huey
Nov	14	First Aid Scenario – Hut	Niesen
Nov	15	“Noon-time” Tracking Practice	Huey
Nov	18	Meeting, Pre-meeting, BP	Finco
Nov	19	Tracking	Myers
Nov	23	Day Hike – Kearsarge Peak	Simons
Dec	4	CPR	Niesen
Dec	9	Meeting, Pre-meeting Sager Splints	Derkey/Niesen
Dec		Tracking with FA Scenario	TBD
Dec	14	Day Hike to Somewhere!	Simons
Dec	25	Merry Christmas	
Jan	1	Happy New Year	
Jan	13	Meeting, Pre-meeting First Aid	Finco/Breitenstein/Westbrook

SCREE

Check our web page at clmrg.org.

Check the California Region’s web page at crmra.org.

Newsletters from other MRA groups, gear catalogs, etc. are available in the hut.



CLMRG is funded in part by United Way of Indian Wells Valley.

OPERATION REPORTS

Operation 2013-05 (Alert)

17 April 2013

Sand Canyon (Kern County)

By Dave Miles

Summary:

Alert to assist in a search for missing motorcyclists in Sand Canyon.

Narrative:

I, Dave Miles, got a call at 9:48 pm on April 17th from Sgt. Haislip to start a search for motorcycle riders missing in Sand Canyon. The riders had gone out for a ride and were due back by sunset. I called Carol Burge and she agreed to coordinate the callout. Then at 9:59 pm Sgt. Haislip called for us to stand-down. The riders had called in on a cell phone and reported they were just late.

Operation 2013-06 (Alert)

19 May 2013

Horseshoe Lake (Mono County)

By Dan Bishop

Summary:

Alert to assist in a search for a missing hiker.

Narrative:

Dave Miles received a request Sunday afternoon, May 19th from Mono County via KCSO Sgt. Haislip to assist in a search for an overdue hiker in the Horseshoe Lake area near Mammoth. The subject, a 62 year old male, was a day late from his expected return. I, Dan Bishop, was the only available leader and called Gina Niesen who agreed to be the coordinator. A mutual aid search was to occur the following day, Monday, beginning at 0730. Part way through the callout the subject was located. At that point both Nathan Simons and Gina Niesen had agreed to commit to the search.

Operation 2013-07 (Mobilization)

16 August 2013

Owens Peak (Kern County)

By Dave Miles

Summary:

Alert to assist in a search for a missing hiker on Owens Peak.

Narrative:

At 1500 on August 16th I, Dave Miles, received a call from the Kern County Sheriff Office, Sgt. Smith and then Sgt. Haislip to assist a search for a missing hiker on Owens Peak. I put out a call via calling post (a remote calling system that puts out a call to all members on all their phone numbers) to get the callout started. Kern County Fire Station 74 was leading the operation, with their helicopter performing the initial search. I contacted the Fire Department ECC to get more information. Gina Niesen agreed to be our coordinator and we had Dan Bishop, Mike Myers, Tom Roseman, Nathan Simons, Bill Stratton, and Al Green for the search. We met at the hut at 1600 and called ECC to find that the helicopter had made contact with the subject and that we might not be needed. We went ahead with our deployment, but right before leaving the hut we received the call to stand down at 1613. The Kern Fire helicopter transported the subject and her hiking companion 1.5 miles to the trailhead.

Operation 2013-08 (Search) OES # 2013-LAW-0186

21-23 August 2013

Rock Creek Lake Lake (Inyo County)

By Linda Finco

Summary:

Alert to assist in a search for a missing hiker.

Narrative:

Dave Miles received a request Wednesday morning, August 21st from Inyo County via KCSO Cdr. Smithson to assist in a search for an overdue hiker out of the Rock Creek Lake trailhead area. The subject, 47 year old Matthew Mooney,

a former member with the Inyo SAR team, was reported overdue from a day hike. It was thought that his intended destination was Round Valley Peak. The Subject's truck was located at the Tamarack Lakes trailhead which would be the appropriate trailhead for Round Valley Peak. It was reported that he called his wife from the summit on Tuesday, August 20th, commenting he could look down on their house in Paradise, could see the Tamarack Lakes, and that he should be home in 2 or 3 hours. When he did not return at the expected time and due to a severe afternoon thunderstorm possibly impacting his descent, the Subject's wife reported him overdue. I, Linda Finco, took the operation and Mary Schmierer agreed to be the Coordinator. Terry Mitchell assisted with the call out. I set the time to meet at the hut at 12 noon to give folks enough time to leave work and get ready. Nathan committed as well as Tom Sakai who was in Mammoth. Tom contacted me and I gave him Cpl. Terry Waterbury's (Inyo Sheriff) phone number to contact him directly about a meet time since Tom was only 30 minutes away and it would be almost 1500 before Nathan and I would arrive to get fielded. Nathan and I met at the Hut, loaded up our gear and arrived at the trailhead at 1445. At this time other search teams were being pulled from the field due to a severe thunderstorm with lightning strikes in the area. Tom had been fielded with a Mono County team and they were turned around just short of their search area near Dorothy Lake. The Inyo SAR plan was to regroup and have new field assignments for Thursday. Tom invited me and Nathan to stay at his Mammoth condo. I contacted Mary to let her know we were out of the field for the night, but could use more members for Thursday. Mary made an additional call-out with Daryl Hinman, who also happened to be in Mammoth, committing to the search for Thursday.

CLMRG met the Inyo Sheriff at 0700 at the turn-off to Tom's Place for a morning brief and assignment. CLMRG would hike in from the Tamarack Lakes trailhead and search the vicinity of Dorothy Lake and clear the trails in the area. If we had time we were also asked to clear the Tamarack Lake trail. On our hike in we met a group of citizen volunteers (neighbors/friends of the missing Subject) who intended to hike into and search around the Tamarack Lakes. We spent most of the morning in the Dorothy Lake area on the upper ridges scoping the chutes that came down from Round Valley Peak and the Wheeler Ridge, since we felt this was a higher probable area of someone getting injured and needing help. We worked our way south towards Wheeler Peak and then descended into the meadow. As we were discussing the option of continuing up to clear the trail to Tamarack Lakes, or descending and sweeping more of the Dorothy Lake vicinity and clearing those trails, we heard a shout come from the area we had just descended, followed shortly by a member of Inyo SAR reporting over the radio that the person shouting had located the Subject. We ascended back up the talus towards the reporting party. Andrew, another local citizen volunteering in the search, had been searching the Wheeler Ridge and spotted Matt below the saddle leading to Wheeler Peak on the east side. Inyo SAR arrived at Andrew's location first and together they ascended the chute and then descended to confirm that the Subject was located. It appeared he sustained fatal injuries in a fall. Teams were put on hold. It was requested that Nathan, who had ascended highest in the chute, continue up with the Inyo SAR member who had the satellite phone, but a non-functioning radio. Within the hour, base requested all teams except those with the victim to return to the trailhead. After it was determined there would be no helicopter support to make an extraction that night, the scene was secured, the UTM location was noted, and all teams descended to the trailhead.

Tom, Daryl and I got down to the trailhead around 1730. We had dinner at Tom's Place, and I notified Mary that the search was over and that I would call when Nathan and I started back to Ridgecrest. After dinner, Tom and Daryl drove back to Mammoth, and I returned to the trailhead to wait for Nathan. The final team with Nathan got to the trailhead at 2125 and we were released. Nathan and I arrived back at the hut at 0030. Inyo was attempting to get a helo for an extraction the next day.

Operation 2013-09 (Alert) OES # 2013-LAW-0186

27 September 2013

Wofford Heights (Kern County)

Summary:

Alert to assist in a search for a person with Alzheimer's.

Narrative:

The team was alerted to assist in a search for a missing 76 year old diabetic with Alzheimer's in the Wofford Heights area. CLMRG proceeded with the callout to the team while we waited for a callback from an operations leader. Terry Mitchell coordinated the callout and was assisted by Gina Niesen with the calling. Tom Sakai, Bob Huey, Al Green, Nathan Simons and Gina Niesen committed to the search. Prior to an operations leader being identified the subject was located.

Operation 2013-10 (Mobilization)

10 October 2013

Mt. Whitney (Inyo County)

By Dave Miles

Summary:

Mobilization to assist in the evacuation of two climbers stranded while climbing on the East Face of Mt. Whitney.

Narrative:

CLMRG was alerted to assist in the evacuation of two climbers stranded while climbing on the East Face near the 14,100 foot level on Mt. Whitney. The climbers were unable to escape the route due to snow. A CHP helicopter had cell phone contact and was able to extract the climbers via a one-skid landing as CLMRG was mobilizing. Dave Miles was the operations leader and Carol Burge coordinated the callout. Luke Swanson, Dan Bishop, Nathan Simons, and Dave Doerr committed to the operation.

Operation 2013-11 (Alert)

5 November 2013

Mojave National Preserve (Needles Area) (San Bernardino County)

By Dan Bishop

Summary:

Alert to assist in a search for an overdue hunter near Needles, CA in the Mojave National Preserve.

Narrative:

CLMRG was alerted to assist in a search for an overdue hunter near Needles, CA in the Mojave National Preserve. The subject, Greg Monroe, departed his home in Orange County on October 29th, was overdue on November 1st and was reported missing on November 3rd. On November 5th the San Bernardino County Sheriff requested mutual aid for search teams for every day from the 6th through the 9th, or until the subject was found. I, Dan Bishop, took the operation but could only commit to the search days on the 8th and 9th. After determining that no other leader was available for the earlier search days, I called Carol Burge who coordinated the callout. Gina Niesen assisted with the calls. Bob Rockwell also offered to help phone during the initial callout for an operation leader. We planned for an evening departure on the 7th, however, the subject was located, deceased, that afternoon prior to the team mobilizing. Bob Rockwell, Mike Myer, Dave Doerr, and Luke Swanson committed to the search.

Operation 2013-12 (Incident)

1 September 2013

Mt. Whitney (Inyo County)

By Bob Rockwell

Summary:

Incident to assist the Park Service and the Forest Service on Mt. Whitney

Narrative:

Around 1:30 pm on September 1, Mr. Yukio Kato, age 60 of Torrance, California, was descending the Mt. Whitney trail after summiting with his wife and two other female companions. About 100 yards after passing the start-up route to Mt. Muir, Mr. Kato fell down a near vertical cliff, and ended up 100 to 200 feet below the trail. Reasons for his fall are unclear, but he was known to be feeling very ill. Observers reported that he seemed ataxic.

Around 2:30 pm Bill Stratton, guest Jay du Nesme, and I, Bob Rockwell, were above Trail Camp on the Whitney Trail, heading for our planned campsite for the night, which was a couple of hundred feet below the cables. A descending hiker told us of the fall, and then other hikers successively gave us more details such as Mr. Kato was motionless, and that there was noticeable signs of extreme trauma. We decided to offload unnecessary gear at our planned campsite, and continue up with sleeping bags, water, warm clothing, some food, and first aid gear (there could be up to 5 people at the site, perhaps having to spend the night, and all would only have day packs). We further decided to stay together because I was the only one with the radio, even though we would not be as fast.

Inyo National Forest (INF) Ranger Daniel had been working on the trail a quarter of a mile ahead of us, so he encountered the descending hikers shortly before we did. As he was heading up the trail I heard him report the incident to INF dispatch over the radio, which then relayed it to Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Park (SEKI) dispatch. I shortly radioed our intentions to INF dispatch also. It was a little after 3:00 pm.

Halfway to Trail Crest, we passed a distraught Mrs. Kato, accompanied by a Good Samaritan hiker. And later, another member of the party, similarly accompanied. Close to Trail Crest we heard that yet another hiker had descended to Mr. Kato and reported that he could detect no pulse and Mr. Kato's fall resulted in numerous injuries with a lot of blood loss.

Reaching Trail Crest at 5:00 pm, we spotted the SEKI helicopter searching the area southwest of the crest. A descending hiker had activated his AquaLink PLB Model Number PLB-3508 (a SPOT-like device), but he had done so near Trail Crest and his device was primarily for marine use. We heard later that the signal may have gone to the Coast Guard, which relayed these coordinates (which were incorrect) to SEKI.

Unfurling my red sleeping bag, I was able to get the helicopter's attention. Using vigorous hand and arm signals, Bill, Jay, and I directed the helicopter to the correct location (Mt. Muir is $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile north of Trail Crest).

Now that we were on the west side of the Sierra crest, radio communication with INF dispatch was virtually impossible, except at the deep notch just south of Mt. Muir. So I stationed myself there to relay to INF dispatch what was going on. I was also able to talk to Crabtree Rangers Rob and Laura Pilewski, who were monitoring the Inyo frequencies, to tell them details of the terrain Mr. Kato's body was on, and that it could be reached by descending on only class 3 terrain 100 feet or so. There, they would have to move the body a short distance to allow for a helicopter short haul pickup. Meanwhile, Bill and Jay continued up to join Daniel at the accident site. The last member of the victim's party was still there, refusing to leave. Eventually she was persuaded, and was accompanied down by another Good Samaritan hiker—Garrett Johnson, the man who had climbed down to the body.

The SEKI helicopter spent some time hovering, but could not land. They made the decision to return in the morning with technical rescue personnel and gear to recover the body. The helicopter departed around 5:15 pm. There being no reason for anyone to stay at the site overnight (it could hardly be expected that any early morning Whitney hikers would notice the body, and animals would not be a problem), Daniel, Bill, and Jay hiked back to my location at the notch. At 6:30 pm we started down to our campsite below the cables, while Daniel continued to the ranger shelter at Trail Camp. We reached camp around 8:00 pm, using headlamps for the last few minutes, had a few bites to eat, and retired.

By 8:00 am the next morning, September 2, we were on our way down. We stopped at the ranger shelter and talked briefly with Daniel. Evidently all three women had each been accompanied down to Whitney Portal, separately by INF Ranger Brian Spitek and the volunteers. At 8:50 am the SEKI helicopter appeared over the large flat area southeast of Discovery Pinnacle that we have used before for inserting and picking up people. We later learned that four SEKI SAR personnel disembarked and hiked to the site, with the helicopter returning later for a short haul pickup. We reached Whitney Portal at 1:20 pm.

GROUP BUSINESS

2014 Officers were elected at the December 2013 meeting. Our 2014 Officers are:

President:	Eileen Loughran
Vice President:	Gina Najera-Niesen
Secretary:	Debbie Breitenstein
Treasurer:	Werner Hueber
MRA Rep:	Mike Derkey

CONGRATULATIONS!

China Lake is funded in part by the United Way of Indian Wells Valley



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Address Correction Requested

