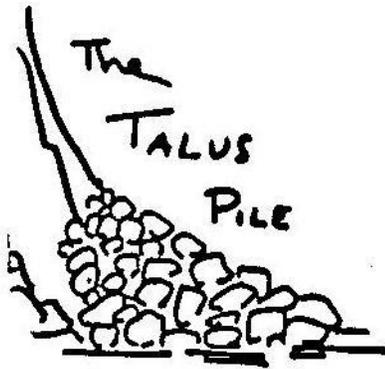


NUMBER 158

May 2015



## CHINA LAKE MOUNTAIN RESCUE GROUP

P. O. BOX 2037  
RIDGECREST CA 93556

### **TRAINING SCHEDULE**

May	11	Meeting	Mitchell
May	TBD	Tracking	TC
May	16	Cal Region MRA Meeting	Myers
May	22-25	60 Lakes Basin	Simons
Jun	4-7	National MRA Meeting – Estes Park, Colorado	Myers
Jun	8	Meeting: Pre-meeting: Summer Class	Ferguson/Simons
Jun	9	Summer Class Begins	Simons
Jul	11-12	Summer Class Day Hikes	Bishop/Miles/Myers
Jul	13	Meeting	Finco
Jul	25-26	Summer Class Overnight	Derkey/Swanson
Jul	29	Summer Class Graduation	Simons

### **SCREE**

Check our web page at [clmrg.org](http://clmrg.org).

Check the California Region's web page at [crmra.org](http://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 2014-06 (Search) OES# 2014-LAW-3846**

15-16 and 18-19 June 2014

Mt. Whitney Trail (Inyo County)

By Mike Myers and Tom Roseman

#### **Summary:**

Request to assist in a search for a lost hiker on the Mt. Whitney trail.

#### **Narrative:**

I, Mike Myers, received a call from Dave Miles at 1930 Sunday evening, June 15<sup>th</sup>, requesting a leader for an operation for a missing hiker on the Mt Whitney Trail. I contacted Inyo County Sheriff Sgt. McMinn for more information who then had me contact Dep. Brian Hohenstein in Bishop. The missing hiker, a 60 year old male, was last seen just below the cables by his two hiking companions on Saturday evening at 1845. Very few details were available, but Inyo County couldn't get any members until Monday morning. I did get the name and phone numbers of the two reporting parties who were staying in a hotel in Lone Pine. I contacted them and they agreed to meet us at the Sheriff's sub-station in Lone Pine at 2300.

Mobilizing the team, we met at the hut at 2115 and departed at 2130. Members responding were M. Myers, Dave Miles, Tom Sakai, Luke Swanson, Nathan Simons, and Sean Litton. Coordinator Sheila Rockwell was assisted by Mary Schmierer.

During the drive to Lone Pine, Dep. Hohenstein called and handed the operation over to Dep. Nate Derr. We reached the substation and met with and interviewed the two RP's prior to Dep. Derr's arrival. The three friends had been meeting once a year for the past 34 years to do something significant and this was their 5<sup>th</sup> climb of Mt Whitney. They camped at Outpost Camp on their first day (Friday), climbed Whitney on Saturday and were descending when their hiking partner, Mr. John Likely, disappeared. Based on previous hikes, Likely was always slow coming down but always made it back to camp. The RP's had gone ahead, but stopped at Trail Camp to make sure he made it past the cable. Once they saw him below the cables (they claimed 100% positive visual ID) they headed on down to Outpost Camp to wait for him. When he didn't return by Sunday morning, they went back to Trail Camp searching for him. When they couldn't find him, they returned to Outpost Camp and packed up all their gear, including Likely's. They left Likely's pack sitting just off the trail so it couldn't be missed, then hiked out to get help. Dep. Derr arrived during the RP interview. The RP's also stated that Likely was in reasonably good health, an experienced hiker, and had good equipment.

To confine the search area, we discussed the high probability areas, which were the area between Consultation Lake and Trailside Meadow, and the area surrounding Mirror Lake, with the cliff bands south and southwest of Mirror Lake being the higher probability. We divided our four members into two teams of two and dropped them off at the Portal to begin their search at 2350. Sakai agreed to be a radio relay at the big switchback on the road and Myers headed back to the substation to set up a Command Post.

Myers met Dep. Derr at the substation, but had no radio contact with the relay, so moved the CP to the Lone Pine Airport to a building the Sheriff had recently acquired. The airport provided good communications. Dep. Derr had to leave to take care of law enforcement issues, so Myers ran the CP until Inyo and Mono Team members began arriving at 0830 the next morning.

During the night, the two search teams split up as planned at Outpost Camp. Simons and Swanson (Team 2) climbed above the waterfall and searched the base of the cliffs with a very bright light from Outpost to the south, then ascended on up to Trailside Meadow. Miles and Litton (Team 1) continued on the Trail and their first assignment was to look for Likely's pack, which they found just as the RPs had described. They continued up the trail to Mirror Lake searching off-trail with lights, and then continued on up to Trailside Meadow searching the cliffs.

Myers contacted S. Rockwell at 0600 Monday and requested additional resources. Tom Roseman and Mike Derkey responded and arrived a couple hours later. They were assigned to hike the trail to Trail Camp and interview every hiker they came in contact with.

Team 2 completed their initial assignment then moved in to the area between Consultation Lake and Trailside Meadow. Team 1 searched the area north of Trail Camp and found a set a tracks heading west/northwest that may have been the Likely's. This was difficult to determine due to so much foot traffic in the area.

Teams 1 and 2 were eventually picked up by the China Lake SAR helo at Trail Camp around 1700. Roseman and Derkey hiked back to the trailhead. After filling out a team debrief sheet, we were relieved. Being up for roughly 36 hours we came home for a rest day, arriving back at the hut around 1930, securing at 2000.

Tom Roseman led the team during the 2<sup>nd</sup> operation period on 18-19 June....continuing:

Leaving in the morning of June 18<sup>th</sup> at 0530 Bob Rockwell, Mike Myers, Sean Litton, Jon Slager and myself, Tom Roseman, met at the hut. We arrived at the Lone Pine Airport at 0645 and were briefed shortly after that. A CH-47 from Stockton Army National Guard was now on hand to shuttle nearly 69 searchers into the field. The teams were divided into four divisions: A,B,C and D with a leader for each division. Since we were part of division D assigned to areas below Lone Pine Lake we were driven to the Portal and hiked into our assignments. Myers, Litton and Slager were a team, with Rockwell and myself as another team. We spent all day searching our area. Our main find was a nearly complete winter outfit with pack, sleeping pad, bag, ice ax and crampons. They were found in the thick willows, where they had been left there for some time, and were not related to the current search.

At the end of the day, Litton and Slager returned to China Lake, while Myers, Rockwell and I spent the night at a local hotel to clean up and rest. We returned to the airport for the morning brief. Myers and Rockwell were given a special assignment to search a shortcut known to Rockwell that started above Mirror Lake and worked down 3<sup>rd</sup> class to the lake. I was in charge of a team with three San Diego MRA members and a member of the Inyo Team. Our assignment was to search area 30, adjacent to the switchbacks below the cables. We were flown into Consultation Lake along with other search teams. The teams spent the day searching their respective assignments, with no luck in finding John Likely. We were flown out around 1600 along with the other teams. After debriefing and eating, I received a call from Sheila stating that the Kern Sheriff had called to inform her to stand-down search efforts. I checked with the Inyo operation people, who were holding back the information pending notification of family members, confirming that John's body had been spotted by Helo 552 from the SEKI on a late check of an area that was not yet searched. We loaded up and returned home arriving around 2000 that evening.

Prior to notification of the end of the search, two additional groups had committed for requested follow on efforts. I had committed as Operations Leader for the Friday operation search period, with Swanson and Slager as field team members. Carol Burge had taken over as Coordinator from Sheila. A second team with Bishop as Operations Leader and field members Daryl Hinman and Dave Doerr had committed for the Saturday operation search period. This was a good turn out from our team.

### **Operation 2014-07 (Search/Evidence Protection)**

1-6 November 2014

Cantil Area/Garlock Road (Kern County)

By Linda Finco and Mike Myers

#### **Summary:**

Request to assist in securing the SpaceShip Two crash site.

#### **Narrative:**

I, Linda Finco, received a call from Kern County Sherriff Sgt. Haislip at 1350 on Saturday, 1 November, requesting support for securing the SpaceShip Two crash site. The crash site was located south of the Redrock-Randsburg Road and spanned a 5 mile distance east to west. The sheriff needed personnel to relieve the current personnel that had been securing the debris sites since Friday afternoon for the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB). Folks were needed from 1900 to 0700 (a 12 hour shift). Terry Mitchell coordinated the callout with the help of Janet Westbrook. We met at the hut at 1800 to assign teams and radios. Twelve other members committed, Dave Miles, Mike Myers, Tom Roseman, Tom Sakai, Mike Derkey, Luke Swanson, Gina Niesen, Jeff Green, Al Green, Paul DeRuiter, Dave Doerr and Debbie Breitenstein. We divided into 5 teams of two and one team of three with each vehicle. Five teams arrived at base for assignments at 1700 and one team arrived at 2100. Each team was assigned a debris site to secure. Some sites were a little closer to main roads so there was more interaction with the public. I stayed with the team in the Explorer and maintained radio contact with base on East Dispatch. I had radio communication with the two teams near our location and cell phone (texting) coverage with the other 3 teams. Every team had the cell phone number for the sheriff at the Command Post in case they needed support. Our relief started arriving at the various sites around 0715 and all teams were out of the field by 0800. We returned to Ridgecrest and secured at the hut at 0830.

Dave Miles was contacted by Sgt. Haislip on Tuesday, 4 November. Sgt. Haislip was requesting additional resources to secure the SpaceShip Two debris sites. The sheriff was looking for personnel to support follow on 12-hour shifts starting Wednesday morning, 5 November at 0700 and continuing through Friday, 7 November. I, Linda Finco, coordinated the initial request to alert CLMRG members on the request using email. Dave Miles initiated the callout for the first shift Wednesday morning and got Mary Schmierer to coordinate the callout. Terry Mitchell helped with the callout. Mike Myers committed to be the operations leader. Tom Roseman, Eileen Loughran and Al Green committed for the first

shift. Myself, Miles, Mike Derkey, Nathan Simons, Gina Niesen, Paul DeRuiter, Bob Rockwell, Debbie Breitenstein and Bill Ferguson committed for follow on shifts. Wednesday morning, Myers and Loughran met at the hut at 0600, picked up radios and then drove by Roseman's and picked him up. They met Green at the Shell station on China Lake Boulevard. Both vehicles arrived at the Command Post (CP) at 0700. Myers and Loughran were assigned to block the road intersection at the Randsburg-Redrock and Cantil road intersection. Green and Roseman were assigned to join a member of the Bakersfield team and block the road intersection of Randsburg-Redrock and Nelson. Myers and Loughran were relieved of their assignment at 1445. Myers contacted me to inform me that no additional personnel were needed for the follow on shifts until Friday, 7 November starting at 0700. I used Calling Post and emails to get this change in plans out to all members. Eight members committed for the Friday shift (Finco, Derkey, Simons, DeRuiter, Loughran, B. Rockwell, Breitenstein and Ferguson). Terry Mitchell committed to take over the coordination for the Friday shift.

After their release, Myers and Loughran took water to the Roseman and Green team. Myers asked if either one wanted to go home and Green was ready to leave. So Myers relieved Green and Green and Loughran left at 1610 and drove home. They arrived back at the hut at 1640. Myers drove back to the CP to inform them of the change in personnel. Myers updated the board to reflect the CLMRG teams and assignments. Myers and Roseman stayed until sometime after 1900. About 1910, Myers called the CP and they told Myers that they were released and to just to head on home. Myers dropped Roseman off at his house then took the explorer back to the hut. This shift was secured at 2015.

Thursday, 6 November I contacted Sgt. Haislip at 1200 to inquire about the shift for Friday. Sgt. Haislip stated no additional personnel were required. I again used email to notify the members that committed that we were no longer required for Friday and to stand down.

### **Operation 2015-01 (Search) OES# 2015-LAW-8203**

5-7 January 2015

Big Bear North Shore, Fawnskin (San Bernardino County)

By Mike Myers

#### **Summary:**

Request to assist in a search for a missing person in the Big Bear area.

#### **Narrative:**

The Group received a call from Kern County Sheriff Sgt. McMinn on January 5, 2015 at 1430 for a California Region mutual aid request. San Bernardino County Sheriff was requesting Type 2 Alpine Search resources for Tuesday morning, 6 January, on the north shore of Big Bear Lake. The missing woman, Lisa Cimbalk, was last seen at her residence in Irvine on December 29th and her vehicle was spotted by a San Bernardino County sheriff on Sunday January 4th at a trailhead parking lot in Fawnskin. The vehicle was covered with snow after a major winter storm hit the Big Bear area around noon on December 30th. This led to the assumption that the vehicle had been parked at that location prior to the storm's arrival. Following the storm, the overnight temperatures in the area were consistently below zero. Those committed to the initial search were Mike Myers, Nathan Simons, Tom Sakai, Bill Stratton, Matt Lee, and Jon Slager. Sgt McMinn, the Kern County Sheriff SAR coordinator, was on scene the entire time we were there. The trailhead in Fawnskin allows access to a 1.5 mile loop trail that is very popular for snow sledding, and an estimated 100,000 people had visited the area during that previous week. Most of the snow had melted, but finding tracks was virtually impossible.

Tuesday January 6th our six man team from China Lake was assigned the area that included the entire 1.5 mile trail loop. We performed a line search of the area, which took all day. We found numerous clues, most of which were not relevant, but we photographed each article and noted the coordinates to report back to the Command Post (CP). Among the clues we found were jackets, blankets, hats, and other articles of clothing. I called CLMRG Coordinator, Janet Westbrook, to get more resources for Wednesday and Jeff Green and Sean Litton committed. They left Ridgecrest at 0430 Wednesday morning and joined us in the CP at 0730.

Wednesday January 7th, Myers and six China Lake members (Sakai, Green, Lee, Slager, and Litton) were assigned to line search a large hill adjacent to the trail loop. The team hiked from the CP up to the northwest corner of our assigned search area, then perform five east/west passes. It took five passes to effectively cover the hill, which was covered with thick brush, trees and in places on the northwest side, steep terrain and snow was about a foot deep.

Simons had a team of four, which included himself and Stratton from CLMRG, plus two members of Tehachapi Search and Rescue. Their search area consisted of a parallelogram shaped section that was not searched the day prior. The team drove to end of the road near the southwest corner of the search area then proceeded to hike to the southwest corner. Upon arriving at southwest corner they proceeded to perform a line search with intent to maximize probability of detection (POD) by making sure they could see each other at all times. Line searches proceeded from west to east, shifting north on each successive pass. Upon reaching the northern boundary of the search area they realized they had a triangular sliver

approximately 500 feet across at the top on the eastern part of the search area that they had not covered. More latitudinal line searches were performed until the triangular section became narrow enough that they could complete the area with a final north-south line search. Upon finishing their assignment they contoured back to the vehicles, spending some time on the trail and some time on the road, all while still searching. Both Teams met back at the CP at 1700, had dinner and then headed back home at 1730.

On Thursday January 8th, the subject's body was discovered by aerial surveillance in the water/ice on the south shore of Big Bear Lake at 1000.

**GROUP BUSINESS**

2015 Officers were elected at the December 2014 meeting. Our 2015 Officers are:

President: Gina Najera-Niesen  
 Vice President: Mike Derkey  
 Secretary: Nathan Simons  
 Treasurer: Werner Hueber  
 MRA Rep: Mike Myers

CONGRATULATIONS!

**— YEAR END COMMITTEE REPORTS 2014—**

**2014 Operations Summary by Dan Bishop**

We had seven Operations in 2014. These Operations were composed of four Searches ranging from the Whitney Trail to a local mine shaft investigation to securing the crash site of Space Ship 2. Additionally two of the Operations involved Rescue of hikers near Bill's Butte and helicopter insertion for a stranded hiker on Telescope Peak.

Alert	Mobilization	Transit	Search	Rescue
0	1	0	4	2

The activity of the Subjects for four of the six fielded operations were categorized as hiking. Helicopters were utilized, at some point during the operation, on four of the Missions.

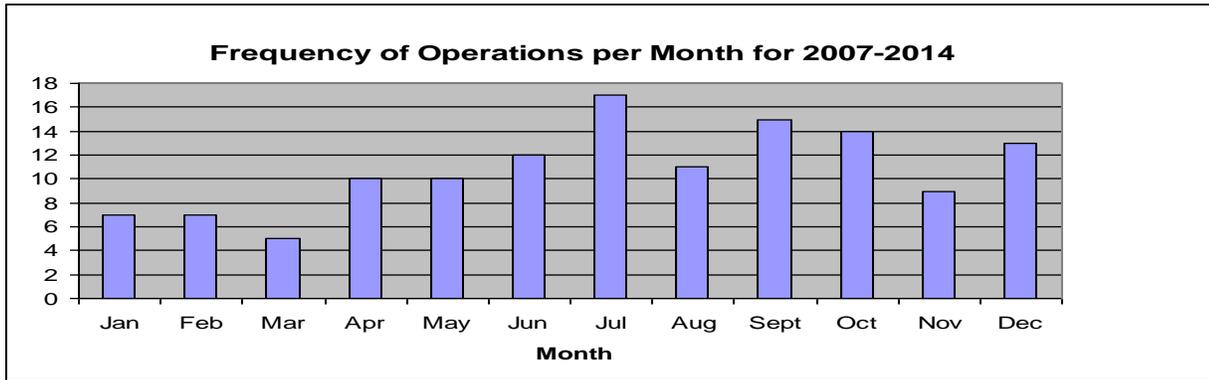
Three of the seven requests to assist came from Inyo County.

Kern County	Inyo County
4	3

Breaking down the Operations by month shows January as our busiest month.

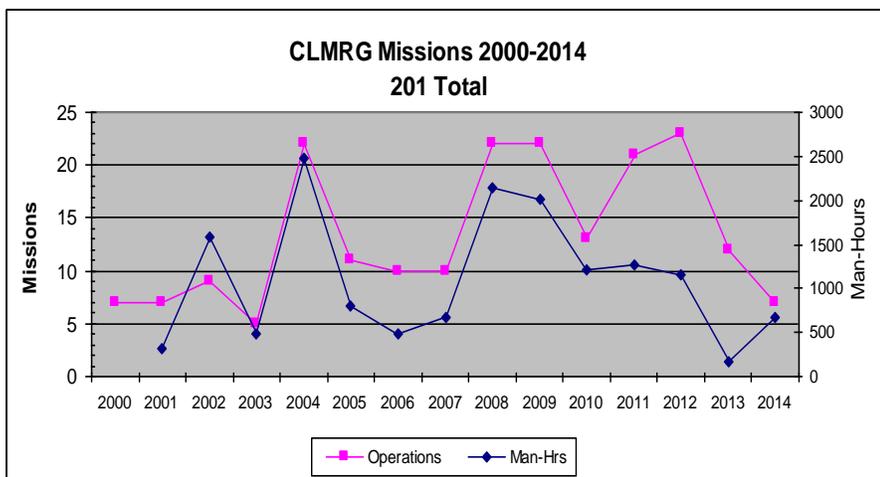
Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
3	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0

Below is the Frequency of Operations per month since 2007.



We expended 670 man-hours during these Operations and logged 2138 vehicle miles. We averaged 12.0 members committing per call-out, with the March Search near Dirt Digger turn-out in Kern County seeing the largest Group turnout of 16 members.

The graph below shows the trend over the past 15 years.



Below is a summary of all the Operations this year.

SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS						
OPERATIONS IN 2014						
Number	Date	Type	Op Leader	Coordinator	Commitment	Location / Requesting Agency / Description
2014-01	11-Jan	MOBILIZATION	D.BISHOP	C.BURGE E.RIENDEAU	D.BISHOP D.MILES L.SWANSON G.NIESEN A.GREEN N.SIMONS B.STRATTON M.MYERS	MT WHITNEY TRAIL / INYO COUNTY. Alerted to assist in a search for missing Subject separated from his hiking partner on the Whitney trail. Subject located, deceased prior to Team departure.
2014-02	15-Jan	RESCUE	M.MYERS	J.WESTBROOK B.ROCKWELL M.SCHMIERER	M.MYERS D.MILES L.SWANSON J.GREEN D.HINMAN	OWENS WILDERNESS / KERN COUNTY. Team mobilized for possible carry out of injured hiker near Bill's Butte. VX-31 SAR helicopter hoisted subject as Team was preparing for rescue.
2014-03	24-25 Jan	RESCUE	D.MILES	J.WESTBROOK	D.MILES A.GREEN M.DERKEY T.ROSEMAN L.SWANSON L.FINCO T.SAKAI B.STRATTON G.NIESEN J.GREEN	TELESCOPE PEAK / INYO COUNTY. Rescue of stranded hiker climbing from Death Valley floor up Hanaupah Canyon, east of Telescope peak. Team inserted via SAR helicopter. Subject spotted from fire that he started and extracted by helicopter.
2014-04	28-Feb	SEARCH	D.MILES D.BISHOP	C.BURGE	D.MILES D.BISHOP L.FINCO B.HUEY B.ROCKWELL D.DOERR B.STRATTON L.SWANSON N.SIMONS G.NIESEN J.GREEN M.DERKEY E.LOUGHRAN T.SAKAI D.HINMAN A.GREEN	Dirt Digger Turn-out & HI 395 / KERN COUNTY. Search for Subject needing assistance in the early morning walking from her home. Cold, rainy conditions necessitated quick mobilization. Subject found in her residence as hasty team was driving to Command Post and as follow-up team was mobilizing.
MRA	28 Feb 02 Mar	MRA RE-ACCREDIT	L.FINCO	M.DERKEY	L.FINCO D.MILES B.HUEY B.ROCKWELL D.DOERR B.STRATTON L.SWANSON N.SIMONS G.NIESEN J.GREEN M.DERKEY E.LOUGHRAN	Auburn, CA / MRA Re-Accreditation for Search/Track/ELT/ Command Post

Number	Date	Type	Op Leader	Coordinator	Commitment	Location / Requesting Agency / Description
2014-05	20-Apr	SEARCH	D.BISHOP	S.ROCKWELL	D.BISHOP M.MYERS D.HINMAN G.NIESON A.GREEN D.MILES D.DOERR	TOR ROAD & HI 395 / KERN COUNTY. Search of a mine shaft for possible remains among dumped car parts. Rappel 25 feet to choke point of shaft, no evidence found to risk proceeding further. IWV Mine Team to make further determination.
2014-06	15-19 June	SEARCH	M.MYERS T.ROSEMAN D.BISHOP	S.ROCKWELL C.BURGE M.SCHMIERER	M.MYERS D.MILES T.SAKAI L.SWANSON N.SIMONS S.LITTON T.ROSEMAN M.DERKEY B.ROCKWELL J.SLAGER D.BISHOP D.HINMAN D.DOERR	WHITNEY MAIN TRAIL / INYO COUNTY. Multiple day/night search for missing hiker who separated from his party while descending the main Whitney Trail. His remains were found, off trail, by air, in a steep chute west of Mirror Lake
2014-07	01-06 Nov	SEARCH	L.FINCO M.MYERS	T.MITCHELL J.WESTBROOK M.SCHMIERER	L.FINCO M.MYERS D.MILES T.ROSEMAN G.NIESEN M.DERKEY L.SWANSON A.GREEN T.SAKAI J.GREEN D.BREITENSTEIN P.DERUITER D.DOERR E.LOUGHAN N.SIMONS B.FERGUSON B.ROCKWELL	CANTIL / KERN COUNTY. Overnight shifts to secure crash site of SpaceShip 2.

**Public Education: Linda Finco**

Members of CLMRG made over 10 public education presentations in 2014 putting in over 250 hours of community service. We participated in the China Lake Health and Wellness Fair, promoting mountain safety, and the NAWA Community Day where we set up in the kid safety zone and gave away “Hug-A-Tree” kits (garbage bag, whistle and pamphlet) and emphasized to the kids to stop and stay in one place if ever lost in the back country. We also provided first aid, navigation and rope skills (rappelling) to local Boy Scout troops as part of their programs. For the Girl Scouts we participated in the Mojave Primitive Encampment (MPE). And finally CLMRG again presented our 7-week Basic Mountaineering and Mountaineering Class this summer (details provided in a separate summary report). We received \$2274 in donations from individuals, Microsoft, the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) and the United Way.

**First Aid: Gina Niesen**

The group continues with our series of trainings in addition to our annual CPR and First Aid training. The trainings focus on specialized equipment and wilderness first aid issues. Topics covered in 2014 included head to toe exams and using SOAP

notes to track symptoms and determine treatment plan and then practicing these skills in "real-life" scenarios. All members completed the American Red Cross CPR and Community First Aid training or an equivalent.

**Summer Class: Nathan Simons**

The China Lake Mountain Rescue Group ran a successful Basic Mountaineering and Mountaineering Safety class for the Summer of 2014. The class was seven weeks long, from Tuesday, June 10, to Wednesday, July 30, with lectures on Tuesday nights and outings on Wednesday evenings. We had 38 students, with 22 receiving full certificates and thirteen surviving certificates. Outings included bouldering, belay practice and navigation practice at Wagon Wheel; belaying and top-roping at Robber's Roost; rappelling at Fossil Falls; as well as three day hikes (Cirque, Dragon/Gould and Owens Point) and two overnight trips (Independence Peak and Bear Creek Spire).

**Equipment: Werner Hueber**

The Sheriff is providing the Group with two vehicles, an Explorer and a Suburban. Expenses for gas and maintenance are covered by the Sheriff's Department.

Major equipment purchases:

We replaced most of our technical gear and purchased a load cell, laptop computer, holds for our climbing wall, and two ropes.

Hut:

Public Works continues to provide maintenance support for the hut.

**Emergency Services: Janet Westbrook**

ESC meets every month to discuss emergency preparedness in the Indian Wells Valley. We share ideas, problems and solutions for the various agencies and community groups. CLMRG has a presence at most of these meetings and brings information back to the group about activities around our valley of interest to the group, as well as reporting on some of our rescue operations and capabilities.

**Training: Daryl Hinman**

Year End Totals by Training Category:

53 mountain climbing

49 rock climbing

16 search skills

3 rescue skills

1 winter skills

10 first aid

For a total of 4933 training hours and 19710 miles logged.

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



China Lake Mountain Rescue Group  
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Address Correction Requested

