



NUMBER 174

August 2022

**CHINA LAKE MOUNTAIN
RESCUE GROUP**

P. O. BOX 2037
RIDGECREST, CA 93556

SCREE

See our web page at clmrg.org. and clmrg.org/contact.html

Also the California Region's web page at crmra.org.

Find us on Facebook – China Lake Mountain Rescue Group



**CLMRG is funded in part by United Way of Indian Wells Valley
and is a member of the Combined Federal Campaign.**

We benefit from smile.amazon.com

+++++

2022 Operations continued

2022-09 SEARCH Kern County Horse Canyon Finco

On May 6, 2022, at 1414, the China Lake Mountain Rescue Group (CLMRG) received a request from Sgt. Kimmel, Kern County Sheriff (KCSO) to assist in the search/rescue of an alert that was initiated by the fall-detection feature that can be enabled on an iWatch or iPhone. The alert was received around 1045 and provided a GPS location for the incident. The Sheriff was able to determine the iWatch was registered to Brent Rose, however, there was no response to the contact phone number. Sgt. Kimmel was requesting CLMRG to go to the GPS location and determine if there was an issue. As an oh-by-the-way, Sgt. Kimmel informed us that a Kern County Deputy (Deputy Shotwell) had initially responded to the request, but the Razor he was driving caught fire and burnt to the ground about 2 miles west of LA 1 on the Horse Canyon Road (SC65). The deputy was OK, and another deputy was going to assist.

Linda Finco took the operation. Debbie Breitenstein coordinated the callout and Eileen Loughran helped with the calls. Finco used the Group Me calling system to initiate the callout. Dave Miles contacted Finco and offered to load the waypoints into our group SARTopo map. Finco also asked Miles to try calling the Subject's phone number a few more times. Finco requested the initial group meet at the Hut at 1500 (Team 1). Phil Cash, Nick Pio, Joe Kromphardt, Sean McNamara and Matt Kubik committed to this departure time. Dan Bishop responded and was able to lead another team at 1700. Finco agreed that would be beneficial, therefore, Bishop, David Jensen, Bill Stephenson, Katie Kempema and Christian Aranda would mobilize at the Hut at 1700 (Team 2) and respond if there was still a need for more searchers.

Team 1 departed the hut at 1515 and met up with Kern County Fire, BLM and Deputy Miller who had picked up Deputy Shotwell. After talking with the Sheriffs, we continued to the GPS location of the recorded alert. We arrived around 1650 and found nothing. The road continued to McIver Canyon where it became a dead end. It was decided that McNamara and Kubik would continue to the cabin in their vehicle. McNamara had received some additional

information from the Sheriff he spoke with in the canyon where they mentioned our Subject was in a white-dually-truck with a female passenger. We knew a dually truck would not make it much further down the road to the cabin, but we had nothing else to go on. We checked the dirt road for dually tracks, but there was nothing obvious one way or the other to rule anything out. Cash and Kromphardt searched more thoroughly in the area of the GPS location to make sure no one had accidentally left the road.

Around 1700 Bishop contacted me to see if Team 2 was still needed. Since we still had not located a vehicle, I told Bishop to have Team 2 meet at the SC65 turn off on Hwy 14 and wait for an assignment. During the call with Bishop, Sgt. Kimmel called with more information. The Subject, Brent Rose, riding with a group of other off-road vehicles was operating an orange Can-Am where he rolled-it, suffering no injuries. Along with the other people with him, they were able to upright the vehicle. Once in cell coverage, Brent contacted his wife around 1045 from the McIver Cabin to say that he was OK. After that conversation, no further contact had been made with Brent. The Sheriff wanted us to continue our search to the cabin, however, our team of McNamara and Kubik had spoken with other off roaders coming back from the cabin and they did not see anyone except for hikers. The Sheriff had also determined through Brent's son that he was camping in Dove Springs and was driving a white truck pulling a toy hauler. With this information, the Sheriff was going to Dove Springs to locate the campsite and talk to anyone who might have more information. At this time the Sheriff requested we look for other possible roads that the Can-Am might have travelled between SC65 and Dove Springs that we could search. I sent Cash and Kromphardt down SC65 to check a spur road to see if anyone had been on it. Then at 1744 Sgt. Kimmel called to say our Subject was found at his campsite in Dove Springs. All teams were requested to meet back at SC65 and Hwy 14 for a debrief. Team 2 arrived at SC65 and Hwy 14 at 1755. After receiving the news that our Subject was found and that no further resources were needed, Team 2 departed and secured at the Hut at 1830.

At the debrief Sgt. Kimmel stated that Brent had rolled the Can-Am yesterday in Dove Springs. His iPhone (not an iWatch) apparently has an automatic alert for any sudden impacts. Since there was no cell phone coverage in the Dove Springs area, no alert went out. But the next day when Brent was going to McIver Cabin the phone finally picked up cell phone coverage and sent the alert. Noticing that the phone alerted on an accident, he called his wife from the cabin and then thought no more of it. His wife was in Alaska dealing with other issues and misunderstood that the accident had occurred the previous day, and so when she could not get back in touch with her Brent, she contacted her son with her concern. This is what initiated the call to the Sheriff.

We departed and all of Team 1 except for Cash and Kromphardt secured at the Hut at 1920. Cash and Kromphardt took the Sheriff up on his offer for dinner and they secured at 1955.

2022-10 RESCUE Kern County / Kelso Valley Miles

On May 18 at 0906, I (Dave Miles) received a call from Sgt. Kimmel requesting CLMRG to join Kern Valley Search and Rescue (KVSAR) to rescue four stranded hikers (two female and two males) in the hills west of Kelso Valley. They had called 911 and said that they were out of water and having heat issues. I put out the first alert on GroupMe and Carin Miles responded as Coordinator. Phil Cash and Andrew Cammenga met at my house to leave with me as the Team 1 at 0945. Linda Finco, Bill Stephenson, and David Jensen left from the Hut as Team 2 with litter and wheel at 1030.

Team 1 met Sgt. Kimmel at 1050 at Hwy 178 and Kelso Valley Road. We followed him to the Command Post (CP) about 9.5 miles south on Kelso Valley Road. KVSAR and some deputies were driving 4-wheel-drive roads in order to get close to the Subjects. Sgt. Kimmel got in my 4Runner and we joined up with the others. We were able to drive to a location about 0.75 miles from the Subjects and were able to see one of them waving from the top of a ridge. Because of extenuating circumstances relating to the two male Subjects, at least one Sheriff deputy would be with each field team. We formed two teams and started hiking towards the Subjects. Cash, Cammenga, and Deputy Cain went up the ridge and two KVSAR members and a Deputy went up a ravine. Sgt. Kimmel, Brian Baskin and I managed radio communications on four different channels to coordinate all of the involved agencies.

It was a steep 1000 ft climb to reach the Subjects. When the teams were about halfway there, we found out the Subjects made another 911 call and said one of the females had passed out. At this point, Kern Fire had launched a helicopter and dispatched a fire engine and ambulance. The ambulance and engine were directed not to leave the paved road due to the bad road conditions. CLMRG Team 2 was also held at the paved road since we did not need the litter and wheel.

The helicopter flew over the Subjects and lowered a medic to the location of the team on the ridge since they were getting close to the subjects. Once contact had been made with the Subjects, the helicopter medic determined

that both females were not sweating, suffering from heat related illness, and needed to be hoisted out and taken for medical treatment. The two male Subject hiked down to the vehicles with the CLMRG team.

After both teams had returned to the vehicles with the two male Subjects, we proceeded to fix a flat tire on the KVSAR side-by-side vehicle. Once all personnel were back at the CP, we then went to Mountain Mesa for a late lunch and debrief at 1515. We then returned to Ridgecrest and both teams were secured by 1745.

Lessons Learned

- A little more time planning with the maps might have prevented the team from going up the ravine.
 - A better brief was needed to prepare the field teams to know to bring more water.
- In this hot environment, the first aid teams needed better cooling methods for the Subjects. Need ability to provide shade and active cooling.
- CLMRG field team lost communications when a radio was accidentally bumped and changed channel. EVERY rescuer needs to have a radio.
 - CLMRG Team 2 followed our SARTopo tracks but they were not uploaded once we lost cell service in the Kelso Valley.
 - More SARTopo training is needed to understand all the features and limitations.

2022-11 ALERT Inyo Co. Mt. Emerson

Bishop

On May 27, 2022, at 2222, the China Lake Mountain Rescue Group (CLMRG) received a request from Inyo County Search and Rescue asking for help with a carry-out of an injured Subject from Mt. Emerson. The CLMRG Group Text (ALERT) was activated and Voice Call-Out performed. Terry Mitchell accepted as Coordinator, Eileen Loughran as the Telephoner, and Dan Bishop committed to be the Operation Leader. Due to injuries, Mike Derkey and Dave Miles offered to be Drivers, however, they would be unable to assist in the field. Based on this limited response, we were unable to send a Team.

From the Inyo Register website and Inyo Co Sheriff's Facebook Page:

At about 2 p.m. on Friday, May 27, Inyo County Sheriff Search and Rescue (SAR) coordinators received notification that an emergency satellite beacon had been activated on Mt. Emerson, reporting that a party of three climbers had a member with a broken leg high on the south east face climbing route, at about 12,000 feet.

The SAR team was activated and the first team members started to arrive by 3 p.m. A helicopter was requested and CHP H80 was able to respond. The SAR team noted that a cold wind system was forecast to arrive and persist through the weekend, potentially affecting the ability of the helicopter to be able to hoist the patient, and thus making the possibility of the party spending the night out on the mountain a potentially life-threatening situation. It was decided that the team's "Plan A" would be to attempt a helicopter hoist, but that the more likely scenario should be prepared for, the "Plan B" – without a hoist the team would have to assist the party by climbing and descending the route. Plan B would be an all-nighter.

Shortly before 6 p.m., a hoist was attempted and failed due to gusty winds. The first SAR responder was left off at 10,500 feet, above Loch Leven Lake, near the Paiute Pass Trail. Over the next two hours five more SAR members and their equipment were inserted via H80 at the same spot via a challenging "one skid" landing technique. The last drop-off occurred in the dark. The earlier-arriving SAR team members started climbing the southeast face route right at dark, with the first SAR member arriving to the patient about 9:45 p.m. The patient was assessed and packaged in a vacuum splint, and rescue litter.

By approximately midnight the patient and other uninjured subjects were ready to begin the long process of descending the route with the SAR team. Due to extreme rock fall hazard, and the perils of working in the dark and cold, windy conditions, the descent was executed in careful stages, minimizing the number of people exposed to rockfall as much as possible.

One SAR member would rappel a 300-foot rope and establish an anchor in a safe spot. The uninjured subjects would rappel to that spot. Next the litter with the injured person would be lowered on two ropes, each rope controlled by a SAR member, with three SAR "attendants" helping with the litter. Each of these cycles took about an hour and a half.

The process was repeated five times, each just under 300 feet of lowering, and the patient reached the ground at about 9 a.m. From the base of the route it took 20 some SAR members, who had also worked through the night to be at the base of the climb, about three hours to carry and wheel the litter out to the trailhead and the waiting ambulance. There was one minor rock fall mishap, resulting in a painful but not serious injury to one of the SAR members.

Being prepared

SAR members point out that not all accidents can be prevented, but there are things people can do to stack the odds in their favor. They offer the following to keep in mind:

- *Prepare for the worst: Having warm clothing would have really helped this party. Had they had to spend the night it is questionable whether or not they could have survived the conditions. Remember, you are not guaranteed a rescue! As was the case with this rescue, due to inclement weather or lack of available resources, it could take many hours for rescuers to reach your location. Whenever you venture into the wilderness, you should have a plan to solve your own emergency should the need arise.*
- **Reaching the summit is far less important than returning safely.** *Calling SAR or pushing your SOS button is the same as calling 911: only do so if you are in a life-threatening emergency or you need specialized assistance beyond what you are qualified to provide. Recognize when illnesses or injuries become too serious for you to handle on your own. Of course, some emergencies do require outside assistance, and this party did the right thing by calling for help.*
- *Though Mt. Emerson is often viewed as a moderate alpine climb, it is a serious undertaking. The difficulty rating belies some of the challenges climbers face on this route. Many climbers are not familiar with the tools and techniques to manage the rock fall hazard as well as the hard to protect ridge climbing high up on the route. Route finding is challenging. Mt. Emerson is the site of frequent rescues and should in no way be considered a route for a beginner other than if you are being led by a qualified guide.*

2022-12 TRANSIT Kern County / PCT Jawbone Canyon

Miles/Finco

June 23, 2022, CLMRG was contacted by Kern Valley Search and Rescue (KVSAR) to assist in the rescue of an injured hiker on the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) out of Jawbone Canyon. At 1315 we were given the go ahead by Sgt. McNeal with the Kern County Sheriff (KCSO) to assist. Dave Miles contacted Linda Finco to decide what to do. It was decided that as soon as Miles could find another Member to commit, they would then proceed to the location as a hasty team. Finco would start the call-out with our calling system and request that the Second team meet at the hut at 1430. The Second team would bring the stretcher and wheel to assist in a carry-out if needed. Eileen Loughran coordinated the callout and Carin Miles assisted with the telephoning.

Miles got Bill Stephenson to meet with him and they departed Ridgecrest at 1400. Nick Pio and Mike Franklin met Finco at the Hut at 1430 and loaded the gear. As the Second team was departing the Hut, a call was received from Miles stating the Subject had been hiked out to the Jawbone Canyon Road and our assistance was no longer required. The Second team unloaded and secured the equipment while Miles and Stephenson returned to Ridgecrest. The operation was secured at 1500.

2022-13 SEARCH Kern County / Miracle Hot Springs – Kern River

Bishop

2022-14 ALERT Kern County / Miracle Hot Springs – Kern River

Bishop

On the afternoon of 4 July 2022, at 1350, the China Lake Mountain Rescue Group (CLMRG) received a request from Sgt. Williams, Kern County Sheriff Office (KCSO) to assist in the search for two male Subjects who were reported to be swept away in the Kern River near the Miracle Hot Springs area. Carin Miles responded as the Coordinator, Eileen Loughran assisted as Telephoner and Dan Bishop was able to be the Operation Leader along with Bill Stephenson and Phil Cash committing. The Team departed the Hut at 1500 and after first stopping at the Remington Trailhead met with Sgt. Williams at the Miracle Hot Springs parking lot at 1630. We learned that the

Subjects, Samuel Raymundo (19 years old) and Diego Cabo (27 years old) were attempting to swim across the river from the river-left Hot Springs side to the opposite side, where they were last seen (35.576435, 118.53417). We also learned that neither knew how to swim nor did they possess PFD or other types of floatation. Ground teams from Kern Valley and Bakersfield were in the process of searching the river-left, our assignment was to search the river-right side, starting off Highway 178 (35.576435, -118.53417) upstream to the point last seen (PLS).

As we climbed down the steep embankment from the Highway and intersected with the River, we spoke with boat teams from Kern Valley and learned that they had made multiple runs down the river since the Subjects were first reported missing. They also informed us areas of heavy underwater vegetation made locating submerged objects very difficult. Although the flow was low, 300 cfs, areas in the river still had powerful currents

Our Team spent the next two hours making our way up to the PLS. The three of us 'leap-frogged' and attempted to search methodically at different viewpoints in the hope of taking advantage of the sun angles to improve our probability of detection. We encountered areas of thick brush including poison oak. Evening light conditions made the last 30 minutes of the search difficult; the shade obscured the visibility in the water. Once arriving on the opposite side of Miracle Hot Springs, we ended our search and returned cross country nearly directly back to the Highway and our vehicle.

As we returned to the debrief with Sgt. Williams, many of the Subjects family and friends were present in the Hot Spring parking lot. Kern Valley was planning to search the following day along with helicopter support. We discussed that our further assistance would probably be of more use in the next 2 or 3 days helping with the anticipated recovery efforts. We departed and secured from the Hut at 2145.

On July 6th an Alert was sent out by KCSO for CLMRG to assist in the continuation the search. Sgt. Kimmel requested teams to be prepared to assist in morning and evening operation periods on Thursday, 7 July and Friday, 8 July. Linda Finco and Eileen Loughran performed the coordination and Terry Mitchell assisted as telephoner.

Based on commitments for this in-county search, the following Members were ready to search: July 7th: Bill Stephenson (Team Lead), Dave Doerr, Joe Kromphardt, and Tyler Brewer; July 8th: Dan Bishop (Team Lead), Phil Cash, Maricela Park, Andrew Cammenga, and Tyler Brewer. Fabien Pering committed for Thurs morning, however, was the only one so we were not able to field a morning team.

On Thursday afternoon, prior to deployment, the Subjects were recovered, thus ending the Alert and the overall search efforts.

LESSONS LEARNED

- The river rope throw bags were appropriate to carry as a just-in-case. Many people were in the Miracle Hot Springs area.
 - Pre-treat and post treatment for poison oak.
 - Leather gloves.
 - Change of clothes for the drive back.
 - Binoculars are useful.
 - During the Alert, there are still some issues with the Group Me text



Miracle Hot Springs



River Right



Fig 1. Search Assignment Note: searching the banks of the Kern is not a picnic – it’s mostly huge boulders and Poison Oak. It is very frustrating that so many people drown in the Kern every year, in spite of all the warning signs. This really is a cold, swift-moving dangerous river with eddys, holes, rocks, logs.

2022-15 TRANSIT Kern County / North Edwards Miles

22 July 2022, at 0853 Linda Finco sent out an ALERT via GroupMe. Dave Miles accepted as Operation Leader and Terry Mitchell as coordinator with Eileen Loughran as telephoner. We also had Phil Cash, Andrew Cammenga, and Bill Stephenson commit for the field team. After calling Sgt. Kimmel, he told me that a 22 year old female from Tarzana, CA had been reported missing and her car had been located unoccupied with the engine running in North Edwards. There were possible foot tracks heading from the vehicle. We would meet at the Command Post near the car at Claymine Road and Suckow Road with the hope to find her quickly since the weather forecast was for a high of 111°F. Miles set a meet time of 0930 at the Hut and after getting gas we proceeded south on Highway 395. After making it about 5 miles south of Red Mountain I received a call from Sgt. Kimmel at 1032 that the subject had been located inside a residence and was ok. We returned to the Hut and secured to OP at 1115.

Summer Mountaineering and Safety Course

Every summer we offer this class. We tried a different format this time, starting out with topics and hikes for people who were just beginners. Then more advanced topics. We did day hikes and overnight camping trips, and got most people to the tops of some nice Sierra Peaks. Philip Cash organized the class, Nick Pio was head rock climbing instructor, and many members helped out at various locations. Photos below.

Donations since May, 2022

- Over the Hill Track Club
- Just Giving
- Amazon Smile (1)
- CFC Pledges (2)
- Janet Westbrook – use of Museum rooms for Summer class and Wilderness FA

Just a note: if you shop at Amazon, sign up for “Amazon Smile”, designate CLMRG as your charity, and they give us .5% of your purchases.



Summer CLMRG Family Fun Pool Party and Sean's lovely pool! Much safer place to swim than the Kern River!!

Summer 2022



