



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Sequoia and Kings Canyon
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Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks News Release

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TWO SUCCESSFUL SEARCH AND RESCUE OPERATIONS

Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks have completed two successful search and rescue operations in the last two days.

On August 2, Richard (Rick) Reynolds of Santa Clara, California, was reported three days overdue in returning from an extended wilderness backpacking trip. He began his trip in Cedar Grove on July 13 and was expected to return on July 29. National Park rangers immediately began searching for Reynolds; by August 3 there were over 30 people dedicated to the search.

Using wilderness permits issued for the area, rangers were able to identify a party who encountered Reynolds on July 21 in the Kid Lakes area. This information focused the search efforts, and a helicopter searching in the Kid Lakes area located a fire Reynolds had started to attract attention. Reynolds was airlifted by helicopter to Grant Grove, where he was evaluated by park EMS (Emergency Medical Services). He was in fair condition and good spirits, but was transported by ambulance to a local hospital for evaluation.

The key to finding Reynolds was the wilderness permit system. A permit is required for overnight trips into the park wilderness. This system serves as a tool to help distribute use and protect the wilderness, but it also provides critical information for investigators during search and rescue operations.

The second rescue involved the evacuation of two hikers who had both sustained leg injuries. Ken Connelly and Linda Duvall-Connelly, both 39, of Richardson, Texas, were backpacking the John Muir Trail in Sequoia National Park. They lost the trail in the vicinity of the Rock Creek Ranger Station, and wound up travelling cross-country down the steep, rocky terrain of Rock Creek Canyon, towards the Kern River, in hopes of finding the trail. Both fell several times, with Ms. Duvall-Connelly injuring her ankle and Mr. Connelly suffering injuries to his leg. Both remained ambulatory.

The couple activated a GPS beacon device at around noon. Once the park was notified, a helicopter located the couple about one mile east of the Kern River. Due to the steep and rough terrain they were in, the pair was short-hauled by helicopter to a better location, loaded into the aircraft, and taken to Lone Pine. From there, the Connellys were transported by ambulance to the hospital.

Park rangers remind hikers that good navigational skills are critical to wilderness travel. Snow and trail washouts can obscure even high-use trails. Rescue may not be immediate, even if electronic beacon devices are used. Leave a clear travel itinerary, always travel within your abilities, and be alert to hazards.

For more information about Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks,
visit www.nps.gov/seki or call 559-565-3341.

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