

2021
Mount Shasta Wilderness
Search & Rescue - Incident Narratives

1.17.2021 – Lower Casaval Ridge, skiing, broken leg – Male/35

On Sunday the 17th at approximately 11:50 a.m., Antwan and his group were skiing an open bowl of lower Casaval Ridge on the south side of Mount Shasta. They were skiing one at a time. When it was Antwan's turn, he lost control and crashed while skiing across a section of breakable crust, tumbling numerous times. A local Shasta Mountain Guide ski guide (Justin) was in the area, alerted when he heard Antwan calling out in pain, and quickly responded. The other group members that remained at the top of the slope carefully skied down to Antwan and Justin. Justin was able to rapidly conduct a patient assessment, finding a chief complaint of lower leg pain. Other local members of the public, who were skiing higher on the mountain and in the area, joined the rescue team. Justin called 911. Sheriff Deputy and Siskiyou County SAR Coordinator Mike Burns notified USFS Climbing Ranger Ryan Sorenson of the accident. In partnership, Burns and Ranger Sorenson notified the California Highway Patrol (CHP) helicopter of the situation. The rescue team on the mountain, Justin, a few other locals and Antwan's partners constructed a sled out of skis and lowered Antwan to lower angle terrain near 8,000 feet. At 1310 hours, CHP helicopter H16 arrived on scene, landed nearby to reconfigure, and then performed a hoist. Antwan was transported to Mercy Hospital Mt Shasta at 1350 hours. Injuries unknown.

2.15.2021 – Old Ski Bowl, snowmobile accident, lower leg injury – Female/19

USFS Climbing Rangers responded to a lower leg injury of a 19-year-old female on the snow-covered road to Old Ski Bowl near Bunny Flat. Cal Fire and Mount Shasta Ambulance EMS personnel were already on scene. The patient was riding double with her partner on a snowmobile when it tipped over crushing her leg. She was carried in a litter and transported to Bunny Flat where an ambulance was waiting. Injuries unknown.

03.14.2021 – Old Ski Bowl, lost snowmobiler – Male/40

At approximately 1630, a 40-year-old male snowmobiler called 911 when he realized he was lost. It was getting dark and a storm was approaching. Sheriff Mike Burns contacted the USFS Climbing Rangers to report the lost rider. Rangers Sorenson and Beverly met Sheriff Burns on the road to Old Ski Bowl, all on snowmobiles. Using a GPS location from lost snowmobiler's phone call, they were able to locate the rider at approximate 1730 hours. He was in good health and but unable to find his way back through the deep snow and thick trees in the area. After a quick assessment, Sheriff Burns and the Rangers lead the lost rider back to the trail and eventually to Bunny flat. Riding snowmobiles off trail and solo is not a good idea if you are unfamiliar with the area and/or have novice powder riding skills. A casual ride can become an epic quickly. Snowmobiles have the ability to cover great distances. If riding solo, consider

always bringing snowshoes or skis in case of a walkout and/or and enough survival equipment to weather a night out. A shovel, bivy sack, small insulate pad, fire starter and an extra jacket are just a few items that can make the difference. The rider was fortunate that he was easily located and had the cell phone coverage to call for help.

4.9.21 - Avalanche Gulch, near The Heart, solo climber, struck by rockfall - Male

A solo climber took a glancing blow to the thigh by a quoted, “500 lb rock” near The Heart in Avalanche Gulch on the afternoon of April 9th. Another nearby solo climber witnessed the incident and came over to aid. A 911 call was made, but after some reassessment, the injured was able to self-rescue with the aid of the other climber. The two scooted down the mountain to Helen Lake and then skied back to Bunny Flat. A large contusion was the extent of the injury, to our knowledge. A most definite near miss!

4.16.21 – Search, Avalanche Gulch, lost hiker, separated from party – Female/50's

A spiritual group from San Francisco went for a short hike on the mountain via the Bunny Flat trailhead. They were in light running shoes and casual clothes, not prepared for snow and/or climbing. The group hiked up to treeline in Avalanche Gulch. One of the members of the party stated she was “familiar with the mountain” and “in tune with the power areas”. She separated from the group while everyone else turned back, continuing on her quest to “get in touch and closer to the mountain”. She never returned to the trailhead. Siskiyou County SAR, three USFS climbing rangers and California Highway Patrol helicopter initiated a search at 1800 hours. Search and Rescue team members/USFS Rangers were unable to locate the hiker into the night. The subject ended up walking down the mountain and emerged out somewhere along the Everitt Memorial Highway. She then hitched a ride back to town and was able to phone her friends. The search was finished about 2200 hours.

6-19-21 – Rescue, Hotlum/Bolam route, north side, 11,800 feet, slip/fall of roped team of 7

A family from Utah attempted a climb of the Hotlum/Bolam route on June 19th. They stated they had moderate experience and had been practicing for the climb. Conditions on the route were icy, making self-arrest very difficult. This accident occurred at nearly the identical location of a fatality incident the year prior.

The family of 7 began the steeper climbing of the route by mid-morning. They were all roped together with no protection when one of them slipped and fell near 12,300 feet, dragging everyone else off balance. Despite everyone’s attempt to self-arrest, they were unable to stop for approximately 500 vertical feet. Miraculously, they came to rest just before a boulder field.

A 17-year-old female suffered the worst of the injuries with a broken tib/fib. The mother of the family sustained a crampon puncture wound to her calf but was able to self-rescue. Everyone else suffered minor injuries (cuts, abrasions, contusions from sliding and tumbling on the rough, icy snow surfaces).

Immediately after the fall, the family called 911. USFS Climbing Ranger Nick Meyers and California Highway Patrol Helicopter H-14 were able to assist Siskiyou County Sheriffs SAR. CHP inserted Meyers and immediately hoisted the 17-year-old female with a broken leg. All other party members self-rescued off the mountain.

6-23-21 - Clear Creek, 13,000 feet/top of headwall, ankle/knee injury, pulled rock on himself - 31/male

A solo, 31-year-old male was climbing the Clear Creek route on June 23rd and had ascended to near the top of the “headwall” section (13,000 feet) of the route. This portion of the route involves 3rd class hiking/scrambling up through a relatively short section of steeper rock and talus to gain the summit plateau. The solo climber reported, “accidentally pulling a 200-pound boulder onto his foot/ankle...” and was unable to descend on his own. He called 911.

USFS Climbing Ranger Nick Meyers and California Highway Patrol Helicopter H-14 were able to assist Siskiyou County Sheriffs SAR. Meyers met CHP at Mercy Mt. Shasta and prepare for the rescue. Meyers was inserted near 12,600 feet and ascended on foot to the injured climber’s location. Meyers rigged the climber to prepare for a hoist. CHP hoisted the climber, and the rescue was complete. Total time of the operation was approximately 1 hour.

The climber tore all the ligaments in his ankle and suffered a knee injury.

Incident #: SHF-924

6-26-21 - Lost hiker, Casaval Ridge, 9,500- 54/female

A pair of hikers were hiking above the Sierra Club Alpine Hut (Horse Camp) on June 26th in the late afternoon. The two separated for an unknown reason and a 54-year-old woman never returned to the campsite at Sand flat. At 11pm the friend of the missing called 911 to report the incident.

USFS Climbing Rangers Sorenson, Dellaporta and Coots along with Siskiyou County Sheriffs SAR began a ground search at 7:30 AM on the 27th, out of the Sand Flat and Bunny Flat trailheads. Siskiyou County SAR also requested helicopter aerial assistance (CHP). At 8:53 AM, California Highway Patrol helicopter H16 located the lost hiker. Ranger Coots met CHP H16 at Mercy Mt Shasta and prepared a plan. Coots was inserted near the missing hiker near 9,500 ft on Casaval ridge. Coots rigged the hiker for a hoist. CHP hoisted the hiker, and the rescue was complete. No injuries were reported. Total time of the search was approximately 4 hrs.

Incident # SHF-2021 963

09-22-21 – Search, lost hiker, South Gate/Valley of the Moon area, 76/male

On the afternoon of September 22nd, a 76-year-old male took a hike to South Gate Meadows via the Old Ski Bowl trailhead. He made it to South Gate Meadows, but upon his return, made a wrong turn. This alternate trail took him into the “Valley of the Moon” in between Red and

Yellow Butte, heading toward Gray Butte/Lower Panther Meadows. He soon became disoriented in the late afternoon hours along a portion of the trail that is vague as it travels over slabby rock features. As daylight waned the hiker was unable to locate the trail and he called 911. Siskiyou County SAR coordinator Mike Burns and USFS Ranger Nick Meyers responded. Burns arrived on scene first, then Meyers. The man was uninjured and had started a small fire a hundred yards downhill, off the trail. After fully extinguishing the fire, Burns began to hike out with the man. Meyers soon arrived on scene and assisted with a several hours walk out via on and off trail hiking. The man was brought back to his car at 1130 P.M. and aside from exhaustion, was okay.

While in good shape for his age, the man struggled with his balance. He walked with a staff but needed assistance with almost every step. It took several hours to hike out what would normally take 20 minutes.