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September 10, 2017

NEWS RELEASE

EPFD responds to ComSAR event

Firefighters respond to ComSAR event at McKelligon Canyon

EL PASO, Texas – At approximately 7:56 p.m. on Sunday Sept. 10, the El Paso Fire Department was dispatched to the Franklin Mountains near the McKelligon Canyon Amphitheater when a passerby saw flashing lights at the ridge of the mountain and called 9-1-1. The first unit arrived on the scene at 8:07 p.m. and made visual contact with the hikers. Crews waited for approximately 30 minutes to see if the hikers would descend on their own, but because the hikers were stationary, the Combined Search and Rescue team was dispatched to reach the hikers. The ComSAR team reached the five hikers at 9:47 p.m. and began to hydrate the hikers because they had very little water.

The five hikers and the ComSAR team were all safely down the mountain at 10:59 p.m. The five hikers, ages 16, 18, 20, 21 and 22, all refused transport to a local hospital.

There were no injuries to the hikers or ComSAR personnel. A total of 7 units and 12 personnel from the ComSAR team responded to this incident.

The El Paso Fire Department and Texas Parks and Wildlife would like to remind the public to practice these safety recommendations when planning outdoor hiking/climbing activities.

- Plan before you go. Know rules and regulations. Also, do not hike beyond your capabilities.
- Stay on the trail always. Walking off-trail increases your chance of suffering an injury, getting lost, or encountering dangerous wildlife. In addition, desert soils are fragile. Cutting across switchbacks tramples vegetation, erodes the soil and eventually destroys the trail.
- Have a cell or mobile phone for emergencies, but do not rely on them only. Carry with you a whistle, mirror, flag, flashlight, flare or other means to signal your location.
- Check weather conditions and wear proper clothing accordingly. Avoid doing activities during extreme temperatures. Seek shelter in the event of strong winds and thunderstorms.

For a list of more detailed hiking, biking and camping tips, the public is encouraged to visit epfire.org.

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