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November 20, 2016

NEWS RELEASE

EPFD responds to ComSAR event

Firefighters respond to ComSAR event at Schaffer Shuffle Trail

El Paso, Texas – At approximately 1:01 p.m. on Sunday Oct. 20, the El Paso Fire Department was dispatched to Schaffer Shuffle Trail inside Tom Mays Park when two hikers lost sight of the trail and called 9-1-1. The first unit arrived on the scene at 1:03 p.m. The Combined Search and Rescue team was immediately dispatched to help the hikers return to the trail. The ComSAR team reached the hikers, a 29-year-old male and a 30-year-old female, at 2:17 p.m. Since they did not need medical treatment, the ComSAR team escorted the two hikers down the trail. Firefighters and hikers were safely down at 2:28 p.m.

There were no injuries to hikers or ComSAR personnel. A total of 5 units and 13 personnel from the El Paso Fire Department responded to this incident. El Paso Police and Texas Parks and Wildlife assisted in 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/biking 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.
- Be aware of the types of wildlife in the area by searching the web or calling the ranger station.
- Take plenty of drinking water (more than you may think you will need) and light snacks.
- 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: <http://www.elpasotexas.gov/fire-department/divisions/fire-prevention>.

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