



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Sequoia and Kings Canyon
National Parks

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Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks News Release

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Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks Initiates Rescue of Woman Who Had Been Trapped in a Creek Under Snow for an Extended Time

Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks' staff initiated a search-and-rescue for a woman who had been pulled from the creek at the Mineral King area of Sequoia National Park on Tuesday, June 14, 2011, at 5:15 p.m. The 52-year-old woman (who is from Squaw Valley, CA) left the Farewell Gap Trailhead on a solo day hike to train for an ultra-marathon. She hiked up Farewell Canyon and crossed Franklin Creek on a snow bridge. On her way back to the trailhead, the snow bridge collapsed underneath her, and she fell into the creek. She was swept downstream under the snow for 30-40 feet, where she found a spot to stop herself. She stood up in the creek under the snow with no access to the surface. Using her hands, she dug through approximately 5 feet of snow and created a small hole at the surface. She threw her backpack out of the hole, where it was seen by another party who went to examine it and found the woman under the snow nearby. The woman was hypothermic and incoherent when the second party pulled her out of the creek, as she had been trapped in the creek under snow for over 3 hours. One member of the party went back to the trailhead for help. The remainder of the party provided assistance in warming the woman. Upon notification of the incident, the park helicopter (with a medic) and a ranger (on foot) were dispatched to the scene. When rangers arrived, the woman declined evacuation or medical assistance. She was assisted to the trailhead by a ranger.

Please Note: Anyone interested in visiting Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks should be aware that there is still quite a bit of snow at higher elevations (7,000 feet+) in the Central Sierra Nevada Mountains this year, and conditions are expected to last well into the summer due to record snowfall this winter followed by a

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very cool, wet spring. Rivers in the parks have not crested yet and will do so later than in normal years. Visitors to higher elevations face conditions more similar to late winter or early spring than would be expected at this time of the year. Many trails that normally open in June are still completely covered by snow, and many creek crossings are not passable. Park visitors interested in accessing higher elevations are encouraged to modify their trip plans accordingly.

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ABOUT SEQUOIA AND KINGS CANYON NATIONAL PARKS

Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, which lie side-by-side in the southern Sierra Nevada Mountains in central California, serve as a prime example of nature's size, beauty, and diversity. With the world's largest trees (by volume), grand mountains, rugged foothills, deep canyons, vast caverns, and the highest point in the lower 48 states, it is a place that attracts 1.6 million visitors a year from across the U.S. and the world. Visitor activities vary by season and elevation.