

# NEWSRELEASE

Pinal County Sheriff's Office • 971 Jason Lopez Circle  
Florence, Arizona 85132 • 520-866-5208 • Fax: 520-866-5195

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, April 03, 2015

CONTACT: PIO – Jim Knupp



Paul Babeu, Sheriff

## **PCSO Responding to an Increased Number of Search and Rescue Calls in 2015**

So far in 2015, the Pinal County Sheriff's Office has seen and responded to an increase in the number of search and rescue calls coming into its Communications Center.

Just this year, from January to March, the Pinal County Sheriff's Search and Rescue (SAR) team responded to 17 searches for individuals, 34 rescues and 19 patrol assists. A patrol assist represents when a normal patrol vehicle may not be able to access an area, i.e. rough terrain, requiring a response.

Last year, for the same time period, SAR responded to 16 searches, 13 rescues, and 24 patrol assists. The number of rescue calls this year over last represents an increase of over 161 percent.

A recent example of these increased calls for service occurred at approximately 3:30 pm on Tuesday, March 31, 2015, when three men who have been hiking for three days contacted the Pinal County Sheriff's Office for assistance.

The men believed they were approximately two to three miles south of Picketpost Trailhead, near Superior, AZ, and reported each was suffering from heat exhaustion. Worst among the group, though, was a 60 year old man, who was conscious and breathing but placed under a tree in an attempt to keep him cool. Additionally troubling was the fact the group reported they were down to half of a liter of water.



SOURCE: Pinal County Sheriff's Search and Rescue, taken on 3/31/15 near Picketpost Trailhead, near Superior, AZ.

The Pinal County Sheriff's SAR team and air unit – Raven 4 – responded and within 30 minutes located the individuals and began to extricate them, one-by-one, to the trailhead. Once at the trailhead, Queen Valley Fire met the helicopter in order to medically evaluate the subjects. All three refused further medical treatment.

Sheriff Babeu stated, *“The Pinal County Sheriff's Air Unit provides invaluable support to our Search and Rescue teams and continually proves to be a lifesaving tool for our residents and those visiting Pinal County. If it weren't for the training of our SAR team and use of our aviation unit, these three men may have been in perilous danger of succumbing to heat exhaustion and dehydration in a very short amount of time.”*