

# Media Release

## Yavapai County Sheriff's Office

**Scott Mascher – Sheriff**

255 E. Gurley Street, Prescott, AZ 86301

Dwight D'Evelyn - Media Coordinator

928-777-7441



**February 11, 2015**

### ***Poor Decision by Hikers Result in Rescue on Bell Rock***

\*\*\*

On February 8, 2015, at approximately 7:30PM, YCSO received a call regarding 2 subjects, a 46-year-old male and a 39-year-old female, both from Los Angeles, who were stuck near the top of Bell Rock in the Village of Oak Creek.

The initial call to YCSO came from a concerned citizen who reported seeing flashing lights on Bell Rock appearing to indicate someone in distress. This report was followed by a 911 call from a couple on Bell Rock who confirmed they were lost and due to darkness, did not want to attempt hiking out on their own. They were currently stuck on a small outcropping, out of water, had little food, and were wearing only light clothing. The cell phone being used was nearly out of power.

The deputy first on scene spotted the pair from some distance and coordinated a response from the Verde Search and Rescue Team. These rescuers were not able to reach the pair directly and indicated the necessity for a technical rope rescue to safely bring them off a ledge. As a result, members of the Yavapai County Search and Rescue Team's Backcountry Unit were called out. 8 rescuers arrived and were able to reach the couple and deliver water and warm clothing. Over the next several hours, these incredible volunteers set rope lines to rappel the pair to safety.

The couple told deputies they began an ascent on Bell Rock around 9AM and decided to remain and catch the sunset but darkness fell much faster than they anticipated. On the descent, they became lost after taking the wrong trail.

Lessons – Planning any hike is an important part of preparation especially when it involves difficult trails and climbs like those on Bell Rock. Darkness should always be anticipated and hikes should conclude well before sunset to avoid this danger. The pair was smart to remain stationary once it was apparent they were lost. As with rescue cases in the past, the couple's cell phone became a lifeline to rescuers. Consider conserving cell phone battery life on such long hikes by placing the phone in "airplane mode" when not in use. This prevents the phone from power loss normally used to maintain contact with cell towers while hiking.

*Citizens can contact the Yavapai County Sheriff's Office with information or questions at 928-771-3260 or the YCSO website:*

[www.ycsoaz.gov](http://www.ycsoaz.gov)