



AAC Publications

STRANDED – Dehydration

North Carolina, Pisgah National Forest, Linville Gorge Wilderness, The Amphitheater

In the late afternoon of July 8, a male climber (42) free soloing Good Heavens (5 pitches, 5.5) called 911 to report that he was on a ledge near the top of the route and did not feel he could complete the climb after becoming weak from dehydration. He was wearing a harness and carrying some gear but had no rope.

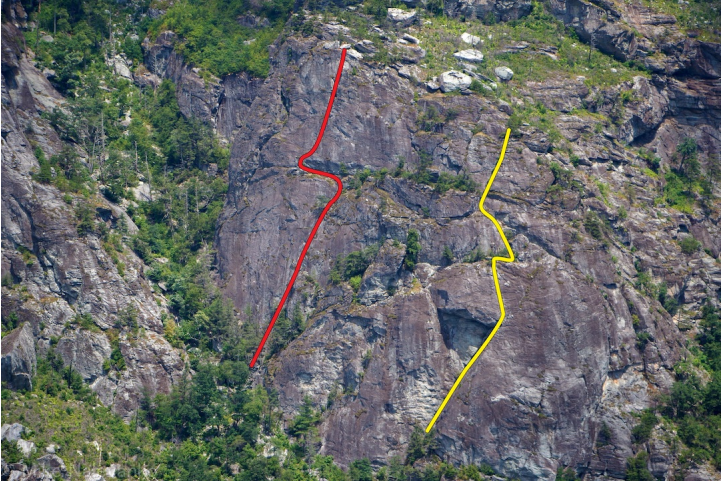
A hasty team of four rescue personnel arrived at the Amphitheater and made voice contact with a pair of climbers on a neighboring route called The Daddy (5 pitches, 5.5). Information regarding the situation was conveyed to the pair. As rescuers moved around the Amphitheater rim trail to the top of Good Heavens, the two climbers on The Daddy traversed a ledge and made contact with the solo climber. They were able to hydrate and assist him to the top. Once contact with the rescue team was made, IVs were established, and the patient felt well enough after some light snacks and rest to walk out. (Source: James Robinson, Burke County Search and Rescue.)

ANALYSIS

Climbing in the Linville Gorge Wilderness during the height of summer is hot and humid, with long, demanding approaches and unreliable water sources. In this environment, climbers are reminded to carry extra water and, if possible, cache water so it is accessible at the end of a climb. It is important to start hydrating no less than 12 to 24 hours before any outdoor activities.

Free solo climbing presents its own challenges. It is contingent on any soloist to weigh the impact they have on others and make responsible choices, factoring in all potential hazards. This climber was lucky: He was able to get a cell signal, and there were additional climbers in his vicinity willing to risk their own safety to render assistance. (Sources: James Robinson and the Editors.)

Images



The Daddy (red) and Good Heavens (yellow), both five pitches, on the Amphitheater crag. The prominent wooded ledge bisecting the upper cliff was used by rescuers to access the soloist on Good Heavens.

Article Details

Author	James Robinson, Burke County Search and Rescue
Publication	ANAM
Volume	13
Issue	76
Page	69
Copyright Date	2023
Article Type	Accident reports