

## **Mesa Scouts found OK after wet, cold weekend** *Kids, leader lost in Superstitions*

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The search for a missing Mesa Boy Scout troop ended early Sunday when rescue crews spotted a tent peeking from a snow bank in the Superstition Mountains.

Nine boys and one adult were rescued from the mountain after spending the night huddled in three tents during a winter storm punctuated by freezing temperatures and biting winds.

Cmdr. Robert Cooper of Superstition Search & Rescue said the group, which originally included a Scoutmaster and another chaperone, had been in the mountains since Friday night.

The troop camped out in Haunted Canyon during what was supposed to be an overnight trip, but the group was overcome by the weather Saturday morning.

The Scoutmaster and a chaperone parted from the group Saturday afternoon to search for their vehicle, which was miles in the opposite direction, Cooper said, but did not exit the canyon the same way they entered. The snow had blanketed the trails, whiting out the landscape.

A search for the troop began about 9 p.m. Saturday after a concerned parent called 911. Fifteen Superstition Search & Rescue volunteers located the troop's van in the darkness and canvassed the area by vehicle and on foot.

By then, the snow was more than 3 feet deep and the troop was nowhere to be found, Cooper said.

A break came in the morning, when an Arizona Department of Public Safety helicopter spotted one of their tents. With the coordinates in hand, rescuers trekked several miles up the mountain by foot to make the confirmation.

When Cooper and his crew found the boys, they were "soaking wet and had nothing warm left."

The crew provided food, water and warm clothing until a helicopter could lift them from the mountain. No one was injured, Cooper said.

The boys and their families were reunited by noon.

"They were lucky," he said. "They made several mistakes to get into that predicament, but once they realized they were lost, they did everything right."

For more information: <http://superstition-sar.org/>.