August 2, 2011 - The SPOT GPS Messenger first became important to me after a recent trip to Dinky Creek, CA. Dinky Creek is as deep as you can get in the high sierra wilderness. One access trail at the entrance and the only way out is by kayaking the two day adventure of class V whitewater.

We arrived first at the take-out for the river at Balch Camp. Balch Camp is nothing more than a parking lot deep in a canyon hours from your last bar of cell reception. We prepared our gear and went to bed early to feel fresh for our next days adventure. Early that next morning, we were awakened with Helicopters circling overhead and a few minutes later two Italian kayakers were driven down to our site.

The previous evening they had experienced a horrible accident on the river and one of their teammates and good friends died. It was horrific news that hit all of us deep. They had used a SPOT Messenger to send for help as they lost gear and could not continue out on their own.

Our group did everything we could to help the two survivors as their story and loss devastated

us and our confidence for our upcoming trip. One of our good friends who had just finished the trip the day before offered up her SPOT to us so that we could be prepared and to help boost our confidence as we were still determined to go in.

Safety on the river is always very important to me on the river and having the SPOT did not make me feel as though I could be reckless, but instead was simply comforting to have just one more piece to stack the cards for me and my team. We moved down the river really well that day. Our level of safety was absolutely as high as possible and our confidence was returning with each section completed.

Nearing the end of the first day we caught up with a group of two paddlers that had also put on that morning. One of the members in the group had come out of his kayak and lost all of his gear. We joined them for the evening and planned his escape for the next day. Seeing as he was physically okay we did not want to hit the emergency button. Our plan was to hit the personal message button to log his location to the programmed email in the SPOT. Then once we exited the canyon we would call California Highway Patrol and have them pick him up. CHP is a free service and we all concluded it the best option as we could leave him with plenty of supplies. Hiking out of Dinky Creek is not an option as you would quickly get clifed out and the poison oak would leave you sore for months.

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