

Maine Association For Search And Rescue

Meeting Minutes

11 April 1999

John McDonough brings the meeting to order at 1604 hours at Maine Warden Service Headquarters in Sidney Maine.

Present

Randy Armour - Lincoln SAR, Dave Martin - DIRIGO SAR, John McDonough - Wilderness, Rick Grant - Lakes Region SAR, Ronald Tedford - Katahdin SAR, Matt Tedford - Katahdin SAR, Mike Sawyer - Warden Service, Nanci Ingraham - PTESAR, Chris Wiebusch - MDI SAR, Al Martin - Dirigo SAR, Keith Heavrin, Jr. - MESARD

Announcements

Final planning for the Statewide training exercise is in place. Registration will be held at 0830 at the Alfred Courthouse building where the York County Emergency Management offices are located. Please get there on time so registration can be completed by 0900 when the field training exercise will commence.

Camping and indoor bunk space are being provided for and that information will be available at registration, or you may call 324-1578 for details if you need to.

Each unit is requested to please send a head count for their team as soon as you can poll your membership for who is attending. They need this information to plan for the meals and accommodations they are arranging. Please call 324-1578 as soon as you can get this together.

Maine Warden Service K9 Coordinator Deborah Palman has been named Warden Of The Year for 1998. She was honored for her work in forensics and dedication to Search and Rescue in Maine. She was also recognized as a founding member and Training Director for Maine Search and Rescue Dogs, Inc.

MDI SAR is going to be conducting the BASAR challenge test on April 20th. For details and to arrange attendance call 244-9936. They plan to conduct the field test for the BASAR requirement in the fall at a date and time to be announced.

Lakes Region will be conducting a BASAR test on or about May 8th. For details call Rick Grant at 933-3553.

Each MASAR member unit not having done so is requested to get team roster information directly to Randy Armour as soon as you can do it. The database information from which correspondence and MASAR related mailings come depends on this being updated. You can e-mail it to rivers@telplus.net or send to PO Box 365, Howland, Me 04448. He needs name, address, phone numbers for each member plus unit address and callout numbers. This data base is important.

Mission Critiques

Keith describes a callout to the Upper Dedham Rd, on 2/19/99, for two lost teens, who walked out of the woods and directly to Warden Deb Palman just before MASAR teams arrived at the scene.

Keith also provided a description of the search effort initiated by the Maine State Police on March 30th. This is the first time MESARD has been used directly by the Maine State Police. Three MESARD dog teams, Deb Palman and Roger Guay from Warden Service and a Maine State Police dog team work together to search for evidence along the 6.5 mile section of Rt. 15 between Kenduskeag and East Corinth. Each team worked with a Maine State Police detective or supervisor. Each team was assigned a section of road about a mile long and was tasked to search for a possible murder weapon disposed of by tossing it out of a car driving along that road. The weapon was alleged to be wrapped in a very bloody towel. The search took most of the day and was comprehensive but turned up no evidence. The volunteers performed very well and very much appreciated the vote of confidence from the Maine State Police. We hope to continue a working relationship with this agency.

Secretary's Report

The minutes from the meeting held 7 Feb 99 were considered. Chris moves we accept them as read, and that is seconded by Al. The vote is unanimous to accept.

Treasurer's Report

The financial statements for MASAR for the period since the last meeting were presented by John McDonough in Peter Laveway's absence. Discussion included that the custodial account for the funds designated to the maintenance of the Nite-Sun unit shall remain as they are, in a separate account handled by MASAR. There is an accounting category that shows a \$250 income item that is not identified. Al moves we conditionally accept the report pending clarification of the \$250 item. Seconded by Chris, unanimous in favor.

Mike Sawyer advises MASAR to bill Warden Service for postal expenses related to setting up the statewide training exercise.

Statewide Training Exercise

Mike Sawyer reports on preparations for the event to be held April 24th and 25th. Arrangements are being made for camping at the Massabesic State Forest near Alfred. Arrangements are also being made for indoors space for those who prefer. They are going to need a head count as soon as possible for this and for the two meals that will be provided, one Saturday night supper and the Sunday lunch. Please have your team leaders follow through on this head count for each team.

The search exercise will be held in the Massabesic Forest beginning at 0900 Saturday. Hopes are to wrap that up with a debrief at the Alfred Courthouse by 1500 or so. The planning for the exercise will include some use of newer techniques for hasty search and use of critical separation in line searches. There will be around 10 Maine Warden Service officers present with overhead team members Roger Guay, Rick Mills, Kevin Adam, and Tim Place running the exercise.

Supper will be handled by the Newfield Fire Dept. at their firehouse in Newfield, to which participants will have to commute. **A MASAR meeting for election of officers will be held after the meal, as well as the presentation of the Tim Burt Award.**

Sunday's exercise will be held off the Gully Oven Road located just east of Milton, NH, which is right on the Maine border with NH. There is somewhat limited parking available at this site and car-pooling where possible would be well advised. Lunch will be handled by the Alfred mobile trailer.

Solo instructors Frank Hubbell and Paul Richardson will be instructing. Lt. Chris Estes of NH Fish and Game will also be in attendance.

Mike Sawyer relates that Warden Service has been discussing what they need to know about technical rescue techniques and considerations from a safety and resource use perspective. They are also considering wilderness medical issues. The types of training the exercises will address fit well with Warden Service recognizing they need to focus more on the Appalachian Trail corridor. Mike Sawyer forwards that there is some talk about scheduling a high angle training for Baxter Park so we can polish some of the agreed-upon leadership protocols and techniques. The Sunday exercises will conclude by 1430 so participants will have ample time to return home. For further information please call York County Emergency Management at 324-1578 and talk to Bob Bohlman or Joyce.

After some discussion it is suggested we contact the Massachusetts State Police and invite them to send a representative or two to the Maine exercise at Alfred. The agencies in Massachusetts are currently exploring the extent to which they will be using volunteers in SAR operations in that state.

Committee Reports

Standards Committee

The Standards Committee would like to have suggestions for changes to any MASAR Training Standards sent to the committee for consideration at your earliest convenience.

Technical Rescue Subcommittee Report

Keith reports that the first meeting of this committee was held on March 28th at Acadia National Park headquarters and that excellent progress was achieved with a start of a draft standards document and agreement upon some guidelines for the meetings. The second meeting of this committee was held two hours before the MASAR meeting on April 11th and more progress was made on the draft. Randy Armour asks if the committee has a completion date in mind for when the work will be done. Chris Wiebusch offers that he'd like to see it wrapped up by or before the end of the year. The next scheduled meeting will be at the Bangor Warden Service Headquarters at 1800 hours on Tuesday May 11th.

Mike Sawyer says that Warden Service has an interest in gaining a working understanding of Technical Rescue issues as they relate to leadership and safety. The Warden Service doesn't want to get into doing these type of operations themselves but would like to have someone attending the standards committee meetings to learn and become familiar with the topics. John suggests Keith poll the committee members on that question and get back to Mike on it. Keith agrees to do so.

Communications Committee

Al and others report that the T-card system is working well which gives rise to a question by John concerning the use or non use of the MASAR ID cards. The consensus is that we have not followed through with the ID cards and they aren't being used to their potential. It is suggested that the personal training information for each card holder should be on each card, perhaps as an add-on sticker that can be updated periodically. No action was agreed upon to implement, but further consideration will be addressed at the next meeting in Sidney.

Al relates that DIRIGO has been using several business radio frequencies for the Kenduskeag stream race and they have found them very useful; more so than the traditional channels for SAR. He suggests we may be able to use these as tactical channels on searches provided we aren't within range of businesses who use them.

New Business

Aircraft and Transport

A general discussion ensues about availability of aircraft assets for searches and transport of searchers. Mike Sawyer relates that a Brunswick Naval Air Station lieutenant attended a conference in Texas and at some point related that the station had been donated the Nite-Sun unit MASAR put on one of their helos. This raised a question with some of the federal representatives there as to what a state or private asset was doing mounted on a federal unit. Apparently most, if not all, of the personnel who were at the Brunswick station when the Nite-Sun project was accomplished have since turned over. There will be a need for MASAR to do some work to explain the situation and especially, to explain the maintenance funds and account MASAR maintains for the unit. Mike Sawyer suggests we draw up a report in support of this resource and get it to the leadership at Brunswick. John McDonough agrees to undertake this.

Further discussion of Brunswick Naval Air raises the question of why the Nite-Sun unit is there if they are refusing to fly at night. What are the legal issues involved? Mike feels we need to address this. Al states that we would have a lot fewer problems if we stationed the Nite-Sun with the 112th. They are already a state asset and they do fly at night and have proven to be a responsive and reliable resource. Mike reports that the 112th will be deploying to Bosnia in July leaving only about 40% of their birds and pilots here. Their deployment and the leave afterwards will tie them up for about a year and thus we may not be able to count on them as much for this reduced assets period.

MEMA Meetings

John McDonough reports that he has been attending several meetings with MEMA representatives at which the 112th, CAP, Warden Service, Brunswick NAS, and others were in attendance. Amongst the important issues being addressed is the responsibility MEMA has for seeing that the appropriate resources required to conduct SAR operations can get to emergency incidents in the state. This committee is producing a draft document describing these type issues and how they will be addressed. Generally, when a type of resource is called for by the agency in charge at an emergency incident, such as a search or rescue, the committee is setting up a mechanism for responding to this need. One of the ideas in the draft may be to create a couple of technical SAR teams of 6 members each. The per person weight, including all support gear, will be 300 pounds or less. The committee is also working on funding issues such as addressing the Workmen's Compensation question for volunteers. Other funding considerations being discussed are mileage compensation and compensation for volunteers' equipment damage or loss related to SAR operations in the state. MASAR is one of many represented on this committee. They are working to draft a bill that will be submitted to the legislature to address these issues. These and a number of other topics are currently under discussion and are evolving as the meetings progress.

Terrain Navigator USGS

Al brings in some information on this new mapping competitor for Topo Scout. It apparently has about the same capability and features as Topo Scout and the cost at around \$250 is the same.

The next scheduled meeting for MASAR will be after the April 24th supper at the Newfield Fire Department in Newfield. Supper begins at 1800 hours.

The next regular business meeting will be held on June 6th at 1600 hours at the Sidney Warden Service headquarters. Among the agenda items will be further consideration of ID cards.

It is suggested that any member units wishing to use the MASAR minutes Announcements section to convey unit information, training opportunities, or news related to the mission of MASAR should contact Keith Heavrin at 326-8538 or be sure to attend regular MASAR meetings. Meeting is adjourned at 1820 hours.