

Maine Association For Search And Rescue

Monthly Meeting Minutes

3 / 5 / 95

Meeting is called to order at 1311 hours by Steve Hudson, acting chairman. Due to an ice storm on the day of the scheduled MASAR monthly meeting for February, that meeting was cancelled.

Present-

Keith Heavrin, Steve Hudson, Randy Armour, Deb Palman, Dan Tourtelot, Gary Anderson, Chris Drew, Nancy Ingraham, Joe Dudley.

Secretary's Report-

Copies of the previous meeting minutes were referred to and some information discussed with Baxter State Park Supervisor Chris Drew and the Warden Service SAR coordinators Dan Tourtelot and Gary Anderson but no vote was taken to accept the minutes due to a lack of sufficient voting members present to constitute a quorum.

Treasurer's Report-

Steve Hudson passed out copies of the treasurer's report sent to him by Peggy but no vote was taken to accept the report due to a lack of a voting quorum.

Committee Reports-

No committee representatives except the Standards Committee were present.

Standards Committee report-

Steve proceeds to explain the draft Ground Search Standard the committee is working on to the agency representatives at the meeting. A general discussion of the standards ensues.

Dan Tourtelot asks if any specialty group would be deferred from accountability to the new standard. Steve responds that all groups would be accountable and that the new Ground Search Standard will be the basic requirement for any unit. Specialty standards will apply in addition to the ground searcher requirements and are being worked on at this time. Keith explains a little of the process the dog groups have gone through to arrive at being MASAR certified.

Keith asks if anyone has addressed the weight factor and size of the equipment list and if the committee expected all volunteers to carry this pack or just have it available to them at a search. Randy responds that unless someone were being deployed in a situation that could require the contents of the pack, it would be enough to simply have the pack at the search. Dan Tourtelot comments that he would want to be sure any of the teams deployed in remote areas, especially in severe weather conditions, be appropriately equipped to ensure their safety. Dan brings up the problem of underequipped volunteers showing up for searches. Again, his concern is for safety and the impact on the overall search effort should the problem develop where these under equipped people get into trouble themselves. Steve comments that units must be responsible for these issues. Keith offers that it would only take an example two, being set by Wardens in charge of searches, telling any such underequipped volunteer that they would not be able to be deployed, to solve that problem. Word travels fast and it is probable that the very few groups that tend to field such members would then police themselves in this area.

Dan Tourtelot States that he and Gary Anderson, being the new Warden Service SAR coordinators, would like to move towards making volunteer teams a much more active part of the Search and Rescue effort in the state of Maine. They want to see a comprehensive set of training standards in place to ensure that the volunteers being used are well trained and will not represent the likelihood of liability problems for the states SAR effort. Warden Service would like a certain proficiency level insured by these standards to avoid mistakes

or litigation. Gary Anderson says that often W.S. has to take what they can get at search incidents. They can always find a job for folks at a search scene but they worry about fielding incapable people. Dan says he has seen volunteers arrive on scene that really cause concern as to how he can deploy them. Dan also recognizes that they do have a valuable and highly trained resource in the SAR volunteer community and he would like to start using some of the better qualified personnel to act as team leaders and as part of the overhead team at searches.

Deb introduces a proposal for the standards that addresses the use of trainees or trainee teams at a search incident. The proposal requires a number of stipulations and was briefly discussed. It will appear in the new Ground Search Standard and be considered with the rest of the standard at the next MASAR monthly meeting.

Dan Tourtelot reports that he met with the Commissioner last week and that he was very supportive of volunteer groups. Dan and Gary feel they should be able to get some funds to help MASAR with volunteer SAR activities. One area they can possibly help in is MASAR's postage expenses, another is in joint training sessions with Wardens attending. Keith mentions the scheduled May training Exercise and explains some of the objectives and plans as they now stand. Dan and Gary express interest in seeing some of their Wardens participate. Gary forwards that W.S. should be able to help to defray some of the expenses for the weekend of training and would like to see any bills incurred for it, including expenses for meals. A brief discussion of possible numbers that might attend is held and the general feeling is that we might see anywhere from 50 to 100 people attend, with the possibility of 150 at the most.

Warden Service SAR Committee-

Dan Tourtelot reports that they have revitalized the SAR Committee in Warden Service. Roger Wolverton has joined the Committee and John McDonough has been asked to join it as a permanent member to bring continuity with the volunteer resources. One of the first priorities for the committee will be to take a good strong look at the existing teams and their capabilities. Warden Service is aware that they are losing some good teams from the volunteer resource. An area that seems to be becoming more popular is winter camping and hiking. Winter weather conditions in the mountains makes for some pretty tough challenges to any SAR resource. Dan asks if there is a current list of SAR resources and their capabilities. Randy says he has been working at updating the list but has had trouble getting units to send him the data sheets. (Any units that haven't done so, please send a completed unit information sheet to Randy Armour, P.O. Box 365, Howland, 04448, or fax it to 207-732-4282.)

Warden Service is facing tighter budgets and having to work with fewer Wardens making the volunteer SAR resource increasingly important to the Maine's SAR response effort.

Some discussion takes place about the Find a Space Show Your Face and Hunter Safety programs cutting down on the number of searches in recent years. Gary Anderson comments on the issue of missing vs. lost persons and the confusion it has caused. They have decided to keep a Warden "attached" to any missing person situation to stay apprised of the developments and to assist in identifying incidents where Warden Service should be involved as early as possible.

Dan Tourtelot says W.S. had 196 searches during 1994. Nancy Ingraham asks how many searches Volunteers were called to. Keith offers that MESARD has been called about as often as any group over the last few years and that they responded to 19 searches in 1992, 12 searches in 1993, and 8 searches in 1994. Randy says that Lincoln responded to 8 searches in 1994. Deb offers that in 1994 MESARD teams worked 147 search hours, not counting turn arounds, and drove some 7211 miles responding to searches. Gary observes that hours worked and mileage driven figures would be very helpful to him in getting funds designated to help volunteer SAR efforts.

Volunteer SAR Agreements-

Steve gives overview of intent to obtain agreements with Parks for ensuring insurance coverage to volunteers during searches in their areas. Chris Drew comments that all volunteers have the same coverage at Baxter Park that the state provides, which is for injuries, but says he knows of no workers comp being

provided in that coverage. Gary reaffirms that the state coverage is the same as the Parks and comments that if volunteers would like to see workers comp as part of that package, the best approach would be to get a State Representative or Senator to submit a bill to that effect.

Verona Island Search-

Deb Palman passes out her report on the search for Paul Winter Sr. on Verona Island on 2 / 23 / 95 and a discussion of the search takes place. Deb pretty much ran that search with some help from a variety of people. She comments that the volunteers all did a great job and worked very hard. Deb points out that the search came right on the heels of a snowmobile fatality and that many of the Wardens had been up all night the night before, making the volunteer response even more important to being able to run the Verona Search effectively. A copy of her report can be had by contacting her.

Next Meeting-

The next monthly MASAR meeting will be held on April 2nd at Warden Service Headquarters in Gray Me. and will start at 1300 hours .

Agenda

1. Announcements
2. Secretary's Report
3. Treasurer's Report
4. Committee Reports
5. Correspondence
6. Old Business
7. New Business
8. Set Next Meetings Agenda

The meeting will feature a presentation of the new Ground Search Standard for the members consideration.

Respectfully submitted,



Secretary - MASAR