

Maine Association For Search And Rescue

Meeting Minutes

5 April 1997

Called to order at 1307 hours by John McDonough at Warden Service Headquarters in Sidney.

Present

John McDonough, Steve Hudson, Randy Armour, Keith Heavrin, Warden Deb Palman, Paul Magoon, Phil DuPerry, Dave Martin, Jane Chandler, Andy Robidoux, Bert Boisvert, Rick Grant, Mark King, Bill Adcox, Pete Laveway, Bob Baribeau, Warden Tim Peabody, Warden Pat Dorian, Baxter Park Ranger Chris Drew.

Announcements

John says he has invited the Gorham fire chief to the meeting to give a briefing on the Gorham search from their perspective. Decided to go forward with business till he arrives, if he arrives.

This year's Tim Burt Award goes to Gary Anderson and will be presented to him at the May Training Exercise where he will be the guest speaker.

Secretary's Report

Meeting minutes from 2/2/97, prepared by Steve Hudson, were presented. Motion to accept as read from Steve Hudson, seconded by Mark King. Minutes are accepted unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

Interim Treasurer Pete Laveway presents a report indicating there is \$1444.16 in the MASAR checking account. Dues are current for all members except Search Dogs North East.

Individual members will be absorbing the costs of their pagers but the MASAR mailbox will be maintained by MASAR.

Some discussion ensues concerning savings account designated funds being held in escrow for the Night Sun, GPS and the command trailer. No reportable information developed.

Dave Martin moves to accept the Treasurer's report as written. Seconded by Steve Hudson. Vote is unanimous to accept.

Education Committee

Planning for the May Statewide Training exercise on the weekend of the 3rd and 4th has more or less been completed. The search exercise will be centered at a command post at the Echo Lake Beach Parking Lot beginning at 0800 hours on Saturday the 3rd of May. The exercise is planned to last until 1500 to 1600 hours and will be followed by a critique. One of the challenges for the exercise will be to solve communications problems that may result due to the mountainous location of the search scenario that is scheduled.

At 1830 to 2000 hours a \$5 per person buffet dinner is scheduled at the Epicurean Restaurant at 8 Cottage St. in Bar Harbor 288-5853. Dinner will be followed by a short MASAR business meeting for the purpose of electing officers. Currently serving are: John McDonough- President, Al Martin- Vice President, Dave Martin- Education Officer, Keith Heavrin- Secretary, Pete Laveway- Interim Treasurer, Randall Armour- Representative at Large and Steve Hudson- Representative at Large.

After dinner Gary Anderson will be our guest speaker.

Tee shirts will be for sale at the training exercise for around \$10 apiece. It is advised that Cadillac Mountain Sports is having a 25% off sale during the time period of the exercise.

Camping will be available at the Blackwoods Campground for those who wish to camp out.

Bring your MASAR ID cards, with a photo, to the exercise. A laminating machine will be present.

Standards Committee

Steve Hudson - The BASAR curriculum is completed. Questions for testing to that curriculum are being polished and finalized. The Committee would like to have it completed for the May Exercise but might not have enough time. After the test is finalized, it and the curriculum will be distributed to the member units. Each unit will then be responsible for administering the test to their respective memberships. MASAR will reserve the right to review the tests.

Standards Committee has determined to continue to require Dog Teams to be certification tested to the new MASAR Dog Team Standard by a MASAR Field Evaluation Team. This is at the recommendation of Keith Heavrin - President of MESARD.

Baxter State Park

Chief Park Ranger Chris Drew answers the questions posed by John McDonough concerning insurance and liability issues for volunteers working in Baxter Park. A lengthy discussion ensues and is condensed as follows: Baxter Park insurance coverage will provide for help should any volunteer be injured working for the Park. Baxter Park liability coverage will cover volunteers acting under the direction of the Park Authority and participating in approved volunteer activities. This coverage is the same as for regular Park Staff. There is no provision for Workers Compensation coverage of any kind for volunteers at this time.

Chris Drew addresses the Park plan for volunteer response teams in the Park beginning with saying that Lincoln SAR has applied for and been scheduled for several weekends in August. Any volunteers interested in being part of the volunteer response teams project this summer would need to call Chris at the Park to schedule times. The Park will provide a cabin or tent site, hand held radio, and some other gear if needed in exchange for having the response teams on standby in the park during high use summer periods. The objective is to be able to have these teams be the primary resource for injured person, or lost person incidents in the park and thus allow campground Rangers, especially, to remain stationed at their primary responsibility areas.

Chris also hands out new Baxter Park OD schedule, resource list and several other sheets with useful information pertaining to the park.

John offers that the above lack of provision for Workers Compensation in the event of injury was very disappointing but not unexpected. John feels the state has a clear exposure and liability regarding this coverage and it is regrettable that it isn't being addressed. It has been an issue that the state has side stepped for years now. Steve Hudson suggests that MASAR could carry the issue to the legislature and seek to have it addressed. After some discussion, Tim Peabody and John McDonough forward that a best approach might be to draw up a proposal for including volunteers in Workers Compensation coverage, then submit that as a package to the legislature for consideration. It would at least begin a debate of the issue. Steve suggests that if they could see how much the volunteers save the state in dollars, they would probably conclude it would be worth it to insure them. It is suggested that coverage be applied to MASAR certified members first to be expanded later if that works. John says he will begin to explore the possibilities.

Issue of volunteer training exercises in Baxter Park is discussed. Chris allows that the Park

has problems with having any sort of larger exercise up there. It is hard to find funds to sponsor something big, and it degrades the wilderness experience for the public to see a large event like that taking place. It is also an issue with damage to the often fragile wilderness areas as well as difficulty with the availability of park personnel for supervision. Chris says smaller, team level, exercises may be easier to accommodate and it would be more workable if the park has assistance with logistics, food and planning well ahead of time. John suggests that several MASAR members get together with Chris to see what training possibilities might be set up in the Park. Pete Laveway, Dave Martin, Pat Dorian and Chris will do so and report back to the group.

Gorham Search Briefing

Gorham Fire Chief did not show up for this meeting so briefing proceeded from other perspectives. Dave Martin relates that he was OD that night and made calls to a number of units as requested. He says York County responded separately. Tim Peabody arrived at the scene at 0300 hours and found over two hundred volunteers at the scene. The dive team had been there since 2000 hours the evening before. By daylight more and more people from the local area as well as more trained volunteers began arriving. Gorham FD had just had a course in ICU and set up a system to try to handle the numbers of volunteers showing up on scene. Security issues arose with some trained volunteers being unable to get to the command center due to security at a gate across the only access road. Tim states he would like to work towards having the MASAR trained volunteers incorporated into the command system to try to help manage the numbers of volunteers that arrive at searches like this. He feels that most incidents in the southern part of the state are very likely to become large and hard to manage due to public response. Paul offers that perhaps they could have set up the access gate guard with a radio on a different frequency to at least give him contact with the CP. Tim says that the extra radio traffic would not be needed if the guard had instructions about ID of who to let past. A brief discussion of MASAR ID cards ensues. John asks if all units have them and what the status of ID cards is. Keith offers that the ID card committee did a study of the issue, as assigned last year, then made a final report to MASAR with recommendations for the use of the cards. After the report was turned in no action or decisions were made concerning the cards except that Randy stays current with issuing and recording them as they are requested by the member units. Tim Peabody says he will arrange for a laminating machine to be brought to the May training exercise.

Tim Peabody states he felt the Gorham search went very well, especially considering the huge numbers of people who showed up. The tracks leading to the river were definitive and did indeed lead to the recovery of the victim. Pat Dorian says he arrived quite late but thought the search went well despite the numbers of people.

Pete Laveway states the only problem his people had was getting to the CP and getting information about the search. Jane Chandler brought up the issue of having had a 7 year old and a 10 year old assigned to her search group. Negative aspects of this are discussed and it is agreed this should never be permitted. Jane also complimented Warden Service on their radio traffic discipline and that it was never broadcast that "We found the body". Tim Peabody says W.S. does not have a Chaplain service or counselors and it would be very helpful for units to make Wardens aware, if they have people with training or skills in this area, to assist victims or families from that perspective. Pat Dorian says he'd like to see a listing of MASAR personnel including a listing of their training and experience.

New Business

Pat Dorian relates that a funding grant for SAR equipment and training has been approved.

Much of the work on this grant application was done by Deb Palman. The grant was targeted to equip the new command trailer and may provide some \$20,000 to SAR training.

Pat Dorian is now the Warden Service SAR Coordinator. Gary Anderson has retired. Pat says that until he learns who will be appointed to assist him in this job, he is the only person assigned to deal with this area.

Some discussion of ID cards ensues. Dave Martin moves that hence forth MASAR ID cards will only be issued to MASAR certified teams and units. Steve Seconds and the vote is unanimous to accept.

The next MASAR meeting will be at the May Training exercise Saturday May 3rd after the dinner at the Epicurean Restaurant, 8 Cottage St., Bar Harbor at 2000 hours. Agenda - Election of officers.

Meeting is adjourned at 1535 hours