

# Maine Association For Search and Rescue

## Meeting Minutes for 5 April 1998

The meeting was called to order at 1300 hours at the Warden Service Headquarters in Sidney by MASAR President John McDonough.

### Present

John McDonough - WRT	Randy Armour - Lincoln	Steve Hudson-MDISAR
Roger Guerin - WS	Andy Robidoux - Mahoosuc	David Braun - CAP
Chris Drew - BSP	Pete Byrnes - Lakes Region	Lt. Pat Dorian - WS
Mark Baribeau - Mahoosuc	Tom Donnell - Dirigo	Dave Martin - Dirigo
Al Martin - Dirigo	Phil DuPerry - WRT	

### Announcements

None

### Secretary's Report

Minutes from the February meeting were passed to those who did not have copies. There being no discussion, the minutes were accepted as read by unanimous vote.

### Treasurer's Report

As the treasurer, Peter Laveway, was not present, there was no Treasurer's Report..

### Incident Discussion

Baxter State Park - Chief Ranger Chris Drew reports that the person rescued in January is doing better, but will require at least a year to recover completely from his injuries.

Lincoln - Pat Dorian reports that the Warden Service assisted in the search for a Lincoln woman who drove off in a snow storm and disappeared. As it was the type of search which falls between a missing and lost person, they had little to go on, and were only able to point police in general directions. The woman was found 5 days later, deceased. Some discussion followed concerning what could be done to increase coordination between the Warden Service and the State Police on these cases.

Carrabassett Valley - Pat Dorian reports that the family of Keith Zabrowski is still getting family and friends together on weekends to search the woods for him. The Wardens are supervising to reduce the risk of more lost people.

### Committee Reports

#### Standards

Steve reports that he will be mailing the revisions to the dog standard this week. Work and other concerns have kept him from getting to them earlier. He requested suggestions from the membership regarding the direction the Standards Committee should go now and what standards they should be developing.

#### ASTM

Steve reports that ASTM is making good progress on their search dog standards. Assuming that the current balloting goes well, they should have a finished standard for air scent dogs out within six months. They

are also working on a "Standard Guide for Training of Basic Wilderness Land Search and Rescue Personnel", and hope to have it out for committee ballot in the next few months. He is commenting and voting on these standards as they are presented for ballot.

He also reports that the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) is still proposing standards affecting wilderness SAR personnel. He is commenting to NFPA on all relevant standards, and will keep the MASAR membership informed of what is proposed and the status of those standards which may affect wilderness SAR personnel.

### Education

Due to missed communications and scheduling problems, the statewide exercise will not be held in the southern part of the state. First, York County has a previous commitment on the weekend scheduled for the exercise, and would not be able to help organize or take part in it. Second, confusion following a discussion at the December MASAR meeting led Dave Martin to understand that it was the group's preference to go ahead with his suggestion that we use the Spring exercise time to research the comparative efficiency of different search methods. Third, the Warden Service is planning to go back and search in Garfield Plantation for the missing hunter Robert Smith, and the earliest they expect to be able to get into the woods with a minimal amount of snow is the first weekend of May.

Therefore, the membership has made the following plan. Dave will make arrangements to hold the Spring Exercise in the University of Maine Experimental Forest in Orono, and instead of a search scenario, searchers will perform test searches for comparison of results. If the woods are clear of snow up north the statewide exercise will be canceled and searchers will go to Ashland instead to search on Saturday and Sunday. Either way, this will be an excellent opportunity for both new and experienced ground searchers to get in some practice in interesting country. A description of the plans for the exercise is included as an addendum to these minutes.

The Fall exercise will take place in the southern part of the state.

There are two large SAR conferences coming up. On May 27-30 the NASAR Response Conference is in Portland, Oregon. For information, contact:

National Association for Search and Rescue  
4500 Southgate Place, Suite 100, Chantilly, VA 20151-1714  
Telephone: (703) 222-6277, FAX: (703) 222-6283

The Wilderness Medical Society's 1998 Annual Scientific Assembly focusing on Rescue in the Wilderness takes place on July 20-25 in Lake Placid, New York. This conference is oriented toward medical practitioners who participate in or advise those with outdoor interests. Those interested should contact

Wilderness Medical Society  
PO Box 2463  
Indianapolis, IN 46206-4623  
800-967-7494

### Communications

Al Martin has nothing new to report on our application to the FCC to license radio frequencies for MASAR.

## Old Business

### EMS

Andy Robidoux and Steve Hudson are looking into the legal position of searchers licensed in the Maine EMS system who provide emergency medical care to a victim. Andy proposed that MASAR develop guidelines for searchers providing medical care to clear up any questions. At John's suggestion Andy offered to join the Standards Committee and work with them to create these guidelines.

### CAP and Searcher Transportation

Dave Braun reported back for the Civil Air Patrol regarding the possibility of air transportation for searchers and search resources. The CAP may fly searchers, dogs, handlers, and other resources as needed once requested by the Warden Service and authorized by the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center. A warden sergeant or higher rank must request the use of air transport, and the Warden Service's aircraft must be unavailable.

### Brunswick Naval Air Station Assistance

John asked Pat Dorian if there had been any resolution of the confusion regarding night flights by BNAS helicopters. Pat is still looking into the question, which arose during the Ashland search this past winter.

### Standard Flagging Procedures

Mike Sawyer is still working on standard procedures for flagging lines, clues, etc. in search operations. Steve reports that he queried SAR people on the Internet and received only one response to his question. There doesn't appear to be any standard flagging system in use. General discussion resulted in agreement that standard colors weren't as good an idea as standard numbers of flags and colors. The membership agreed that the flagging plans for a search should be provided to searchers at each operation.

## New Business

### Warden Service Changes

As many have already heard, Tim Peabody has been promoted to Major, replacing Dan Tourtelotte who has retired.

### Baxter Park

Chris Drew reported on the Baxter Park meeting with SAR people on the 21<sup>st</sup> of March. Several points of interest were discussed. The January rescue of the injured climber led to a reevaluation of the need for rescue equipment on the western side of Katahdin. A cache of equipment will be placed there for future use.

The need for fuel for helicopter flights during SAR operations in the park has led the Park authorities to look into storage options. Using the former Bowater fuel depot in Millinocket is one possibility, and the offer of a fuel tanker from the Forest Service is another.

Finally, the policies and procedures for winter climbing in the park will be discussed and reviewed, due to the increase in popularity of access to Katahdin from the west side.

### State SAR Meeting

Pat Dorian reported on the first day of the two-day SAR management meeting March 25-26. The meeting, to which MASAR was unintentionally not invited, was organized by the Maine Emergency Management Agency. Its purpose was to get all the groups involved in SAR in Maine together to meet, learn about each other's resources, and work through a tabletop exercise with multiagency involvement. Pat felt that the meeting was a good idea, giving him a chance to meet people in other agencies, see what these other groups

had for assets, and let them know about the resources the Warden Service has for dealing with SAR.

Roger Guerin reported on the second day of the meeting, which was a tabletop exercise dealing with the scenario that the Governor's plane has crashed on an offshore island. The exercise was intended to give the different agencies an opportunity to work together and was successful despite the fact that the agency with jurisdiction over searches for missing aircraft, the State Police, was not represented at the exercise. One of the more interesting items shown at the exercise was the use by the Coast Guard and Navy of modified DeLorme mapping software to track flight plans, SAR resources, etc. There will be another tabletop exercise to work out multiagency responsibilities on May 20 at the USCG base in Southwest Harbor.

Chris Drew commented that he was disturbed that the organizers of the two-day meeting did not contact or include MASAR. He said he and other agency representatives from Acadia National Park and the Warden Service spent a lot of time describing our capabilities and passing out contact information.

### Miscellaneous News

Phil DuPerry from Wilderness Rescue Team had some information for other units. They have been given a 22' Hallmark trailer, but do not intend to use it. It is for sale to any interested unit (value is approximately \$5000).

They have registered with the state surplus materials office and have been getting quite a bit of useful equipment from them. There is a lot of cold weather equipment available at good prices, courtesy of the winter ice storm and resulting disaster assistance. If anyone is interested in getting their group registered they should contact Wilderness.

Dirigo has purchased more canvas stretchers than they can use. If anyone is interested they should call Dave or Al Martin for information.

Dave Braun, CAP Operations, passed out an information sheet on the Civil Air Patrol's asset capabilities. It will be included in the resource lists for MASAR Duty Officers.

The meeting was adjourned at 1535 hours. The next MASAR meeting will be held on 7 June at 1600 at the Sidney Warden Service Headquarters.

## Addendum to the MASAR Meeting Minutes for 5 April 1998

### MASAR SPRING EXERCISE

From: Dave Martin, MASAR Education Officer

#### **PLEASE COPY AND DISTRIBUTE TO YOUR TEAM**

The spring exercise ran into several complications, and it became necessary to shift gears on rather short notice. In order to understand clearly what is happening, please read this notice carefully in its entirety!

**DATES:** May 2 & 3, 1998

**LOCATION:** Orono area

Further information will be forthcoming. (we felt that time is so short we needed to get this initial notice out, and follow it up with the details as we get them tied down).

**PROGRAM:** This exercise will be devoted to a series of experiments with a variety of tactics, crew sizes, crew compositions, etc. The rationale for this approach is explained on the below, with more detail on exactly what we'll be doing. **PLAN B:** after we made the decisions outlined above, the Warden Service threw us a curve. They are planning to make another push to wrap up the Garfield Plantation (Ashland) search. They would like to do this the moment the snow is gone, and before the foliage starts to come out, and they believe this will probably be around the beginning of May.

MASAR agreed that this effort should take precedence over the planned exercise. The hang-up is that the WS won't know until about Apr 24 whether they want to do it on the first (exercise) or the second weekend of May.

We agreed that if we had a week's notice we would transfer both days of the spring exercise to Ashland. If that comes to pass, we will notify all teams via the OD system. Teams will be asked to bring every radio and ATV they have available.

The WS will have housing available for both Friday and Saturday nights.

In either case, we will need to have a pretty good idea several days in advance how many people we're going to have. We will call each team on Tuesday, Apr. 28, and it will be vital for you to have your attendance tied down by that time.

# **SPRING EXERCISE PROGRAM**

## **SATURDAY**

For many years, all of us have been complaining about certain things the Warden Service does on searches, that drive us crazy, such as running twenty-person grid teams. Last December, MASAR decided to devote the Spring Exercise to a series of carefully crafted experiments to determine whether or not these complaints are valid. The experiments planned will include:

- 1) Comparison of hasty searching by foot, mountain bike, horse, and ATV.
- 2) Large vs. small grid teams.
- 3) Critical separation vs. grid searching.
- 4) An experiment to determine whether it is more efficient to:
  - A) Mix trained and untrained volunteers in the same team OR
  - B) Keep trained and untrained volunteers separated.

There are several other areas we could address if we have sufficient attendance.

## **WHY ARE WE DOING THIS?**

Considering the limited SAR resources we have available in Maine, it is of the utmost importance that we employ these resources in the most efficient possible manner. For many years, many of us have questioned whether this is actually happening. This is our opportunity to find out, and to set the tone for SAR tactics in Maine for the next ten years!

In order to accomplish this important research, it is vital that we have a good turnout. To meet the objectives we have set, we need a minimum of 75 trained searchers representing as many different teams as possible.

## **SUNDAY**

**BLACKHAWK HELICOPTER ORIENTATION** - The 112th is rapidly converting from UH-1s to Blackhawks. In addition, virtually all UH-1s nationwide are grounded due to a engine problem, so the Blackhawks are about the only SAR helos flying in Maine right now. These helos are quite different than what we're used to, and there are some serious safety concerns; some of the gospel that we've all had ingrained for years is suddenly dangerous, so this orientation session is of the utmost importance.

We're still working on the rest of the Sunday program, and we'll relay further details to you as we get them tied down.