

Maine Association For Search And Rescue

Meeting Minutes

1 August 1999

The MASAR August meeting was called to order by Vice-president Steve Hudson at 1625 at the Maine Warden Service Headquarters in Sidney. Present were:

Randy Armour - Lincoln CEP SAR	Steve Hudson - MDISAR Rescue
Jon Tierney - HART	Rick Grant - Lakes Region SAR
Paul Magoon - MESARD	Mike Sawyer - Maine Warden Service
Charlie Later - Maine Warden Service Chief Pilot	

Announcements

*****Please Note*****

To be covered by the state's insurance, units must send their training schedules to Mike Sawyer before a training exercise takes place. Schedules may be mailed to:

Mike Sawyer
Recreational Safety Division
Inland Fisheries and Wildlife
284 State Street
Augusta, Maine 04333

or they may be e-mailed to:

<michael.sawyer@state.me.us>

E-mailed schedules should include the text of the schedule in the body of the message, not as an attachment, as attachments don't always survive the state e-mail system.

*****Please Note*****

Mission Critiques

There were no missions reported by MASAR members. Mike Sawyer gave details of the incidents in which the Warden Service was involved during the past two months.

Air Boat Incident on the Penobscot

Mike reported on the Warden Service's investigation of the swamping of an airboat during a Warden Service training exercise on the Penobscot River on 16 July. Wardens involved in river rescue were testing the use of the airboat in rapids, as they had done in the past. While traveling upstream over Big Ambejackmockamus Falls the boat took on water and rolled on its side, sinking in midstream. Contrary to news reports, the four wardens on board were wearing life jackets. Three of the four swam to shore and the fourth was picked up downstream by the WS hovercraft, which was standing by. The air boat was recovered a few days later by a skidder which was brought to the site over an abandoned tote road.

The air boat was used by the Warden Service under an agreement with its owner, Great Northern. The wardens involved had been using it for river rescue training for several years. They have been developing their own rescue methods using the boat with input from local fire and police departments who also own and use this type of vessel. The Warden Service investigation of the incident found that the boat was being used within the area of expertise the wardens had developed. However, the Warden Service will probably look at training and operation protocols for river rescue as a result of this incident.

Jon Tierney pointed out that any incident such as this should be used to evaluate what rescue resources are available, how they could be used, and how they could be mobilized and brought to the site. In this case, river rafting guides reported on scene might have been of assistance in performing a quicker or easier recovery of the airboat. Mike mentioned that liability worries are what frequently keep agencies from using civilian resources. In addition, the lack of standards or documentation of ability in Maine makes it difficult for an incident manager to determine the competence of a civilian resource.

Other people at this meeting pointed out that, when developing operational protocols for using a specialized resource such as an airboat, it may make sense to bring in people from areas outside the state of Maine where that resource is already in use.

Brunswick Alzheimer's Victim Search

In late June an 86-year old man suffering from Alzheimer's went missing in Brunswick. Local resources had been searching for the man in the urban/suburban areas where he had been found in the past. Local agency personnel requested the assistance of the Brunswick Naval Air Station (BNAS) helicopter with the Nite Sun searchlight. Lacking a request from the Warden Service, and also due to his perception that there was no great urgency, the BNAS commander decided not to send the aircraft that evening. Around midnight, the Brunswick Police Department called the Warden Service for assistance; Division A Sergeant Tim Place responded. He called the 112th and requested their help, but they refused to fly until late in the morning. However, at 0200 a helicopter from 112th arrived unexpectedly and, after a brief search with their FLIR unit, found the victim hidden in heavy brush.

The BNAS helicopter crew was upset over not being sent out to assist. Their comments and recommendations lead to the immediate development and approval of a new training and call out protocol for the BNAS SAR helicopters.

Mooselookmeguntic Lake Search

On 10 July two men, despite very rough water conditions and strong winds, rented a 16' motorboat for fishing on Mooselookmeguntic Lake. While underway they were both thrown out of the boat. A guide and client nearby were able to rescue one of the men and secure the empty boat. Rangeley Fire and Rescue responded that evening, and the wardens were called in soon after. The victim's shoes and PFD were located and dive teams were sent down, but they failed to find the victim. A sonar unit brought in from Connecticut also failed to provide any indication of the victim's location.

As there were plenty of people available locally to search the shore and waters down wind of where the victim went overboard, no outside resources were called. Given the lack of trained personnel in that area, the Warden Service plans to work with the local people to help them develop better SAR capabilities.

Grafton Notch Carryout

In July a 15-year old boy slipped and was badly injured when he fell approximately 300 feet on a rocky slope in Grafton Notch. Sergeant Tim Place was called around 0100, and responded to the scene. Upon arrival, he requested that the Oxford County Sheriff's Office call for assistance. He understood that Mahoosuc Mountain Rescue had been called, however, Bethel Fire Rescue responded. They are not a wilderness rescue service and they normally call Mahoosuc when they have a situation which is beyond their level of training. However, in this case they chose to handle the evacuation themselves. By the time Sergeant Place found out that Mahoosuc was not called it was too late for them to be of service.

Bethel Rescue carried the victim to an open site from which he could be hoisted by helicopter. BNAS responded, although they had difficulty communicating with the ground team as the helicopter crew lacked training in how to set their radios to the correct frequencies. Finally, the victim was hoisted out and taken to a local hospital for treatment.

No MASAR units were called on this rescue, mainly because the responding warden had little to no information about the resources available in that area. Mike used this point to illustrate the need for MASAR units to get to know their local wardens. He said Warden Don Gray, at the northern end of Division A, is meeting with Mike, Mark Warren, and Mahoosuc Mountain Rescue to get to know their people better and increase his knowledge of local available resources.

Jon suggested we should provide a clearer protocol to the communications centers, sheriff's offices, and dispatch centers. If they knew that for certain situations they should call the Warden Service and MASAR duty officers it would help to get the proper resources called sooner.

Secretary's Report

Rick Grant made a motion that the June meeting's minutes be accepted as written; Randy Armour seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Treasurer's Report

No treasurer's report was provided.

Committee Reports

Technical Rescue Subcommittee Report

Jon Tierney provided a brief report on the progress of this subcommittee. The standard this group has developed to date lists the requirements for qualification of personnel at two levels - support and full team member. The style of this standard will be on the order of a guideline of techniques to use rather than a list of specific methods for each situation. Steve Hudson pointed out that the standard is still in draft form, with quite a way to go before it is sent to the Standards Committee for presentation to MASAR's members.

Standards Committee

Rick Grant asked if the "pack test" was the new standard for testing ground searchers' aerobic fitness. He had received a copy of the Wilderness Rescue Team newsletter in which this was so stated. Steve informed everyone attending that the Standards Committee was considering changing the fitness standard to use this test, but until the draft has been prepared, sent to the members for comment, and accepted by a vote of the membership of MASAR, ground searcher aerobic fitness is to be evaluated using the existing standard. He also noted that the statement in this newsletter saying that the technical rescue standard is in its final form is not correct, as mentioned above.

EMS Subcommittee

Jon Tierney was unable to report for this subcommittee. However, he reported that in conversation with Tom Judge of Maine EMS he was told that Life Flight's licensure provided a good precedent for setting up ways for SAR personnel to provide emergency medicine.

Communications Committee

No report was made as there were no members of this subcommittee present.

Old Business

Fall 1999 Statewide Training Exercise

No report on the upcoming fall statewide exercise was provided at the meeting, as neither the MASAR Education Officer nor any member of the hosting unit was present. Those present expressed concern that no information was available at such a late date.

New Business

SAR Resources for Gulf Hagas Area

Mike reported that Roger Guay would like to develop better resources for rescue in the Gulf Hagas region. There have been incidents there in the past and the lack of trained personnel in the area is a major concern. At times there are AT ridge-runners at Gulf Hagas, but they are mostly volunteer hikers with little to no training in EMS or rescue. Paul suggested that Mayo Hospital in Dover would be the best source for developing a local SAR resource. Many of the members of the local EMS service are wilderness EMTs. Jon agreed that this local group has the wilderness EMS training but has had no technical rescue training or rescue experience.

Mike suggested that a joint exercise with Roger Guay, Dirigo, Lincoln, and local EMS personnel might be a good idea to develop ideas and methods for responding in that area. It would also underscore the need to mobilize resources early.

State SAR Coverage

Mike also reported that there is a large area of the state, roughly paralleling the AT corridor, where there are few to no organized SAR units. He would like to see more units in areas such as the Carrabassett Valley, Rangeley Lakes region, and around Greenville. Steve suggested that the Warden Service, with the help of MASAR unit members, could help the state fire associations and local fire departments develop better wilderness search and rescue abilities and also assist in training local personnel.

Warden Service Technical Rescue Training Plans

Mike reported on the Warden Service plan for training wardens about technical rescue. At present most district wardens lack the skills, equipment, and knowledge to perform or assist in technical rescue. The Warden Service is concerned that this deficiency in training could open the service to liability charges in the event of an injury or death. The major set up a group to look into equipment and training for those wardens in the 25-30 districts where these skills might be needed. They have located existing equipment and will work with Mark Warren and MASAR to develop basic training protocols for wardens.

Some wardens are interested in learning technical rescue. If trained they would be more useful working with local teams. However, budget issues will prevent the expenditure of training money until at least the spring of 2000. Regardless, there is no plan to develop a Warden Service Technical Rescue Team or to work outside of existing MASAR technical rescue units.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1900 hours. The next regular business meeting will be held on 3 October at 1600 hours at the Sidney Warden Service headquarters.

Note - Any member units wishing to use the Announcements section in these minutes to convey unit information, training opportunities, or news related to MASAR's mission should contact Keith Heavrin by phone at 326-8538 or by e-mail at <krheavrin@acadia.net>.

Maine Association For Search And Rescue

1999 Fall Statewide Training Exercise

Agenda

This Fall Training Exercise will be sponsored by the Mahoosuc Mountain Rescue Team and is being held at Hurricane Island Outward Bound School's Leon L. Bean Mountain Center in Newry, Maine. This is a spectacular location with great facilities, both indoor and out.

(Please make copies of this agenda and distribute them)

Friday September 24th:

1700 on Personnel from Mahoosuc Mountain Rescue will be on hand to greet and facilitate arrivals

A lot of camping space will be available and is the recommended accommodation. Two cabins are also available (bunking 6 to 8 each). Showers and restrooms will be available at the site. Several nearby motels are open (try the River View and the Bethel Spa.) Friday meals are your own responsibility

Saturday September 25th:

Breakfast: May be purchased for \$4 at HIOBS or else bring your own

0730-0830 Registration (All Attendees)

0900-1500 Multiple Victim Search Scenario. Will be very different this year with simulated injuries and evacuation challenges. Bag lunches will be provided; please see pre-register form for units

1500-1545 Debrief and Critique (meant to be a full participation time aimed at improvement)

1545-1630 Brunswick Naval Air Station Helicopter Briefing (dependent on their availability)

1600-1730 ICS 100 and ICS 200 Challenge Test will be offered

1800 Supper at the HIOBS Dinning Hall will be followed by presenting any awards MASAR member units or Warden Service may have to present. This will be followed by guest speaker Chris Drew - Chief Ranger at Baxter State Park

Sunday September 26th:

Breakfast: May be purchased for \$4 at HIOBS or else bring your own

Classes: 0800 to 1100

0800-0900 Map and Compass Skills and Lost Person Behavior

0900-1000 Wilderness Survival Training and Litter Rigging, Packaging, and Handling (may run longer)

1000-1100 Wilderness Medical Issues, Working with SAR K-9's, Clue Awareness (will be followed by clue awareness course challenge for all attendees. Challenge Courses will be open remainder of the day, to be run as time allows)

1100-1200 MASAR SAR Challenge 99 - Four-member teams from each unit wishing to participate will compete in a medical assessment, treatment, and evacuation competition. Teams get the same gear package and info. Will be timed and officiated. There will be a prize for the winning team. All units are urged to join the fun!!!

1200-1300 Lunch: Bag lunch provided

1300-1430 Two-person teams from each unit wishing to compete will run an orienteering course. There will be a prize for the winning team. We hope to engage teams of Wardens in this friendly challenge. Let's field our best members!!

1430-1500 Clean up, farewell, thanks, and departure

Fall Statewide Training Exercise information form

We request that all unit leaders or individual participants fill out one of these forms and mail it to:

Bob Baribeau
PO Box 690 (no later than the first week of Sept)
Bethel Maine, 04217

This will allow us to get set up properly for meals and attendance. Please copy this form and distribute as needed. The cost of the weekend will be **\$20 per attendee** due at Registration Saturday morning.

Unit or individual name: _____

Number of people attending: _____ **Arrival Fri.** _____ **Arrival Sat.** _____

Meals - please enter number of meals we need to plan for, for each sitting

Breakfast 25th, your cost \$4 _____, **Lunch 25th, bag type N/C** _____

Supper 25th, and guest speaker N/C _____

Breakfast 26th, your cost \$4 _____, **Lunch 26th, bag type N/C** _____

Accommodations

Camping - (how many tents) _____

(RV-type campers) _____

Equestrian teams _____

Cabins - (call Bob Baribeau well in advance) _____

(there are two with 6-8 bunks each)

Motels - On your own; Bethel Spa and River View are two near by.

Your comments or planning suggestions

From: MASAR Fall Training Exercise Committee 8/15/99
To: MASAR Member Units and Training Exercise Participants

MASAR Teams;

Enclosed you will find an agenda for this year's Fall Exercise. There is going to be a well planned, participatory, prepared in advance event that should provide an excellent training experience as well as an infusion of some games and fun, but still using our skills. Some of the things the committee has sought to address are:

1. Getting more individuals involved in hands-on application of skills and search know-how.
2. Providing specialized skills training and challenges for those with specialties skills without making that mandatory for the majority of the attendees.
3. Many of the questionnaires returned last Spring expressed an interest in returning to making basic skills training available at these exercises.

Much more advance preparation will be going into this Fall exercise to ensure areas are flagged properly and preparatory work is done, as well as to set up an event where most if not all the attendees get to experience more than just a long fruitless walk in the woods. The Exercise will feature a very busy, multiple victim, search simulation on Saturday. **Radio traffic discipline will be critical and mandatory.** After your teams receive their assignments, the CP does **NOT** need to know when you arrive at assigned areas, when you start your grids or complete them, or any of the other "make noise" traffic that too often clogs the channels we are trying to use. With a multiple victim scenario going, each potentially with a situation for treatment and extraction, the overhead team is going to have to have solid control of the communications.

Sunday a number of courses will be offered, as per the agenda. Instructors will be largely chosen from MASAR's most experienced people plus a couple of experts are being brought in. This year, for the first time, we are going to hold several competitions not only for the fun and hilarity of it but also to use our SAR skills. We will set up several clue awareness courses. They will have a set number of clues along a course that will be timed and refereed for each person who chooses to attempt it. Greatest number of clues spotted within the time limit wins. There will also be an orienteering challenge for a two-person team from each unit. This will be set up to be fun and possibly funny. Get your best people practicing. We hope to have at least one Warden team in this one. Last, and just before departing, there will be a medical treatment and transport challenge competition. The way it will work is that a four-person team from each unit wishing to participate will get an identical set of instructions and an identical set of gear and props. They will then each be presented with the same scenario and a finish line some distance away. A referee for each team will grade the performance of each competing team, looking for specific treatment and actions on a check-off list. The categories on the list will be appropriate to the scenario. All units are encouraged to enter a team. This should be a lot of fun and all the possible turns of this competition are not written here.

This Fall again we are requesting that each unit or individual attendee **PLEASE** send us information on the number of personnel you will have attending. Please see the enclosed form. Fill it out promptly and mail it to Bob Baribeau, PO Box 690, Bethel, ME 04217. We will need this information to provide meals and set up accommodations properly. We need the information well in advance of the date of the exercise.

This year, to meet expenses for the Fall Training., we will charge a \$20 registration fee for each attendee for the event. If we consider the fees normally charged for such weekend trainings elsewhere, this is a considerable bargain for us. After all, camping and the facility are available to us free of charge. We get a great experience for a bargain price. We also have Warden Service pitching in some dollars and the host unit willing to contribute some. We should endeavor to have the fee cover the costs, which is reason enough for asking \$20 each.

In conclusion I would like to encourage attendance at this year's Fall Exercise. I think it will be something a bit different. I'd rather not say more than is written here but we are making an effort to spice the whole thing up. I look forward to seeing you all there and to hearing from you in advance to help with planning. I will endeavor to call each unit leader a couple of weeks before the date of the training to tie up loose ends. If you have any questions call me at 326-8538. The buck stops here. Or give Bob Baribeau a call at 824-2339 and you'll find one of the most helpful people in MASAR.

Sincerely,

Keith R. Heavrin Jr., MASAR Education Officer
President - MESARD
Chairman - Technical Rescue Standards Subcommittee

8/16/99

Memo

From: Fall Statewide Training Committee

To: MASAR Units with high angle rescue capability

Subject: Maine Lead Rock Rescue Team

All;

The MASAR Technical Rescue Standards Committee has been working on a draft standard/guideline for high angle rescue volunteers in the state of Maine. Part of the draft document that will likely be approved is the formation of a Lead Rock Rescue Team. That team shall consist of members from each of the units in MASAR with high angle rescue capability. The intent is to have each unit **appoint** their best trained, strongest and most capable rescue climbers to this team thus initially forming the Maine Lead Rock Rescue Team. It is hoped that units will see fit to appoint only their best and not attempt to get as many of their members on as they can. We would like to see a small but extremely capable team of eight to twelve people from which we may expect to assemble a strike team to respond to incidents anywhere we have call for them.

As per the current draft document, further membership admittance to the Lead Rock Team will be by vote of existing membership of that team. The intent is to have the vote be entirely on merit, training and capability of the individuals being considered, regardless of their unit membership.

The fall training exercise will have a rescue problem that will challenge the skills of such a team. It will be a part of the Saturday exercise. It is hoped to be set up so that climbers from various MASAR units will work together as a team. We can not set up a problem or set of problems for everyone who climbs, from the various units, to train on. Our hope is to provide training that can then be taken back to the individual units and polished. To this end it is requested that each of the units described, select or appoint a couple to three of their best for the team that will work at the fall exercise. The selection of the actual Maine Lead Rock Team will be a later issue, after the draft is approved by MASAR.

If there are questions or ideas please call 326-8538

Keith R. Heavrin, Jr.
Technical Rescue Standards Committee
MASAR Education Officer