

Maine Association For Search And Rescue

Meeting Minutes

5 December 1999

The meeting was called to order by John McDonough at 1303 hrs.

The following people were in attendance:

Randy Armour - Lincoln SAR	Bob Bohlman - YCEMA/YCERRT
Pat Dorian - Maine Warden Service	Chris Drew - Baxter State Park
Deb Emblar - MMESAR	Keith Heavrin - MESARD
Steve Hudson - MDISAR	Nanci Ingraham - PTESAR
Susanne Kynast - Sunrise SAR	Al Martin - Dirigo SAR
John McDonough - Wilderness Rescue Team	Deb Palman - Maine Warden Service
Brad Rounds - Wilderness Rescue Team	Mike Sawyer - I. F. & W. Safety Supervisor
Chris Wiebusch - Acadia Nat'l. Park Ranger	

Searches

Missing York ATV Operator

A 70 year old man out on his ATV failed to return home on time on the afternoon of 28 November. Local resources were called out to search at 1730, coordinated by Warden Don Gray. According to Bob Bohlman of York County EMA, approximately 30-35 vehicles searched all night on a large network of trails in the area. At 0900 on the morning of the 29th the Warden Service aircraft and a helicopter from Brunswick Naval Air Station arrived in the area. The helicopter found the victim's body and his overturned vehicle around 0945.

John McDonough was called on the 28th by members of Wilderness Rescue Team to see if they were needed. John attempted to get in touch with Don Gray but was unsuccessful. He eventually got through to the York EMA office; they informed him that they had been called out by the Warden Service and approximately 20 members of YCERRT had responded.

Once again John asked Mike and Deb to encourage the Warden Service to call MASAR teams out as soon as an incident is known. He noted that SAR volunteers would rather be put on standby and then not be needed than not be called at all.

Incident in Upton

Mahoosuc and Bethel Rescue were called out by the Warden Service on 11 November to search for a 16 year old male. A helicopter with FLIR was also called to the scene, but failed to find the victim before he walked out unaided.

Lost Hunter in Milford/Greenfield

Four teams from MESARD and four members of MDISAR responded to a search for a missing hunter in the Milford/Greenfield area. The victim walked out on to the Stud Mill Road before the dog teams or ground searchers could locate him.

Search in Township 42

Sunrise Search and Rescue was called to assist in a search for a missing man in his late 30's or early 40's on 4 October. They responded with 3 hasty teams and were deployed in very wet and cold weather at 0100 on the 5th. They found the victim at 0200 in an advanced state of hypothermia; although he had a space blanket with him he didn't know how to use it.

Baxter State Park

As reported on the news, Baxter Park Rangers were conducting a small scale search for two infants who may have been buried there in the summer. Pat Dorian noted that the Warden Service may want to return to the park in the spring if additional information suggests that further search would be worthwhile.

Secretary's Report

John apologized for the computer virus sent with his minutes for the last meeting. HE noted that the problem has been resolved and shouldn't happen in the future. The minutes were accepted as written except for the spelling errors, which will be corrected before the minutes are posted on the MASAR web site.

Treasurer's Report

Since Rick Grant was not present, there was no Treasurer's report available. Dues for the past year are due - Rick will be sending notices to MASAR members and teams. Rick also has a new pager number - 471-9434.

Committee Reports

Education

Keith commented that the training we have provided at the past during two exercises each year could be easily done at one exercise annually. He suggested that MASAR be responsible for one training weekend each year. The Warden Service could then plan a search exercise to provide training for the Overhead Team as needed.

Keith recently returned from the SARSCENE meeting in Canada. This is a country-wide symposium/exercise attended by approximately 800 volunteers. Meetings of this type in the U.S. usually have attendance figures of around 350. Keith hopes to improve the effectiveness of the MASAR exercises by making them more interesting and fun.

Mike Sawyer suggested that varying the location to give other wardens experience would be most useful for the Warden Service. He proposed that several regional exercises might not only get greater attendance but would improve communications between wardens and volunteers. Mark Warren, the new Warden Service Training Officer, could help with these. Bob Bohlman noted that both statewide and regional exercises are of value in improving communications - the former between MASAR teams and the Overhead Team and the latter between teams and local wardens.

Al Martin made a motion that MASAR put on one statewide training exercise each year, and assist the Warden Service with a joint search training exercise on an ad hoc basis. He also requested that the date for the MASAR exercise be set one year in advance. There was a unanimous vote in favor. Keith then proposed that the Fall 2000 exercise take place in the midcoast Maine area, i.e. between Camden and Mount Desert Island. This motion also passed unanimously. Chris Wiebusch for Acadia National Park and Steve Hudson for MDISAR volunteered their units as hosts for the exercise. Al requested that the date for the exercise be provided at the next meeting.

Keith also mentioned that MESARD is definitely hosting an international SAR dog conference 12-15 April 2000 on Mount Desert Island. Interested units and members should contact him for further information.

Standards

Standard Update and Corrections

The Standards Committee met again before the regular MASAR meeting to complete its update of the existing MASAR standards. Steve will type up the corrections and send out draft changes to the membership for review and comment. The majority of changes are in the Basic Ground Searcher Recommended Equipment List and the Basic Ground Searcher Certification Standard.

Technical Rescue Standards

Keith is planning a meeting for the Technical Rescue standard subcommittee before Christmas. He believes that it will take two meetings to complete their draft and another to prepare a mission statement for the proposed standard.

Standard Application

Al mentions that a Penobscot Valley Technical Rescue Team has been formed by local fire department personnel to provide eater and technical rescue services. They were originally planning to emphasize urban rescue but are now proposing to provide wilderness rescue instead. He suggests that the MASAR standards should emphasize the need for wilderness experience and wilderness rescue training for certification. This will allow agencies like Baxter State Park to use our standard to limit assistance in wilderness operations to those with the training to be effective.

EMS

Andy Robidoux has had to resign from the MASAR Board of Directors due to a lack of time. He has also had to drop management of the EMS subcommittee for the same reason.

Communications

Al is looking into bar code software to use with MASAR ID cards at searches. He will contact Steve Hudson for the information he has collected to date.

Old Business

Secretary Position Unfilled

John mentions again that MASAR needs a secretary. The position has gone unfilled since the elections at the Spring 1999 Exercise in Alfred. Anyone interested please contact John.

Teams and Callouts

Mike mentions again that he sees a need for teams in areas of the state like Gulf Hags, Greenville, and along some stretches of the Appalachian Trail. Those present agree that it would be easier to work out ways to get existing team members to these sites than to try to form new teams. Brad Rounds notes that a lack of call outs frequently leads to the loss of team members. There have been teams in some of these areas in the past but they died out due to a lack of interest. He feels that more standby calls are important to improve team morale throughout the state. Deb Palman suggested again that regional training would

help to improve communications between teams and the local wardens. Susanne points out that Sunrise has been working with the local wardens in their area and it has lead to more callouts for them.

I.F. & W. SAR Committee

The Warden Service has invited MASAR officers to attend future meetings. The next one is in Sidney at 1600 on 14 December.

Worker's Compensation

The lack of Worker's Compensation for SAR volunteers has been a problem for a long time. At the Maine Emergency Management Agency meeting on 2 December Lt. Col. Peter Golding agreed that volunteers appear to be covered by MEMA's authority, but that the state statues didn't clearly provide coverage. John reported that a change to the legislation is under development. He also mentioned that ASTM is presently working on a guideline for provision of Worker's Compensation by state agencies. Mike suggested that the proposed change to the statute should note that coverage would only be provided to members of organizations.

New Business

Funding Proposal

Gary Anderson, retired Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Safety Supervisor, attended the meeting and requested an opportunity to speak. He had been considering ways to fund equipment for use in Search and Rescue in Maine. He would like to form a group to raise money which would then be disbursed by MASAR for SAR expenses. He proposed that the directors of this group would be working wardens, SAR unit members, and officers from MASAR.

Keith moved that MASAR support the idea - his motion was seconded by Al Martin. The motion was passed by unanimous vote. Gary will form an organizational committee and report back to MASAR after the new group has met.

Acadia 2000

Acadia National Park is expecting a large crowd on Cadillac Mountain the night of 31 December 1999 waiting to see the first sunrise of 2000. ANP Ranger Chris Wiebusch requested assistance from any SAR units or members who might be available to spend the night on the mountain. The gym at the elementary school in Bar Harbor will be available as a place to sleep and meals will be provided at the Mount Desert Island Hospital cafeteria. Anyone interested should contact Chris at the park.

Snowmobile Issues

Mike Sawyer has been working with the Snowmobile Association of Maine on the idea of snowmobile SAR. Warden Dave Peppard has put together a list of recommended equipment and training for snowmobile SAR team members. He has also created trip itinerary tickets for snowmobilers to fill out. They will be available at motels and other gathering places throughout major snowmobiling areas; the information gathered will not only help immediately in any searches but will provide an idea of where and how long snowmobilers travel.

Baxter State Park and the Millennium

Chief Ranger Chris Drew reported that Buzz Caverly is concerned that many through hikers will try to complete their trips before the end of the year just to beat the new millennium. He asked for any suggestions on how to manage this heavier than usual influx of hikers late in the season. Keith suggested increasing the minimum size of parties hiking up Katahdin. Susanne proposed getting information out to

hikers earlier. Al asked if the park had considered renting communication devices to those climbing the mountain. Pat Dorian supported this idea, as it would at least provide a way for anyone in trouble to get that information to rescuers quickly.

If anyone has other ideas they should e-mail them to John McDonough, who will forward them to Chris Drew.

The meeting was adjourned by unanimous vote at 1550 hours. The next meeting will be on 6 February 2000 at 1300 hours at Warden Service Headquarters in Sidney.