



STRATEGIC PLAN

Response to Comments

6/30/13

1. Comments in-line, affixed to .pdf version of file:
<http://xa.vimg.com/kg/groups/324529/1048293497/name/2013-06-04-ASRC-Strategic-Plan-2015-DRAFT.pdf>
2. *Only one perhaps nit-picking comment. The two pictures with orange shirts. The ASRC uniform is either blue shirts or yellow T-shirts, according to the new Admin Manual. The orange shirts are group, not conference, shirts. Just something to think about.*

Photographs were used as they were available.
3. *Are we thinking of this as an internal or external document?*

This document was developed for internal use initially, then at such a time as determined by the conference, the document can be made available to outside parties. SP2015 is intended as an overall guidance document for the conference to check decisions by the BOD and officers against.
4. *If to be for outside consumption, need a spin doctor to edit it to talk more about the ASRC's transition to meet changing needs than the current wording that seems to acknowledge difficulties.*

This comment is noted.
5. *The mission statement seems to limit the ASRC. I know we've had an issue where AHJ's believe MARG only looks for "lost" individuals and nothing more. This particular mission statement leaves out things like assistance that our personnel have provided during mission person cases that are criminal in nature, evidence searches, cave rescues, medical events, disaster response, etc.*

It is acknowledged that our member teams may have practice areas beyond those of search and rescue. However, the mission statement is intended to re-center the ASRC back to its foundation and focus on the core service area that is common between all the member teams. This mission statement is consistent with our training standards and future updates to the operations manual. We recognize that our members desire to provide services beyond this mission statement that those desires make the ASRC a stronger organization. We recognize this in the Strategic Goals and Action Items sections.

6. *The logos on page 6 need to be thought about. Only 1 SAR council is represented, only 1 state emergency management agency, and 3 state level entities. The ASRC has lots of affiliations such as MRA, NCRC, NASAR and in fact belongs to VASARCO as an entity all its own. Multiple member teams belong to all the various SAR councils in the region. Heck the ASRC probably has the largest percentage of membership on the ASTM F32 Sub committee for SAR of any organization by far.*

These logos have been removed to avoid confusion.

7. *There should be some emphasis in the document of the long history of the conference. It was founded in 1974 which is 2 years before NASAR was formed as a comparison. It is one of the oldest SAR organizations in the United States.*

A sentence acknowledging this important point has been added to the Vision Statement.

8. *The document seems to be focusing on changing from the idea that individuals are members of the conference and instead going to team based membership. This will most likely require a rewrite of the bylaws.*

This comment is noted.

9. *We need to be careful if there is a transition from member teams deciding their own policies vs the member teams as a whole. The great success of the ASRC over the years has been that all of the individual members can easily step into a role at an incident with complete trust from others. As a search manager I do not have to know every member of the conference I just have to know the minimum standards are the same across all teams. With the huge variations in how states operate throughout our region the ASRC has been the one organization that has so easily allowed SAR individuals to cross over political jurisdictions to assist. Because of this I strongly believe that if the ASRC is going to have training standards and allow credentialing to those standards that the credential must ultimately come from the conference organization.*

This comment is noted.

10. *Section 2. Reinforcing our Fundamental Search and Rescue Skills and Strengths, the last bullet on the page seems to just stop, it looks like a few words got cut off at the end.*

The bullet was cutoff. The document has been edited to include the additional text.

11. *In general, the Strategic Plan looks good to me. I do have some concerns with both the tone and background material for the first Strategic Goal. I think 3 of the 4 action items are good and the 4th one (the first on the list) makes no sense, given the ASRC's governance structure. There is no "ASRC" to serve the member teams; the ASRC is exactly the confederation of member-teams. The rewrite I propose should offer a team-centered organizational focus (which is, I think, the key point here).*

Overall, this goal is missing the tie between the evolution of ASRC (pretty good), the evolution of the SAR community (pretty good as well), and the governance structure of the conference. We should state more clearly that the relevant shift described by this goal and action items is moving

from organizing ASRC as a “response group” and to emphasize instead our capacity as a multi-agency coordination organization.

I would recommend rewriting the Strategic Goal as:

Focus for Today’s Search and Rescue Needs

The first paragraph is OK. I would add a phrase to the next-to-last sentence:

...further the state of search and rescue in the region, providing service as an operational entity and functioning as a multi-agency coordination organization among the member-teams.

The second paragraph could change to:

While search and rescue resources in the mid-Atlantic region continued to grow and develop, some responsible authorities developed a capability to identify and organize search-and-rescue teams able to respond within their area of operations. As a result, some responsible authorities prefer to work at the level of member-teams, rather than thinking of the entire conference as a response group. This client environment suggests that the ASRC should emphasize its role and capability providing multi-agency coordination.

The third paragraph could be dropped (it adds nothing, is needlessly argumentative, and the “update” action items still flow from the goal).

The fourth paragraph needs to be rewritten to more explicitly open the fundamental governance documents:

The first and major goal of this strategic plan is to revisit the ASRC’s structure, governance, and organizational documents to emphasize the multi-agency coordination provided by ASRC. To do this we will:

First bulleted action item would change to:

Develop the organization and governance to align with team-centered management and continue to support the ASRC’s capability to provide multi-agency coordination, among the member-groups and across the community.

Several of these suggestions have been incorporated to Section 1 to update it.

12. *Section 5: I would like a paragraph to be added here that the ASRC values continuous improvement, and recognizes that self-assessment via regular benchmarking is crucial to understanding the effect of various policies, procedures, skills, and the like on our ability to respond effectively to a search. To achieve this, the ASRC must prioritize the collection of data from our operations and make it available for use.*

A statement has been added to the section which describes this need. However, the specific methods and practices can be determined outside of the strategic plan.