



Appalachian Search and Rescue Conference, Inc.

P.O. Box 400440 • Newcomb Hall Station • Charlottesville, VA 22904

Allegheny Mountain Rescue Group • Blue Ridge Mountain Rescue Group
Delmarva Search and Rescue • Mountaineer Area Rescue Group
Maryland Search and Rescue • Potomac Valley Rescue Group
Search and Rescue Ohio • Shenandoah Mountain Rescue Group

www.asrc.net

Board of Directors
Delmarva Search and Rescue Group Inc.
2321 Hudson Drive 21804
Salisbury, Maryland

12 September 2016

Sent via electronic mail

Dear Delmarva Board of Directors:

We are responding to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that you sent us August fifteenth. This was a big surprise. It was a very big topic of discussion at our August twentieth ASRC Board meeting and in subsequent email discussions. We realize you would like to complete this at your next scheduled meeting, but as you will see below, we need to discuss a number of issues related to this proposal which will take time to resolve. As the new Vice-Chair, the Board asked me to craft a response and be the point of contact for this.

Bottom line: the BOD generally sees this as a goodwill gesture. The ASRC BOD can't sign the MOU as written, in particular due to a single technical point I will mention in the bullet points below, but also because signing an MOU between a team and the ASRC is something we've never done before, and it has many aspects that need to be discussed first. Which is why we are responding with such an open letter, and putting lots of time and effort to discussing the issues... we realize the importance of the ongoing relationship between Delmarva and the ASRC, and want to make sure we do it in the best possible way.

So, in that spirit of open discussion, I'm going to summarize the various points we've been discussing. Your thoughts may help us achieve such a consensus on them.

First, I should note the broad general consensus of the ASRC Board that this is *much* bigger than this one particular MOU. This will set precedent for the ASRC, and therefore we all agree we need to consider this very, very closely. There was even some brief discussion of different membership levels, but we didn't get far with that discussion as that would involve things like Bylaws changes.

I'm going to list what I see as the main bullet points of the ASRC Board discussion about the proposed MOU, in no particular order.

- What are the *goals* and *purposes* of an MOU between an individual team and an umbrella organization such as the Mountain Rescue Association, a state SAR council, or the ASRC?
- *How* and *why* is a MOU different than membership? Is it a kind of "second-class citizenship"? If so, what are the differences in *rights* and the *responsibilities* between *membership* and *having an MOU*?



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- If teams have MOUs with the ASRC, can they call themselves *ASRC affiliates*? Can they use the ASRC logo?
- Is an MOU with a team a good way to maintain a relationship between the team and the ASRC? Or is it just a way for the team to get calls, and for the ASRC to be able to call the team, for big searches?
- Thinking beyond Delmarva, could an MOU be a way to cautiously approach the ASRC, as opposed to distancing oneself from the ASRC? Should any MOU include, not just operational coordination, but coordination on technology and training? Should teams with MOUs, for example, be invited to the ASRC Retreats and the Annual General Membership Meeting?
- The language in your proposed MOU seems to some like an MOU between a search and rescue *team* and a responsible authority, or *between* teams, not between a team and what is now mostly a credentialing, training and resource coordination agency. Particularly, if you look at item 11, the ASRC doesn't *dispatch* resources during routine team operations, and even when acting as a multi-agency coordination agency, the ASRC doesn't so much dispatch resources as keep track of what's going on with the various Group dispatches through ASRC dispatch.

Given these big issues, we'd appreciate your help, and your unique viewpoint, to work through them. We can discuss our future relationship by email, and your ASRC Representatives can also discuss this with the rest of the ASRC Board at the next ASRC Board meeting in October (Sunday, 9 October 2016 in Morgantown, WV). I apologize in advance that I personally won't be there as I and my family will be hiking in Shenandoah National Park that weekend and the week after (I'm sure you feel sorry for me; an ASRC Board of Directors meeting vs. a week of hiking along the Appalachian Trail!)

I'm sure that with some work we'll get to an agreement about how our relationship should be going forwards.

Thank you very much,

DRAFT
Keith Conover
ASRC Vice-Chair