



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

10 July 2021

Virtual at [Click here to join the meeting](#)

1006 – 1232 hrs.

### I. Call to Order.

Called to order at 1006 hrs. by Chair Dan Brizuela.

### II. Participants.

Voting members in **bold**. If some other Group is primary name in (parentheses)

Allegheny Mountain Rescue Group (AMRG)	<b>Keith Conover</b> <b>Meg Anderson</b>
Blue Ridge Mountain Rescue Group (BRMRG)	<i>Phoebe Cook</i>
Maryland Search and Rescue (MSAR)	<b>Dan Brizuela</b> <i>Michael Hansen</i> <i>Jocelyn King</i>
Mountaineer Area Rescue Group (MARG)	<b>Carl Werntz</b> <b>Ken Chiacchia</b> <i>Don Scelza</i> <i>David Rice</i>
Northwest Pennsylvania Canine Search and Rescue (NWPAC9SAR)	<b>LuAnn Gatti</b> <b>Kathy Lamb</b>
Remote Support Corps (RSC)	<i>Patty Lindsay</i>
Search and Rescue – Ohio (SAROH)	<i>Stephen McClanahan</i>

Shenandoah Mountain Rescue Group (SMRG)	<i><b>Katy Hart</b></i> <i><b>Sean McElligot</b></i> <i>Steve Weiss</i>
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**III. Approval of Minutes**

Minutes of the April 11, 2021, meeting was unanimously approved with one typographical error corrected. LuAnn Gatti moved for approval, Keith Conover seconded, none opposed/none abstained, thus all approved.

**IV. Officer Reports**

**a. Chair/Vice-Chair (Dan Brizuela/LuAnn Gatti)**

A draft outline of a 2025 strategic plan has been developed and will be shared/discussed later in the Board meeting. Secondly, Owen Sahnaw is the new chair of the Medical Committee. Owen is keen on reinvigorating the Medical Committee and anyone interested in joining should reach out to Owen.

Nothing to add from the Vice-Chair.

**b. Secretary (Stephen McClanahan)**

The Secretary acknowledged that Board meeting notices might not have been delivered on time for last 2 meetings. Per the Administrative Manual (II.A.2.a): “The Secretary shall initiate electronic notification to all ASRC Board members at least 30 days prior to the meeting date. The notification will include a request for agenda items and include at a minimum, the date and time of the meeting. Prior to the meeting the Secretary will be issued a formal meeting agenda and confirm the date, time, location and any connectivity information associated with teleconference participation.” For the past 2 Board meetings, the timing has been closer to 1-2 weeks prior, though meeting notices have been posted in the Open Working Group calendar. Lateness was driven by the development for distribution of the meeting agenda. In the future, notice of a Board meeting will go out 30 days prior (date, time, place, call for agenda items) with final agenda to follow. Discussion surrounding this topic centered on the need to both post meeting notices on the Team’s calendar as well as electronic notification to reach as many ASRC members as possible.

The Secretary is charged with conducting periodic review of the governance documents of the ASRC to ensure their relevance considering changes to the rules and standards (Bylaws Article 1, section 2.5.6) and will be conducting such a review over the next few months and will bring any items for potential modification to the Open Working Group for discussion. Any proposed changes will then be brought to the Board for consideration, at least a month in advance of a Board meeting.

The Secretary is also remiss in not conducting a review of group rosters for compliance with the ASRC Bylaws, Article III, section 3.2 regarding Certified Group status. This review will be conducted and will be based on Fourth Quarter Rosters submitted in January 2021.

**c. Treasurer (Victoria Avery)**

No report was provided but it was noted that invoices for group insurance have been distributed, albeit late this year. No impact on cash flow is anticipated as the insurance becomes payable in the Fall and monies should be collected before then.

As reported by the Secretary, the Treasurer and Secretary will be working to develop a simple spreadsheet for the collection of roster information that is needed for the assessment of group dues, the assessment of

compliance to certified group status and to track progress of members through the credentialing process (all basically require the same, minimal information). This tool will be sent to group chairs by late Fall. Patty Lindsay noted that if groups use SAR Hub to track roster data, the information referred above is easily extractable.

#### **d. Credentialing Board Chair (Steve Weiss)**

Significant credentialing has occurred during the past quarter, mostly in the form of written tests. These have been for Field IV, III and II. Also, there have been two field assessments at the Field II level due to collaborations between MSAR and SMRG and between MARG and NWPAK9SAR. At the October AGM, there may be several field assessments.

Thus far, the Credentialing Board has credentialed one individual at Field 1, three individuals at Field II and seven individuals Field III (soon to be 8 at Field III once a single remaining item in a PTB is completed as this individual has successfully completed their field assessment).

The Credentialing Board continues work on policy updates on defining examiners.

#### **e. Conference Training Officer (Ken Chiacchia)**

Work on revising standards is in progress. A rewrite of Field III and IV standards is complete; some items were removed, some revised but nothing added. This achieved a better focus on core mission. Revising standards for Field 2 is going to be harder and work is just beginning. The Training Committee is following consensus model for decision making. The overall goal is to get revised standards as clean and non-controversial as possible before presenting to Board, such that the Board does not become a second training committee.

Work is about to begin on planning the mock search for the AGM; first steps will involve linking with Carl Werntz. Steve Weiss would like to ensure that the mock will accommodate credentialing testing for Field I candidates and this was agreed. Patty Lindsay (speaking for MARG training committee) pointed out the standard for testing a Field I include the need to lead a team of 20 people, and this is proving difficult to arrange. Patty and Steve Weiss agreed to work offline on this.

#### **f. Conference Operations Officer (Stevo Solaya)**

No report.

#### **g. Information Technology Officer (Michael Hansen and Don Scelza)**

Microsoft Teams is being used, though there are no use metrics to share. There have been no complaints from ASRC member teams related to use of this technology. Steve Weiss noted the Credentialing Board is using Teams for managing document updates. There are plenty of licenses for all to use, so everyone is encouraged to take advantage of the technology. Beyond the Publications Committee asking for support, there is nothing else to report.

#### **h. Publications Committee (Keith Conover)**

Work on improving our ability to collaborate on document development continues. Keith has solved how to use Adobe In-Design Share for Review for graphics-intensive documents like the Branding Guide. There is still work remaining on our ability to move Google docs and/or Microsoft Word docs into and out of In-Design, but Keith continues making progress. Ken Chiacchia noted the Training Standards Committee is using Google docs for their collaborative work. Keith noted that the Training Guide, in Microsoft Word format, should be posted in the next week or so to the Publications part of our Teams

account for editing. Keith is also planning on posting several one-pagers for review/collaborative editing in Share for Review.

Mike Hansen noted there is a SharePoint site for locations for files for final versions of documents as well as a Publications Committee working space site for earlier versions of documents.

## **V. Brief Group Updates**

MSAR (Dan Brizuela): So many new members of late that the team has decided to freeze new member intake while new processes for vetting and onboarding new members are developed. Current roster is close to 90. Kyle Rhoderick is the new VP for MSAR. Mike Hansen reported the team held a successful leadership retreat at Bedford where strategic plans, core values, mission/vision statements, goals, action items were discussed and developed. The team will likely consider annual retreats in the future.

AMRG (Meg Anderson): AMRG just finished hosting a successful MRA conference; there was good team building from the experience. The team has some new gear as well as new members and will be conducting SAR Tech I and II testing soon. AMRG continues advancing novel relationships with both STAT MedEvac (critical care helicopter transport service in Western Pennsylvania) and the Child Abduction Network/Homicide task force.

MARG (Carl Werntz): Two topics to report. MARG recently had a mission that was in Hardy County in the far eastern panhandle of West Virginia and geographically close to SMRG and BRMRG. It would be helpful from a resource and response perspective to have in place an understanding between teams on how such searches are managed in the future. Also, during this search, MARG became aware of a new search team in the area and will try to learn more of them.

Secondly, MARG is in the process of discussing and developing training standards for Base-only personnel. This is driven by the need to have people available and trained for base tasks so that it will not be necessary to pull field-trained resources to perform base tasks. It is further driven by the recognition that the skills needed for some tasks in Base are perishable (e.g., moving GPS tracks off devices) and doing these tasks only occasionally by field personnel is not an efficient use of resources. And lastly, there are people not interested in or capable of field work but still wish to be trained for Base support.

Philosophically, MARG is approaching this as a training project and recognizes the need for Base trained personnel to also have training in the SAR knowledge components as Field personnel. Recognizing there are likely different levels of Base trained personnel (i.e., Base IV, III, etc.), the goal is to train together with corresponding Field team members to achieve the integration needed for an effective team. The training program seeks to achieve as much field awareness in Base personnel as possible.

There was lively discussion regarding this concept. In essence, the conversation included the following points:

- Field trained personnel should be capable of working in Base and are often asked to do so, at least for short periods of time.
- Field trained personnel often are needed in the field and do not perform Base tasks often enough to become highly proficient
- Many Base tasks are perishable.
- The Credentialing Board strongly advises against the idea of needing to be credentialed in a task before being asked to perform the task. MARG recognizes this and is avoiding any language that can be construed in this fashion.

MARG will share more details of this program once they have it more developed.

NWPAK9 (LuAnn Gatti): No new members have joined recently though some are interested. The team conducted 3 searches in one week in June. The summer bivouac weekend is coming up. One Field II and 1 Field III field practical examinations by the Credentialing Board are scheduled and will be conducted soon. The team held its annual 5K footrace with 62 runners registered (judged a good turnout by race officials) and its annual golf outing (fund raising) is coming up end August.

SAROH (Stephen McClanahan): The team has several members at Field IV; we are pushing hard to get as many trained and credentialed to Field III as possible and have set a goal of doing so by the AGM and will coordinate with the Credentialing Board. The summer bivouac is scheduled for September.

SMRG (Katy Hart, Steve Weiss): SMRG (as well as Virginia) has had several call outs recently. SMRG alone had three missions over the July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend. Things are well with relationships at Shenandoah Park. The team has new members enrolling as well as members getting certifications. The team is experiencing some technical issues with Verizon blocking the forwarding of alerts from Google and is actively working on debugging. Lastly, as a reminder, the ASRC Annual Retreat is in 6 months; teams need to be sharing this with members to allow people to get it on their calendars.

BRMRG (Phoebe Cook): Not a great deal to report: team does have new members who are waiting for Wilderness First Aid and other trainings.

REMOTE SUPPORT CORPS (Patty Lindsay): The RS Corps has supported a couple of call outs recently for MARG and NWPAK9. The Corps is actively working with the Search Manager (SM) Cadre to develop training modules for SMCs in the use of remote support. Portions of the training modules are focused on search theory while others address applications done in a remote support mode. It is anticipated this effort will help both the RS corps and SM cadre.

SEARCH MANAGER CADRE (Don Scelza): The SM Cadre is working on training standards for search managers, and as reported by Patty Lindsay, is working with Remote Support to create curriculum for training. Training modules are linked with one focused on search theory followed by one focused on application. The work is in the early stages and progress to date includes an update to a previous CDS Outdoor document, now donated to ASRC. "Search Management: Files, Forms and Maps. A Practical Approach" describes how ASRC manages search documentation. The updated document was distributed to RS Corps and SM cadre for review and will be made available for broader ASRC once finalized. It was noted that there is a lot of good collaboration ongoing between the SM Cadre and the RS Corps.

The SM Cadre and RS Corps participated in a detailed demonstration of the FIND software hosted by dbsProductions (Dr. Robert Koester and Jason Dalton) which went very well. A detailed listing of questions and concerns regarding use of Find in the ASRC emerged and was shared with Dr. Koester. A well thought out response to our questions and concerns was received. Based on these interactions, it makes sense for the ASRC to further investigate the use of FIND within the Conference and discussions with Dr. Koester and William Dixon (see Board of Directors meeting minutes, 11 April 2021 for background if needed).

Currently the SM Cadre does not view the FIND software as a replacement for SARTopo but rather sees advances in search managements best served if both technologies could be used together. Both have strengths and weaknesses, thus is it important to figure out how to integrate these tools. Importantly Dr. Koester has changed his views regarding the need for integration with other products with FIND.

## **VI. Unfinished Business**

- a. Potential new member groups (LuAnn Gatti)

There was no new progress to report. Discussions at our last Board meeting included the idea of creating a working group to specifically address recruiting new member groups to the Conference. The question was

raised regarding moving forward with this; as described below, this is an important component of the emerging new ASRC strategic plan and thus it is important to move forward with the creation of the working group.

b. ASRC Strategic Plan development (Dan Brizuela)

An outline of a draft strategic plan was shared via power point slides. This is a draft document, open for discussion and input. The Open Working Group will be used for further development and input from everyone is welcomed.

### Mission

Based on 2020 strategic plan, the ASRC mission remains the same: “Locate the lost person efficiently by enabling its groups to provide the best search & rescue services to responsible authorities”. Do not anticipate any changes to our mission.

Vision: (three components, recognizing that the ASRC actively performs each of these today; by keeping these components as our Vision, the challenge is to do more in each area)

Be a support service provider to member groups. Current example of this are Remote Support and External Credentialing. Growth areas may include providing support in terms of learning management systems, as an example. The question is ‘in what ways do we want to grow?’

Be a network that shares learning and resources. Current example of this is sharing operational resources (though there is some debate as to how easy this is to do). An example of going beyond this might include the creation of entry level base-only resources.

Foster community of search & rescue providers. This is the level at which we reach individual group members. Current examples of where we foster community are exercises at AGM, knowledge sharing at the Annual Retreat. This area brings value of ASRC to individual members.

### Core Values:

The Chair noted that he is accustomed to developing the articulation of core values in a bottom-up approach, not top down. Below are the existing core values from the 2020 strategic plan. Perhaps a way of better defining core values is to gather the those of individual teams and use them to refine those of the Conference. It is recognized the list below definitely needs further development as core values serve as a foundation for everything else – they determine what we choose to do, how we make decisions, etc.

Honesty, integrity, professionalism, commitment, leadership, cooperation, coordination, technical skills, quality, innovation, excellence, safety, service, teamwork, good will

Future work is to refine this list into something more manageable, perhaps include some additional ones from member teams and define what we mean by each. Steve Weiss noted the notion of professionalism has become distorted in today’s political environment; we need to define professionalism more specifically. Perhaps professionalism is replaced with simply be nice as a core value.

Strategic Goals (There are eight goals listed below which are too many to manage. The list is more of a brainstorm and needs refinement. Perhaps there are ways of combining elements.)

Need to grow member groups within the Conference. The rate and manner of doing so is to be determined but the Conference needs to grow the number of member groups.

Grow individual member involvement. This may manifest as increasing turnout at AGM, more involvement in administration of ASRC, more involvement in training. The 2020 strategic plan talked of putting content out that reached individual members.

Deliver content to our groups. This goal is listed in the 2020 plan. Delivering training material is key here.

Provide training support to our groups. Should ASRC take on creating or managing a learning management system? Should the Conference put on a Field III or Field II training program to cover the basics at these levels? How can the Conference better help support group's training efforts? Steve Weiss noted that there is nothing preventing GTOs from doing so now; the challenge is how to facilitate. This should be thought of as fostering group to group sharing, not ASRC to group.

Reinvigorate search manager efforts. Recent work on FIND and rolling this into process/procedures is encouraging as is ongoing efforts aimed at training for search managers. The challenge is how to better support the development of search managers.

Grow the ASRC brand externally. Delivering content externally is likely a component of this. How do we get ASRC name more recognized nationally as SAR leader? How do we elevate the ASRC brand?

Support our member groups development. This goal is in the 2020 strategic plan and gets at how to support our groups, not only in training, but in other aspects as well. Being a network of groups that support one another. Grant writing might be an example.

Fostering an ecosystem of innovation. In the 2020 strategic plan. Critical to stay at the forefront of search and rescue knowledge and practice.

Discussion followed. Key points raised were:

- To refine this list, it may be helpful to look backwards and see what has been accomplished and remove those. Perform a 'green, red, amber' assessment. Credentialing and remote support are considered accomplished.
- The draft plan provides a good high-level perspective and shouldn't change too much from previous strategic plans. The implementation part may be different.
- Need to limit to 3-5 specific targets. LMS system might address several goals simultaneously.
- Low hanging fruit and big needs must be balanced. An example of low hanging fruit: ASRC one pagers.
- Nothing wrong with big goals not being completed within the time frame of a strategic plan if progress is being made.
- Must strike balance of attainability and importance. Maybe top 3 list consists of two attainable items and one hard one.
- Some harder items are:
  - Grow number of member teams. Not clear best method. Groups consider ASRC but do not join. Why? In reviewing governance documents, pull in a few others to review the new member process portions. Have not updated this since having a functioning credentialing board. Process may seem daunting to new member groups, and we may be able to streamline and/or rethink the process. Steve Weiss and LuAnn Gatti to work with ASRC Secretary to refine.
  - Learning Management System (LMS) set up.
    - LMS is a very big bite of the apple. More than technical. It's a governance issue, a change management issue at both the group and conference level. It is a hard problem. Must plan hard before we start.

- The big lift is to procure such a system. An LMS not only delivers training content but tracks training and issues certificates of training.
    - Learning delivery systems are different from Learning Management systems (the latter having lots of certifiability, accountability, etc.). Learning delivery systems can be delivered within Microsoft platform.
    - A LMS system is a lofty goal; a more achievable goal is to create quality content.
    - Can do a poor man's LMS by simply have training resources on-line.
    - A learning delivery system with the ability to deliver a summary of training to group GTO is where we want to be. Don't need more than this.
    - Common available curriculum for entry level training available.
    - Content would be small bites...local teams would then stream their version of it.
    - Outcomes of training are still responsibility of local team, but LMS provides platform.
    - Perhaps group participation would be voluntary.
    - Groups should be able to customize the training to their needs.
    - Good outreach method.
    - People may find the delivery of training via a real Learning Management System of value.
    - Anything the Conference can add to lower the management burden to individual groups should be of value. A counter point of view is that such a centralized system may run a few groups away from ASRC.
    - Team Rubicon uses something like this as does Mountain Rescue Association.
  - Integrating search management across multiple IT platforms might be the aggressive goal.
- A shorter-term item might be documenting how to develop, grow and maintain relationships with AHJs. Good expertise within ASRC and lots of examples. Can we sharpen and focus this area? Would help grow groups and attract new teams. A part of this is how get our pitch at the right level. Many members on this call have advanced degrees and this might be off-putting to some. Just be nice.
- Draft plan is largely on the right track. Several can be combined. But the number of action items may be the same and need to be prioritized. Choose things that compliment what we're currently doing.

c. Scheduling of EMS Day (Keith Conover)

EMS day will be held on November 6, 2021.

d. Training donation and FIND software discussion (Don Scelza)

Discussion was conducted earlier in the Board meeting and summarized in Search Manager Cadre group update section.

e. Quarterly seminar series/external outreach (Michael Hansen)

The idea to offer external webinars by using talks that have already been delivered at the Winter Retreats. While the main goal is technical information sharing, the capability of external audience to make donations to the ASRC would be present. The frequency of presentations would be quarterly, with two talks paired to a donation link. Due to multiple other time demands, no progress has been made on setting these up but will target the fourth quarter of 2021 to initiate these.

f. Annual General Meeting plans (Dan Brizuela)

In correspondence with Erin Thomas (Park Manager, New Germany State Park), she suggested Big Run SP with a day use pavilion or Monroe Run Group campsite with small pavilion; given the Monroe Run

group campsite is booked the weekend of Oct 8-10, the AGM will be held at Big Run State Park. The site will be reserved, and the required special use permit filed; a separate permit may also be needed for the Savage River Forest.

Friday evening will be arrival and socializing. The SAREX will be on Saturday and the Annual General Meeting and Fall Board of Directors meeting on Sunday morning.

Logistics: the pavilion will be available Friday to Sunday. Electricity is available but no running water. A pit toilet is on site. Hand washing or alcohol-based stations will need to be set up.

Camping/lodging/food: individuals are on their own to find accommodations.

SAREX: the area was judged suitable but challenging for planning and conducting search/rescue exercises. Ken Chiacchia and Carl Werntz are leading the SAREX planning.

An announcement needs to be sent to the ASRC membership.

## **VII. New Business**

### **a. Branding Guide update (Keith Conover)**

The Branding Guide is posted for review in Share for Review; a link to the Guide was shared a few weeks ago and comments are invited. The plan is to release at least one more intermediate draft of the Guide with new comments incorporated before the AGM. It is recognized there is a lot of technical detail in the Branding Guide and thus a bit difficult to read, but document collaboration is an important element of the ASRC, and the Guide defines our best practices at doing so. No approval is needed at this time.

### **b. Training Manual update: Introduction to Field IV section (Keith Conover)**

The Training Manual update is still being worked. An email communication will come out on this when ready for review. No approval is needed at this time. Also, there are several ASRC one-pagers needing final review by August 31.

### **c. ASRC Canine Policy update: Definition of ASRC event (Keith Conover)**

During a recent group K9 training, there was some discussion regarding whether the training was an ASRC sponsored event and thus, whether the ASRC Canine Policy was applicable. After some discussion within this Board meeting, it was agreed to put additional clarification within the ASRC Operational Guidance Manual (OGM). Specifically, during the next update of the OGM, the canine policy section (III.R.i) should be amended to specifically reference the definition of an ASRC sponsored event as defined in the ASRC Administrative Manual (II.A.1.g). Since individual group training events are not ASRC sponsored events per se, each member group is encouraged adopt a canine policy, if needed.

## **VIII. Good of the Order**

Nothing was brought up.

## **IX. Adjourn**

Meeting adjourned at 1232 hrs.

Respectfully submitted,  
Stephen McClanahan, ASRC Secretary