

Strategic Analysis of the Appalachian Search and Rescue Conference

Purpose:

To analyze the present role of the Appalachian Search and Rescue Conference (ASRC) in the Mid-Atlantic operational region in terms of the organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, as well as provide a vision for strategic transformation to best fit its changing operating environment.

Description:

For the past 35 years, the ASRC has led the way in the development of Wilderness Search and Rescue (WSAR) in the Mid-Atlantic States. In this time it has been behind numerous achievements including: the establishment of multiple WSAR teams, the development of WSAR training standards, a revolution in SAR Theory and Lost Person Behavior research, the development of state level WSAR programs, and the saving of numerous lives. However, in these 35 years, the organization has changed little despite massive shifts in its surrounding environment. The unfortunate result has been a steady decline and stagnation – its successes in regional development making its primary role as a mission coordinating body redundant.

On the one hand, it could be argued that this sequence of events indicates that the organization is coming to a natural end and should prepare to breathe its last. However, with so much work to be done in terms of regional development, this fate is no more pre-determined than any other choice. In this case: rise to the occasion's circumstances or sink below the waves. With this in mind, this study shall examine the characteristics of the present environment and create a picture of the transformation that will allow the organization to once more serve as a major asset for the region.

Method:

Aside from building an understanding of the present environment, the study will focus upon the critical functions of Operations, Training, Research, Regional Development, and Administration (structure, funding, membership, etc.). These topics will be examined in the light of the organization's core documents, pertinent laws, stakeholder desires and viewpoints, organizational finances, emergency management best practices, and case studies.

Timetable:

Mid-January to Mid February – Study Preparation

Mid-February to Mid-March – Team General Meetings & Research

Mid-March to Mid-April – Analysis

Late April/Early May – Final Product Presentation