



BEARS DEN  
bluemont, virginia

# Winter Retreat

January 2017

**Advancing the State of the Practice**



*That Others May Live*



# 2017 Annual Winter Retreat

## *What is the Winter Retreat?*

The Appalachian Search and Rescue Conference (ASRC) sponsors an annual Winter Retreat with the goal in mind to bring together members from each Group to share their knowledge and experience in Search and Rescue. Typically this happens through formal presentations by invited speakers and by side conversations. It is a weekend of fellowship between fellow ASRC Groups and gives a forum for information exchange. Another important purpose of the Winter Retreat is for Groups to come together to discuss the ASRC.

## *What is the ASRC?*

The ASRC is an organization of volunteer search and rescue teams (Groups) in the mid-Atlantic region who are aligned by the common goal to be the resource-of-choice that responsible authorities will turn to when they need to locate a missing person quickly. Our Groups exhibit outstanding professional qualities, share our simple core values, and possess a strong commitment to locating the lost person. Founded in 1974, the ASRC is one of the oldest search and rescue organizations in the United States and we lean on our extensive experience to guide us into the future.

## *What is this year's theme of the Winter Retreat?*

The theme this year is Advancing the State of the Practice. Advancing the State of the Practice means that as Search and Rescue practitioners and members of the ASRC, we are always seeking new opportunities to do what we do in a way that finds the lost person as quickly as possible. We want to practice our craft as well as we can, look for opportunities for improvement, and transfer our knowledge to others.

## *Where is the retreat held?*

Bear's Den Lodge in Bluemont, Virginia. See the next page for details on our venue.

### **Our Groups**

Allegheny Mountain Rescue Group (AMRG)

Blue Ridge Mountain Rescue Group (BRMRG)

Maryland Search and Rescue (MSAR)

Mountaineer Area Rescue Group (MARG)

Northwest Pennsylvania K9 (NWPak9)

Search and Rescue Ohio (SAR-OH)

Shenandoah Mountain Rescue Group (SMRG)





# Bears Den Lodge

## The Lodge

Spend the night in a secluded stone lodge built in the 1930s. Originally a private mansion, the impressive 8,000 square foot facility is nestled in the peaceful woods of the Blue Ridge Mountains; and only 150 yards from the Appalachian Trail.

Bears Den is comfortable and simple. The lodge is a clean place to sleep, eat, shower, and relax. There is no television or radio. Find solitude on the grounds or meet interesting travelers. Listen to stories from backpackers in off the trail. Bring food to prepare your favorite meal. The kitchen is fully equipped with every piece of cook- and dining ware you'll need. Eat in the stone dining room and then sit in the large living room. Read a book by the fireplace or play games around the coffee table.

## The Overlook

At 1,350 feet, the Bears Den Rocks provide a panoramic view of the Shenandoah Valley and the Blue Ridge Mountains. The westward-looking view provides a prime spot for the sunset.

The overlook has a unique rock formation with a number of outcroppings for sitting and enjoying. In fact, the rocks are believed to be a directional landmark for the indigenous people who hunted and fished in the region 12,000 years ago. One local archaeologist claims it was used to mark the changing of the seasons on the Paleo-Indians' celestial calendar! Today, you can see the rock outcropping from Route 7 as you are driving east.

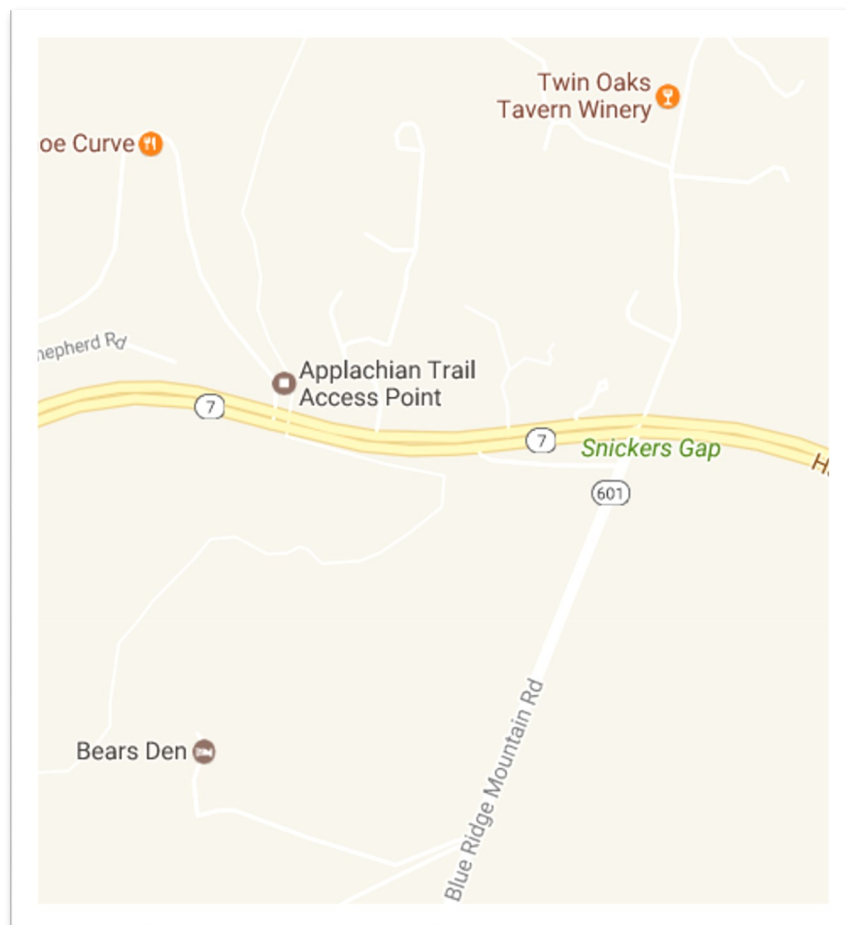
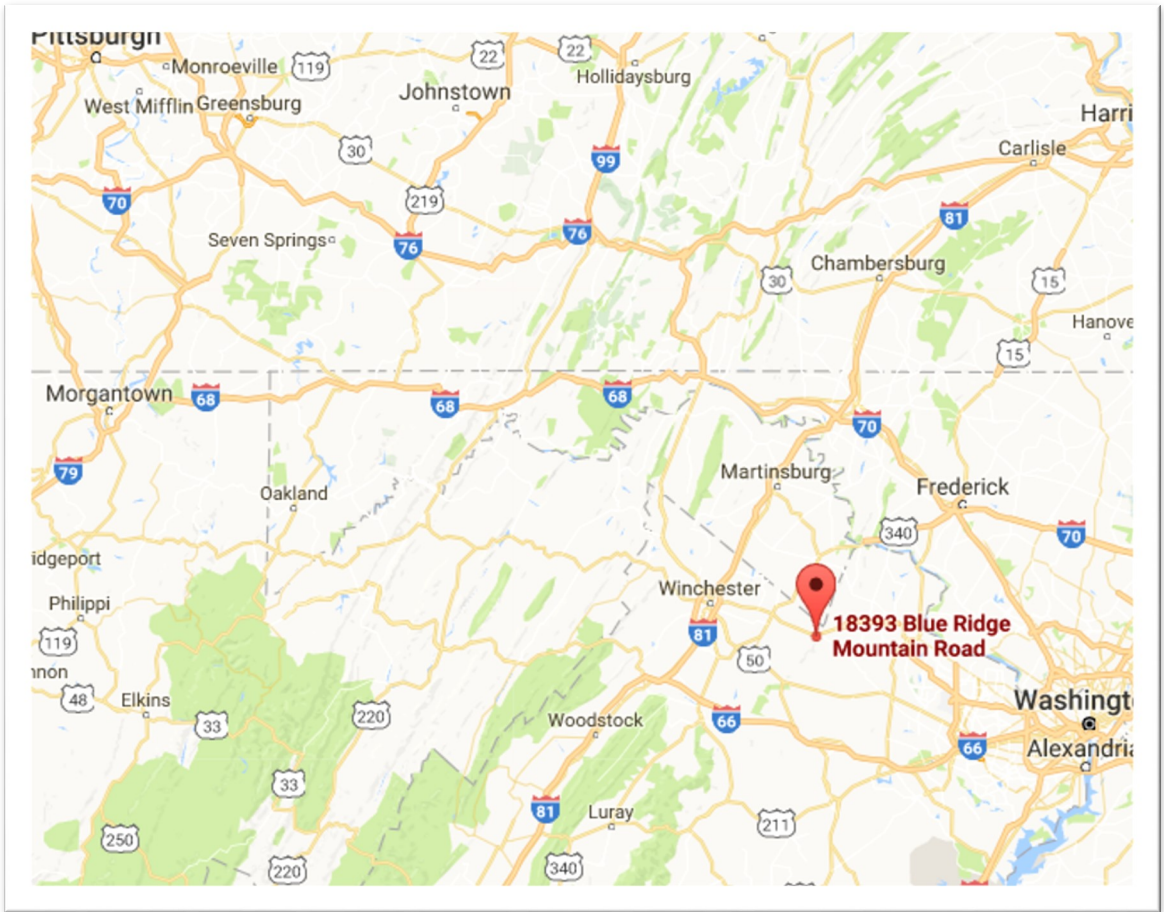
Descriptions from [www.bearsdencenter.org](http://www.bearsdencenter.org)



# Bears Den Lodge – Getting There

## Address

18393 Blueridge Mountain Road, Bluemont, Virginia 20135





...when our Groups are **strong**,  
the ASRC is **strong**.

# Agenda

## Day 1: Friday, 13 January 2016

17:00 Arrival

- Bunks are first come, first served
- Chat with your colleagues and visit the overlook
- Participate in the ASRC sponsored exercise upon your arrival

## Day 2: Saturday, 14 January 2016

08:00 Breakfast Service

09:30 Welcome

10:00 Presentation Session (see following pages)

12:00 Lunch Service

13:00 Presentation Session (see following pages)

17:30 Break and Networking

18:15 Pre-dinner Group Exercise

19:30 Dinner Service

## Day 3: Saturday, 14 January 2016

08:00 Wake and Breakfast Service

09:30 General Membership Meeting (see agenda on following pages)

- Meeting is open to all persons
- See agenda on following pages

11:00 Board of Directors Meeting

- Meeting is open to all persons
- See agenda on following pages

12:00 Working Lunch

13:00 Cleanup and demobilize.

*We are an organization of **professionally trained volunteer teams** with shared values that provide the best in search and rescue.*





# Abstracts

**Saturday, 14 January 2017**

**10:00-10:45      Wilderness Search and Rescue Cross-over to Disaster Response**  
Paulal Ivill Repka—Mountaineer Area Rescue Group

This presentation will include a discussion of how the skills learned in search and rescue (SAR) cross-over to disaster response by using Paula's experience in Team Rubicon as a case study. Team Rubicon's response to Hurricane Matthew in Virginia Beach was extensive and long lasting. Listen to Paula describe her experience in Virginia Beach and pick out the differences and similarities between this type of work and SAR.

**1050—1130      Building A Rock-Solid Relationship with a Local-Level Responsible Authority**  
Steve Weiss—Shenandoah Mountain Rescue Group

Shenandoah Mountain Rescue Group (SMRG) had a concerted effort to build and maintain a solid relationship with Fairfax County in 2015 and 2016. Steve will describe how that effort took shape and provide key points on working with local-level responsible authorities. This presentation will also describe how SMRG balanced this effort in with the rest of their program and how other teams can do the same. SMRG's relationship with Fairfax County sets the example for other teams to follow.

**1300-1345      Group Membership Management Matters**  
LuAnn Gatti—Northwest Pennsylvania K9 Search and Rescue  
Jocelyn King—Maryland Search and Rescue

LuAnn and Jocelyn will lead a group discussion surrounding membership management in your Groups. Topics of discussion will include: recruitment, onboarding, retention, and "special-case" members. Managing our members is fundamental to the success of our Groups so they can achieve the growth and retention goals we set for ourselves. Creating engaging programs for our senior members and efficient recruiting and onboarding programs for prospective members can be equally challenging. Join us for this discussion and share your frustrations and solutions so everyone can benefit.

**1350-1430      Why Your Group Should be Embracing Video Now and How**  
Michael Hansen

Video is the emerging media platform for social media organizations and technology companies. The future of communication is in video. Listen as Michael presents his thoughts on the potential for video in search and rescue and how it can benefit your Group. Review the challenges that video production presents to our Groups and how it could unlock even more potential from our Groups. Michael will also present those considerations that each Group must make when contemplating the use of video.

*...we lean on our **extensive experience**  
to guide us into the future.*



# Abstracts

**Saturday, 14 January 2017—continued**

**1430—1450 Break**

**1450—1530 SARTopo Capabilities for Mission Support**  
Patty Lindsay—Mountaineer Area Rescue Group

SARTopo is the emerging online and offline mapping tool for use in SAR. Patty will present the capabilities of the software and discuss its learning curve and opportunities for training. Capabilities will be presented in real-time including: collaborative potential, base layers, first operational period tasking, offline use, and potential to export data to alternative platforms. Patty will discuss how SARTopo integrates with search management and with other geographic information system programs. Did she mention SARTopo is free?

**1535—1615 Lightning Round**  
Ken Chiacchia—Mountaineer Area Rescue Group

Ken will present on several different topics in short succession focusing on airscenting tactics. If you do not work a canine, these talks will help get you up to speed on the considerations a canine handler must take into account when working his or her dog. Canines are becoming the resource - of - choice for responsible authorities in some of our response areas with little to no reliance on teams without canine resources. Knowing how this resource works helps in search management as well as being better support as flankers.

**1615-1630 Break**

**1630-1700 ASRC Suggested Medical Guidelines for Search and Rescue**  
Keith Conover, M.D., FACEP—Allegheny Mountain Rescue Group

The ASRC has produced guidelines for the content of wilderness first aid and wilderness first responder courses as part of our credentialing initiative. Keith will discuss what is included in the guidelines, how they were developed, and what they are intended to be used for. An overview of the difference between the guidelines as well as their contents will also be provided.

**1700-1730 Closing Thoughts and The State of the ASRC**  
Michael Hansen

Michael will provide an overview of the ASRC and the vision for the future, described in Strategic Plan 2020. He will present his thoughts on how we can achieve the goals of the strategic plan and what it will take to get there, including the need for more volunteers. Michael will wrap up with the volunteer opportunities that are available and expected to become available as the ASRC grows the services it provides to the Groups.

*We value technology **leadership** and practice **innovation** as the foundations to advancing the state and art of search and rescue in our region.*



# General Membership Meeting

Available via Phone

712.432.1500

Code 176968

## Agenda - Sunday, 15 January 2017

- 0930 Call to Order
- 0940 Tabulate Proxies - Determine if a Quorum is Present
- 1000 Old Business
- 1015 New Business
  - 1. Membership of Northwest Pennsylvania K9 Search and Rescue
  - 2. By-Laws
- 1045 Good of the Order
- 1100 Adjourn

*We provide opportunities and **create a culture** in which our Groups can **share and promote** operational best practices and tactical efficiency when engaged in a mission.*





# Board of Directors Meeting

Available via Phone

712.432.1500

Code 176968

## Agenda - Sunday, 15 January 2017

- 1100 Call to Order
- 1105 Participant Roll Call
- 1110 Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes
  - 1. August 2016
  - 2. October 2016
- 1115 Officer Reports
  - 1. Chair – Themes and Culture, Governance Documents
  - 2. Treasurer – Status of Current Funds and 2017 projections
  - 3. Training – most of this is covered below
- 1130 New and Unfinished Business
  - We have combined these typically divided sections; for this meeting, it makes sense to structure the conversation in a manner that is organized. To do so means talking about unfinished and new business at the same time.*
  - Vacant Officer Positions – Vice Chair, Operations
  - Brian Maier – SAR OH
  - AMRG/MARG 2015 AGM K9 Incident Investigation
  - Results of the Survey
  - Contraction and Growth of the ASRC
  - Strategic Plan - 2020
  - Iterative improvements to Governance documents
  - Training Standards – version 8
  - Credentialing Board
  - Content and Training Materials
  - Remote Support
  - Insurance
  - Risk Management Committee
  - Medical Committee
  - UAV Community of Practice
  - January 2017 Retreat
  - 2017 Annual General Meeting
  - Chair Succession Planning
  - DMVSAR offer of memorandum of understanding
  - Deliverables and Action Items for November 2016 BOD meeting
- 1250 Good of the Order
- 1300 Adjourn

*Each of our Groups are **leaders and innovators** in search and rescue...*



# Summary of Strategic Plan 2020

## Our Mission Statement

The mission of the Appalachian Search and Rescue Conference is to locate the lost person efficiently by enabling its Groups to provide the best search and rescue services possible to responsible authorities.

## Our Core Values

We expect honesty, integrity, and true professionalism in everything we do.

We value Groups who show commitment through their training, actions, and leadership to the health and safety of all persons engaged in a mission or training exercise.

We value Groups who work in close cooperation and coordination with responsible authorities before, during, and after missions.

We value the fundamental principles and skills of search and rescue as the cornerstone for our Groups to be high quality resources for responsible authorities.

We value technology leadership and practice innovation as the foundations to advancing the state and art of search and rescue in our region.

We value search management excellence, with search managers embracing the critically important practices of safe incident operations, quality service to the responsible authority, best practice implementation, and an awareness of risk management.

We expect teamwork and goodwill among all member teams, regardless of location or practice specialty.

## Our Strategic Goals

1. Credentialing Program
2. Develop Our Groups
3. Deliver Content to Our Groups
4. Develop Our Remote Support Capability
5. Fostering an Ecosystem for Innovation

SP2020 describes our vision for the future  
of the ASRC in the next four years.



# Notes

Put your thoughts or suggestions for improvement here, then scan in and send to [chair@asrc.net](mailto:chair@asrc.net). Or simply take notes.

Thank you for joining us at the  
2017 Winter Retreat



# About Bears Den

Nestled within the Blueridge Mountains and on the Appalachian Trail, the Bears Den Lodge has a long and colorful history.

**1933** - Bears Den was built by Dr. Huron Lawson, a professor emeritus in obstetrics and gynecology at The George Washington University, and his wife, Francesca Kaspari, a soprano singer, as their summer home. The couple traveled to Europe and designed the home to replicate a faux Medieval castle. Dr. Lawson used the local stonemasons and built the home in three stages, with the last to be the turret in the back. The curved living room was designed for its acoustical properties and for Francesca's recital room. There are also two small stone structures near the day-use parking lot. One was used as a ticket booth because Dr. Lawson created a petting zoo and charged five cents as admission and for visitors to picnic and access the overlook. The other stone structure was, and still is, the well house.

**1960s** - The Lawsons enjoyed their summer home until the late 1960s when they died. The Assateague Island Realty Corporation, owned by the Rodenbergs, purchased 620 acres of land from Route 601 down to the west side of the ridge almost to the Shenandoah River and planned to develop it for a country club-like community. They built one home and the foundation for others, as well as a swimming pool, but they didn't get much further than that. Clarke County turned them down for their proposal because of septic issues and disapproved of the swimming pool. Without the permits, they knew the venture would not be profitable, so they put the entire track of land on the market for \$1 million.

**1984** - Bears Den sat empty for 20 years, although there was a caretaker living in it on and off and the overlook continued to be popular with visitors. At the same time that the Lawsons died and the Rodenbergs failed at their development attempts, much of the Appalachian Trail (AT) was still situated on private lands, especially in northern Virginia. The [Potomac Appalachian Trail Club](#) (PATC), the [Appalachian Trail Conservancy](#) (ATC) and the National Park Service were working together to move the trail off roads and private lands and into the forest. Part of the Rodenberg land was perfect for achieving that goal. Ultimately, after a lot of back and forth, the AT was rerouted into the forest and became known as the infamous "Roller Coaster" and the PATC bought 66 acres that included the lodge and cottage on April 3, 1984. Then, on June 12, 1984, the ATC purchased the property from the PATC at cost.

**Today** - The ATC is still the owner, but has had different entities manage the property over the years. In 2007, the PATC took over management and works cooperatively with the ATC to operate Bears Den Trail Center as a nonprofit organization. Bears Den offers an array of services, including a hostel with full services, accommodations for group or private party rentals/retreats, a primitive campground and a rustic cottage for rent. The 2,184.2-mile AT is just 150 yards from the lodge.

