

APPALACHIAN ALERT

NOVEMBER 1997

A Publication of the Appalachian Search & Rescue Conference, Inc.
WEB ADDRESS - <http://scs.student.virginia.edu/~brmrg/ASRC>

Major Decisions Reached at October Board Meeting

Mission Statement

To save lives, the Appalachian Search & Rescue Conference provides accredited professional volunteer services in incident command management and ground search and rescue operations to government agencies in the mid-Atlantic region.

Vision Statement

The Appalachian Search & Rescue Conference will become the most widely recognized and reputable SAR resource in the mid-Atlantic states.

Appalachian Alert

provides information of interest to the ground SAR community in the mid-Atlantic states, reports actions of the ASRC Board of Directors and its committees, reports ASRC group training events and related business. Send news to Peter McCabe at the address below, or: pmccabe@msn.com

Future ASRC Board Meetings:
January 31, 1998 Working Committee Meetings (replaces December meeting)

February 14 in Charlottesville VA
April 18 in College Park MD

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Appalachian Search & Rescue
Conference, Inc.

Operations and Business:
P O Box 440
Newcomb Hall Station
Charlottesville VA 22904

*Editorial Comments and
Newsletter Information To:*
Peter A. McCabe, Editor
6432 Grateful Heart Gate
Columbia MD 21044-6034

October ASRC Board Meeting

- The ASRC Board approved development of an ASRC affiliated group as a pilot program for established ground SAR groups that wish to become affiliated with the ASRC in adopting ASRC training standards and, when working with the ASRC, ASRC operational protocols, but who wish to retain their own existing identity and service in their regional services area. ASRC affiliated groups while retaining their existing relationships in the region they serve, would be fully capable of becoming operational ASRC units in ASRC operations.

ASRC affiliated group training standards would need to meet or exceed current ASRC training standards for COQ, FTM, and FIL levels. Review is being made regarding what equipment and communication equipment would be required for ASRC affiliated groups. When operating as an ASRC affiliate group with other ASRC certified groups, affiliate groups would need to conform to all existing ASRC operational protocols. ASRC Affiliate Groups would decide for themselves what their uniform requirements are. ASRC Affiliate Group members would be able to wear an ASRC-provided 2" ASRC patch over their left shirt pocket (similar to the Virginia Commonwealth patch and MRA patch). A subgroup of the Conference Operations Committee will be developing the details for this pilot program during the next two months for presentation at the February 1998 ASRC Board meeting.

- 36-month ASRC group recertifications should be completed in November and December

1997 for all ASRC certified groups. Groups not recertified by the next Board meeting will be stepped down by default at that meeting to a certified associate group status. The ASRC Operations Committee is conducting the 36-month reviews.

- The Board approved development of an ASRC identification card. Arrangements are being made by the ASRC Operations Committee to use portable equipment to make white plastic ID cards with the full color ASRC logo and an individual's picture embossed directly on to the card. Cards will be issued for a period of two years, and will contain the member's date of birth. Each card would cost approximately \$3.00. Members will have to be present when the cards are made because pictures must be taken when the card is made. Name, date of birth and expiration date are keyed directly into the unit as the person's picture is taken. The card is produced on the spot. A schedule of dates for each ASRC group will be circulated to groups in the near future.

- The ASRC Board approved air scent dog and handler training standards. These standards will be distributed to all Groups by the ASRC Training Committee, and they will be included in the update the ASRC Standards document which should be published in the near future. The standards are adopted from existing standards issued by the Virginia Department of Emergency Services. A subgroup of the Training Committee will work to review and recommend changes to the standards.

- The ASRC Board approved an increase in membership dues from \$1.00 a year per member, to \$5.00 a year per member. The change will take effect with dues paid by members and/or groups for calendar 1998.

Operations Committee Activities

During the October ASRC Board meeting, a 5-year operations plan was developed. Below is a summary of the Plan;

GOAL ONE

Improve and maintain current ASRC policies and procedures for routine operations and to facilitate opportunities for growth in the Conference.

Objective 1: Complete 36-month Group recertification programs for all ASRC Groups (December 1997)

Objective 2: Complete research on sleep and resting issues related to 24-hour operational periods in SAR.

Objective 3: Complete and maintain ongoing review of Operations Manual and Administrative Manual. (December 1997 for Ops Manual and February 1998 for Administrative Manual)

Objective 4: Maintain ongoing review of Conference Training Standards regarding operational issues. Review and comment on new Conference Training Standards for air-scent dogs and dog handlers. (January 1998 for dog and dog handler standards and by April annually for ongoing review)

GOAL TWO

Plan and Guide Long Term Health of Conference Operations.

Objective 1: Complete first phase of resting and sleep research and make results known by December 1997.

Objective 2: Develop/revise Conference Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) by revising MOU with Pennsylvania DCNR by December 1997; revise MOU with Maryland State Police by February 1998; develop MOU with New Jersey State Police by September 1998; and develop MOU with West Virginia Department of Emergency Services by October 1999; and establish relationships by April 1999 with authorities in North Carolina, Delaware, and by April 2000 with authorities in New York regarding mutual aid services in lost person ground SAR activities.

Objective 3: Establish by September 1998 a Conference Code of Conduct including due process procedures.

(Review in April annually for utility and performance)

Objective 4: Coordinate with Conference and Group Dispatch Coordinators to establish by December 1998 written Conference dispatching protocols, and provide Conference dispatch training in all regions served by the ASRC not later than June 1999.

Objective 5: Develop and establish by December 1998 regional Conference dispatch center capabilities in Maryland and Pennsylvania.

GOAL THREE

Objective 1: Develop plans and procedures by October 1998 to facilitate entry by, and membership of, other search and rescue programs into the Conference.

Objective 2: Develop goals by June 1998 for bringing other search and rescue programs into the Conference.

Objective 3: Review and revise, as necessary, not later than October 1998, ASRC requirements for Affiliate Group probationary and certified status.

NOTE: Future issues of APP_Alert will present goals and objectives of other ASRC Committees

Regional News

MARYLAND: □ The Maryland Association of Search and Rescue Organizations (MASARO) has disbanded. Several Maryland ground SAR teams will attempt to coordinate joint training activities in 1998. □ Maryland Search & Rescue has a new WEB page at <<<<http://msar.homc.ml.org>>>>

PENNSYLVANIA: □ The Pennsylvania Search & Rescue Council (PSARC) has proposed a major restructuring of the Council to provide for five membership categories. One of the categories will provide an operational status membership category. A decision on Council restructuring will occur in January 1998 in a Council wide ballot. ASRC training certifications for COQ, FTM and FTL would be accepted by the PSARC. □ Pennsylvania DCNR is considering an update to its existing MOU with the ASRC.

VIRGINIA: □ At the September ASRC Board meeting, the officers of the Richmond Search & Rescue Group resigned from the ASRC. A number of former RSAR members have joined Tidewater Search & Rescue and are in the process of forming a new ground search and rescue group to become an ASRC group serving the Richmond region.

WEST VIRGINIA: Mountaineer Area Rescue Group (MARG), based in Morgantown, West Virginia, has become an affiliate member of the ASRC. MARG is working toward full ASRC accreditation.

APPALACHIAN SEARCH & RESCUE CONFERENCE, INC.

Chair David Carter
(TSAR) (757) 466-8094
dcarter@infi.norfolk.net

Vice Chair Todd L'Herrou
(SMRG) (703) 449-9251
todd_l'herrou@medstat.com

Secretary Christina Smith
(TSAR) (804) 794-0984
off2search@aol.com

Treasurer Ruth Carter
(TSAR) (757) 466-8094
rcarter@brms.com

Operations Officer Peter McCabe
(M/SAR) (301) 596-9994
pmccabe@msn.com

Training Officer Frank Jargowsky
(BRMRG)) (804) 296-7274

Medical Officer Kevin Reynolds
(TSAR) (757) 874-1327
reynolds@visi.com

Commo Officer Gene Harrison
(SMRG) (703) 777-6111
bats@erols.com

ASRC GROUPS

Allegheny Mountain Rescue Group (AMRG)
(412) 869-3747
c/o Dept Emerg Medicine Mercy Hospital of
1400 Locust Street Pittsburgh PA
15218-5166
Internet Address: houlahan+@pitt.edu

Blue Ridge Mountain Rescue Group (BRMRG)
(804) 924-3472
PO Box 440 440 Newcomb Station
Charlottesville VA 22904
Internet Address: brmg@virginia.edu

Maryland Search & Rescue Group (MSAR)
(410) 992-3945
5434 Vantage Pt Rd Columbia MD 21044
Internet Address: m_sar@capaccess.org

Mountaineer Area Rescue Group (MARG)
(304) 296-5118
P O Box 204 Kingwood WV 26537
Internet Address: pepper@sbccom.com

Potomac Valley Rescue Group (PVRG)
(301) 314-7444
Box 10 Stamp Union Bldg
University of Maryland College Park MD 20742
Internet Address: pvr-g-staff@umail.umd.edu

Shenandoah Mountain Rescue Group (SMRG)
(703) 255-5034
118 Park St, SE Vienna VA 22180-4608
Internet Address: mpotter@cpb.org

Southwest Virginia Mountain Rescue Group (SWVaMRG)
(540) 951-2914
123 Squires Student Cn Blacksburg VA 24061-0546
Internet Address: gsazonov@vt.edu

Tidewater Search & Rescue Group (TSAR)
(757) 466-8094
803 Townsend Ct Norfolk VA 23502
Internet Address: dcarter@infi.norfolk.net