
APPALACHIAN SEARCH AND RESCUE CONFERENCE
Allegheny Mountain Rescue Group
P. O. Box 2196
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15230

March 17, 1988

TO: All ASRC Members

FROM: Keith Conover, M.D., AMRG Training Officer

SUBJECT: Upcoming Practical Test

As you may have heard, we here in Pittsburgh are planning a basic practical examination, primarily for our own members, on Sunday the 27th of March. Although we have enough testers for all the stations, we will welcome Basic members from other Groups who can help with the stations. We also have room for quite a few more people to take the test, so if your Group Training Officer will accept a written evaluation from Mike Kuga, Dave Lindell, John Zimecki, Jim Mandarino, and me, please feel free to come up and take the test. Also, if you'd just like to take the test as a training exercise, please feel free to come. Please call and leave a message on my answering machine (412-561-3413) if you're planning to come, and let me know if you want to take the test, audit it, or help at one of the stations.

We have chosen as a site for our test the summit of Laurel Hill, the ridge on which lies the Laurel Highlands Trail, one of the nation's finest backpacking trails. (For those of you coming from the south and east, Laurel Hill is about an hour before you get to Pittsburgh, so travel time will be a bit less than you might expect.) Except for a few lumbering areas down off the ridge, the area has a mature and open forest with little underbrush except for the occasional briar. The terrain is mountainous but not rough, with several sparkling streams and good-sized cliffs. We will start the test at Laurel Summit picnic area, and candidates will navigate to five stations. A knot station is set up in a delightful meadow with a southern exposure. An equipment check is set up on a remote knoll which is in a pleasant area for cross-country travel. The vertical station is at Beam's Rocks, a popular climbing area on the Laurel Highlands Trail. A patient packaging station is set up in a level area near the ridgeline. A final station, for map problems, communications, an oral exam, and improvised evacuations, is set up in the woods near the starting point. After students have rotated through all the stations, we will adjourn to the ravines of Linn Run State Park for a joint semi-technical evacuation session.

We have obtained permission from the Laurel Hill Nordic Ski Patrol to use their patrol cabin and warming hut for evening accommodations, and we plan to offer advanced medical training Saturday (a standard EMT/EMT-paramedic advanced airway module, and other topics) if enough of you are interested.

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If this all sounds like a travel agency advertisement designed to lure you to this Basic Test, that's indeed our purpose. We have done our best to make things well-organized and to select an area that is both enjoyable and adequate for testing. (After all, we all enjoy the outdoors, and this type of Basic Test is an excellent way to see an area in which you might want to go backpacking.) However, we plan to be quite rigorous at all the stations, and we expect this to be a difficult test to pass.

Directions:

1. Get to the Pennsylvania Turnpike.

(If you're coming from the south, remember to use the VA 37/US 522 shortcut from Winchester to Hancock. It saves about 45 minutes.)

2. Get off at the Somerset Exit. From here, you have two choices: the simple long route or the complex short route.

3a. (Short complex route) Take Route 601 north from Somerset. Pass over the Turnpike. In another 8 miles (approximate), go across a covered bridge, and soon, where 601 bears right, continue straight on 985. About 4 miles from the covered bridge, turn left (west) on Edie road. (At least, I think that's the name of the road to Edie; if you reach Sipesville, you've gone about 1/2 to 3/4 mile too far.) Continue through the town of Edie (about 2 miles from 985), then turn right (west) at a "T" intersection in the village of Allenvale (another mile). In just a tad over three miles, in a saddle just after a height-of-land, turn right (north) on Laurel Summit Road. Go one mile to the picnic area. The Nordic Ski Patrol buildings are a few miles further on the left.

3b. (Long Simple Route) From Somerset, follow the signs to take PA 281 to US 219 north, and take US 219 north about 10 miles, then turn left on US 30 west. At the top of the mountain (about 7 miles), turn left on Laurel Summit Road. Go about 8 miles to the picnic area. The Nordic Ski Patrol buildings are a few miles short of this on your right.

I look forward to seeing some of you at our test.

KC

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