

Pennsylvania Search and Rescue Council

General Meeting Minutes

11 September, 1993

Attendance: see Attachment #1.

Called to order at 1000 hours by President Peter McCabe. A quorum was established.

Secretary's Report

Minutes of the June meeting were mailed to all member teams and were also distributed at today's meeting.

President Peter McCabe had a correction to the minutes of the last meeting: they stated that MED-SAR had been relieved of duties as far as incorporation, but a more correct statement would be that they had completed their portion of the task and it had been taken over by the President.

Minutes unanimously accepted as amended.

Treasurer's Report

See attachment #2. Some teams are still unpaid for 1993; these teams have been billed twice, and since unpaid are no longer members: Thornhurst (but they will pay today; Jim Howley noted that they weren't on the "unpaid" list in the last minutes so he assumed they were paid up), West Branch SAR, Coventry, Chester Co. OES, SAVES, SMRT, and SMRG (SMRG reportedly plans to drop its membership).

Old Business

Regional Coordinators

President Peter McCabe identified the new regional coordinators and thanked them for their assuming their posts.

Radio License Affair

Acting on behalf of PSARC, President Peter McCabe has moved to collection regarding money owed to PSARC by Bruce Barton; the collection agency will pursue this.

Regional Operations

PSARC teams have now operated under a Unified Command structure in several searches. AMRG, MED-SAR, and Rescue 40 have all established a cooperative agreement with a local non-PSARC dog team (CAESAR).

Regions

A map showing the regions was distributed (see Attachment #3).

Keith Conover explained the ASTM F-32 Committee on SAR's work toward an official ASTM Standard on Unified Command. He explained briefly the nature of ASTM, and its activities in developing standards for Emergency Medical Services and Search and Rescue. At a meeting of F-32's Subcommittee on SAR Management, those present voted that their #1 concern was a more unitary method for managing

most civilian SAR. This resulted in the current work toward a Unitary Unified Command standard. A similar feeling of a need for a better Unified Command mechanism than in the existing Incident Command System also led to the PSARC Unified Command policy, passed in June 1992 (reproduced here for your information, though not reiterated in the meeting):

- Whenever two or more Pennsylvania Search and Rescue Council member teams are participating in an operation, they shall use the Incident Command System.
- Each operation shall have a single Incident Commander. For a Unified Command Structure, the Incident Commander acts as the parliamentary Chair of the assembled Agency Representatives.
- The Incident Commander should be chosen based on competence and ability to command the particular search and rescue operation. The Incident Commander need not be a member or officer of an agency holding jurisdiction; however, the Incident Commander shall be responsible to the governmental agency or agencies holding jurisdiction (Responsible Agencies) through their Agency Representatives.
- If only a single Responsible Agency claims jurisdiction for a search and rescue operation, that Responsible Agency's senior representative present should appoint an Incident Commander.
- If multiple agencies claim jurisdiction for a search and rescue operation, representatives (one from each agency claiming jurisdiction) shall meet and vote to select an Incident Commander. Each agency shall have one vote. Voting shall follow the rules of a mass meeting as specified in<MI> Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised<D>, current edition.

Winter Simulation

The President indicated a desire to have another cold weather simulated search like one held several years ago. This met with general approval.

Standard SAR Management Forms

Copies were distributed with the last set of minutes, and were distributed at the meeting (contact the secretary for a new set of originals if you need them). We discussed the advantages of using the standard PSARC forms for all operations, so that members from different teams can take over from each other without difficulty. And, it was suggested that copies of all mission forms from operations run under a PSARC Unified Command be sent to the Secretary to be filed for future reference. (Bob Long indicated PEMA wasn't interested in mission files at this point.)

Patches

Long ago, PSARC allocated \$400 for patches and approved designs but haven't gotten them made yet. Ron Wisbith still has copies of the original artwork, and will send to Greg Sassaman, and Peter will send the ordering information, and Greg will enclose a check and the goal is to have the patches available for the next meeting. The Treasurer will order an appropriate number of patches.

Lessons from Recent Searches and Rescues

New Sewickley township, west of Pittsburgh

AMRG, MED-SAR, Rescue 40, and CAESAR (a non-PSARC field-only dog team) participated in a two-day search for a lost woman who was reported to have a seizure disorder. On the second day, MED-SAR and AMRG used a PSARC Unified Command

to manage the search. She was found, ill but not injured, and evacuated by AMRG, MED-SAR, and local volunteers, and transported to a local hospital.

Coatesville VA Medical Center

The responsible agency was Chester County Parks; Mid-Atlantic Dogs, WEST, and GPSAR all participated in the search, using a PSARC Unitary Unified Command.

Conneaut Lake

In July, Rescue-40 had a body search at Conneaut Lake. This was not a PSARC joint operation, but they thought it had some interesting features worth sharing: in the not-too-distant past there have been several drownings at Conneaut Lake and searchers weren't able to find the bodies. Recently there were two drownings, and R-40 used dogs to mark a possible site. Ron Wisbith noted that a buoy line caused a "hole" in a thermocline discontinuity in the lake water that allowed the scent to come up along the buoy line, creating a false-location scenting.

Juniata County search

A PSARC Unitary Unified Command was used at the Juniata search; the subject has still not been found. Comment: some present suggested better training for search managers in how to manage search dogs, as there were several problems in that regard. Comment on the comment: PSARC is working on training standards for individuals. A logical follow-on to this will be PSARC training to meet or exceed these standards. Comment: on the 23rd of July (Friday) at 0115 hours, Mr. Hill had difficulty getting the telephone numbers of additional PSARC teams from STATCOM; he also had problems with personnel being promised by teams but never showing up. Keith will contact Lee Lyons to discuss this with STATCOM to see what the problem is at STACOM's end, to ensure that they have up-to-date forms, have them available to the dispatcher, and that there are no other problems. Bob Long noted that PEMA's 24-hour number (1-800-424-7362 in PA, 1-717-783-8150 outside PA) has a Watch Officer who has a computerized database with some 30 SAR teams in Pennsylvania, based in part on the resource forms provided by PSARC. This computerized system is also available at each County Emergency Operations Center. However, sometimes the numbers on the system are not up-to-date, because they rely on information being provided by the teams.

Automated SAR Management System

Peter mentioned that Maryland SAR is developing an automated SAR resource management system, using a computer, and this will be operational soon.

Alerting Numbers on Map

At the consensus of the membership, Keith will add the alerting numbers for each team to the PSARC map. (See Attachment #3) **Please check to ensure your team's location and emergency number are correct.** Send corrections to Keith Conover, M.D., PSARC Secretary, 36 Robinhood Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15220-3014, (412) 561-3413.

Special Presentation by Ron Wisbith of Rescue-40

Mr. Wisbith gave a detailed analysis of the different types of search, rescue, and recovery and related teams. He pointed out that 80% of the team personnel operate at a very basic level in different disciplines, and only a few team members need extensive training in a particular discipline. He described R-40's standardized multidisciplinary cross-training and operations plan. He emphasized the usefulness of standardization. He described the implementation of this in four counties. Question: is organization on a county basis efficient? Yes. Each county team is exactly the same.

Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency, Bob Long

Civil Air Patrol

CAP is now attached to Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency rather than PennDOT. PEMA is now establishing a new MOU with the Civil Air Patrol. It will not affect Air Force searches, but will apply to disasters and other state missions. PEMA will try to coordinate cross training between CAP and other search and rescue teams. They hope to open CAP's Hawk Mountain facility to members of other SAR teams. PEMA is also helping CAP to start working under the Incident Command System. However, these will all be gradual changes.

Urban SAR

There was a first orientation training for 30 of state team on 2-3 September. This program is still moving slowly. PEMA is doing some preplanning as far as PSARC teams coordinating with the existing urban SAR plans and teams, but has nothing to disseminate to PSARC teams at this point.

There was some general discussion about the possible usefulness of **wilderness** search and rescue teams in certain disaster situations, and it was observed that the ASRC-CEM Wilderness EMT curriculum taught in Pennsylvania and Virginia contains disaster medical training.

New Business

Incorporation

We need to alter our bylaws to support our applications; all the forms are completed, so as soon as the Bylaws are changed, we will incorporate; will address Bylaws changes later in meeting.

Standards Committee, Jim Howley

We discussed the plan for implementing new PSARC standards, including grandfathering in people. Grandfathering needs to be set up only **after** testing is available to test people to the standards. We need to explore reciprocity with other states, particularly with Virginia, which has had SAR certification for a long time. We may want to submit our standards to Virginia and/or ASRC for them to evaluate for possible future reciprocity. The President noted that in ASRC Groups, the Group Training Officer (who is the only Group officer who must be approved by the ASRC Board of Directors) is authorized to

test and certify members to CQ, FTM, and FTL levels. We may want to employ a similar approach: approve a PSARC Training Officer within teams, who is authorized to certify to the PSARC standards. Ken Boyles: tests should be created and administered by PSARC. Keith: this is actually how ASRC does it: the Group Training Officer administers a standard written ASRC test for FTM and FTL. Ken and Peter: some people feel that all certification should be done through the State Fire Academy, but that would require that only official Fire Academy instructors could teach courses and certify people, and there is a limitation on the number of Fire Academy instructors. Keith: we could follow the National Cave Rescue Commission model: some Pennsylvania <MI>Orientation to Cave Rescue<D> courses are offered through the Fire Academy, and other Pennsylvania <MI>Orientation to Cave Rescue<D> are offered but not considered official Fire Academy courses; students at both types of classes get NCRC certificates, but only those attending an official Fire Academy course get a Fire Academy certificate. Irv: however, to be accepted as a Fire Academy program, the program has to meet certain minimal educational standards, so even if you're taking the course but not officially at the Fire Academy, you still have some assurance that the course curriculum has been reviewed and accepted. Ken Boyles observed that there would be no difficulty in administering standard PSARC test at the conclusion of Fire Academy SAR classes.

- Moved by Ron, seconded by Kay, that there shall be no untested grandfathering to the PSARC standards, but that all shall be able to take ("challenge") the standard testing when available. Voted unanimously in favor.
- Moved by Keith, and seconded by Jim, that Keith Conover develop a standard test bank of written test questions for CQ, FTM, and FTL levels, and practical test checklists; and that these be reviewed by the Standards Committee (Tom Hirschak, Chair, will clarify the membership of this committee) prior to the next quarterly meeting. Accepted unanimously.
- Moved by Keith, seconded by Irv: That the Standards Committee shall present, at the next quarterly business meeting, a formal plan for testing and review to the PSARC standards, including methods of written and practical testing and recertification, and for validation and verification of the tests. Unanimous vote in favor.

Operational Plan for PSARC, Ken Boyles

He has received no comments on his draft proposal that he mailed to ten people. The overall plan is as follows:

There would be Mission Coordinators (MCs) around the state who would allocate/dispatch resources to an incident scene; they would **not** have any role as Incident Commander or other management of the operation. Ideally, MCs would be unbiased and would dispatch resources based on resource capability and incident needs, not based on personality. This is based on the Colorado model. To be eligible to become a MC requires:

- Five years's experience coordinating multiple-agency SAR operations.
- Familiarity with resources inside and outside of the state.
- Familiarity with the Incident Command System.
- Successful completion of a Managing the Search Function (MSF), Managing Search Operations (MSO), or National SAR School Inland SAR course.
- Active membership in an active SAR team.
- Available by pager or other 24-hour number.

- Own or have access to vehicle with a mobile radio.

Discussion: this plan was originally started with the expectation that PEMA would start taking an operational role in wilderness/backcountry SAR. If we implement it at this point, the MC would have no official authority. On the other hand, he or she could give expert advice on resources needed, and then dispatch resources to the scene. An important part of this is for the MC to monitor whether the resource supposedly available are actually responding. However, the responsible agency calling for assistance will need to take ultimate responsibility for the responding resources.

Specific MC duties would be as follows:

- Have to be available, and a central focal point that information comes into.
- Maintain familiarity with capabilities and limitations of the resources.

General consensus was that we should proceed with this plan; a straw vote of ten teams voting showed six in favor, one against. The Board of Directors will meet between now and December, and will make a formal recommendation.

Potential Problems/Comments:

- How do we keep MCs updated on new resource information?
- MCs could respond to the scene with authorization from the responsible agent, but only to provide resource coordination.
- May advise Responsible Agent of Groups alerted by the MC, who will call the Responsible Agent for further instructions, but the MC will not directly dispatch the teams.
- What if teams respond only with a fraction of the resources they promised?

Nominations Committee

Peter appointed Roy Keiser as chair of the committee in the spring; Bob Sessions and Randy Maurer were also appointed to this committee. The committee's nominations are:

President: Peter McCabe, Ron Wisbith

Vice-President: Martha Ann, Ron Wisbith, Keith Conover (declined)

Secretary: Keith Conover, Irv Lichtenstein, Dan Geary

Treasurer: Greg Sassaman

Director: Ken Boyles, Jim Howley, Jim Hill

Also noted by the committee that one nomination was received by mail: Irv Lichtenstein for Secretary.

Bylaws Committee, Jim Hill

Ballot enclosed for voting members; if a run-off between various options is needed, it will be held at the December meeting. **This is your official notice that these items may be voted on at the December meeting.**

The Bylaws committee had been told to review the various proposed Bylaws changes, discuss each proposed change's consequences, and make a recommendation on each change. (See Attachment #4, which is a copy of the Bylaws with proposed changes underlined.)

Article I, section 2:

2A: Proposed changes would exclude urban SAR teams, and would move out-of-state teams into second-class citizenship. It would also require groups to be an association (would have an address) or corporation. There was not a consensus, but many thought it would require filing of Articles of Association with the state to form an Association organized "under the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania," with possible attendant legal costs. Irv: it was an out-of-state team that suggested

this change (Palisades). Ken: I don't understand why an out-of-state team would want to exclude itself. Recommendation: don't accept.

2B: Opens the door for various classes of membership. **Recommendation: don't accept.**

2C: Felt that this should be a function of the Board of Directors. **Recommendation: don't accept.**

2D: Recommendation: accept.

3: Irv: intent of this change: to keep communications between the SAR council and the team going through the Delegate, rather than bypassing the Delegate and going to others in the group. Keith: as worded, if a Delegate were not present, the Alternate wouldn't be able to speak or listen at the meetings. Irv: that's not the intent, it just needs to be reworded. Peter: communications should go to the member team as a whole. Irv: problem was with organizations that split and mail went astray. The proposed change would exclude proxy votes. **Recommendation: don't accept.**

7: This would increase the quorum. Irv: this would allow the Board of Directors, which would have members from 7 different teams, could conduct business. Keith: there are requirements for how meetings can be called, and thus there is no way for the Board of Directors to call a meeting without the rest of the membership knowing about it. Peter: the Board of Directors is already conducting business for the membership, but it is always reviewed by the membership. **Recommendation: don't accept.**

Article V, section 2: Jim Howley: this was an attempt to ensure representation from all regions. A revision was accepted by consensus, and appears in Attachment 4.

Recommendation: accept.

5: Recommendation: don't accept.

6: Unneeded expense. **Recommendation: don't accept.**

8: Unneeded; this is already being done. **Recommendation: don't accept.**

Article VI:

1A: This is already done, and is covered by Robert's Rules. **Recommendation: don't accept.**

1B-D: this just codifies existing practice, except that C dissolves committees when new officers take office. Nothing against the policy, but don't think it should be engraved in stone in the Bylaws. **Recommendation: don't accept.**

3A-B: Peter: I understand the purpose, but short of transcription services, don't think this is realistic for a geographically widespread volunteer membership. **No recommendation.**

C.: This may mean that nothing may get done in subcommittees. **Recommendation: don't accept.**

D.: "This is not the U.N." **Recommendation: don't accept.**

7. Budget: Consensus of those present was that they didn't want to have use their valuable time to review such budgets. **Recommendation: don't accept.**

IX.: Housekeeping change: **Recommend eliminate note at end of 1.**

The dissolution clause is a new addition. **Recommendation: accept.**

Membership

Huntingdon Co. Sheriff's Posse

They have asked to become members effective 1994. Moved by Keith, seconded by Ron, to accept Huntingdon Co. Sheriff's Posse as a member, all its requirements having been met; accepted unanimously.

Trail-Riders of Today (TROT)

TROT has also met all the requirements for membership. Moved, seconded and accepted unanimously. (Things were moving pretty fast at this point and I have **no** idea who moved or seconded.)

Mountaineer SAR

After brief discussion, it was moved to accept Mountaineer SAR as continuation of Bucktail SAR, as just a name change. Unanimous vote in favor.

National Cave Rescue Commission

Eastern Region, NCRC has considered joining PSARC, but wasn't sure if PSARC would consider it eligible for membership; it is a regional coordinating body, not a team, but it does have standardized training, and a roster of instructors who are also available for cave rescues. The membership voted unanimously to accept Eastern Region, National Cave Rescue Commission for membership, contingent only on it supplying the necessary check and paperwork.

Last-Minute Notes:

Somerset is no longer Somerset Sheriff's SAR, just Somerset SAR.

The November Western Pennsylvania WEMT Class is full, another in 14-15 May, 10-12 June in Bloomsburg, PA, in coordination with Dept. of Emergency Medicine, Geisenger Medical Center, and Bloomsburg State University. For information, contact Brad Bason at 1-717-271-1314 (H), 1-717-326-8185 (W).

EMS status for PSARC

We brought up the question of whether or not PSARC should start acting as an umbrella EMS agency for its members. Due to lack of time, this discussion will be tabled until the next meeting. (To spark discussion on this topic at the next meeting, I am enclosing with the minutes the Wilderness EMS protocol as used by two PSARC members. --KC)

Adjourned at 1:28 PM.