



Appalachian Search and Rescue Conference, Inc.

P.O. Box 400440 • Newcomb Hall Station • Charlottesville, VA 22904

Allegheny Mountain Rescue Group • Blue Ridge Mountain Rescue Group
Delmarva Search and Rescue • Mountaineer Area Rescue Group
Maryland Search and Rescue • Northwest Pennsylvania K-9 Search and Rescue
Potomac Valley Rescue Group • Search and Rescue Ohio
Shenandoah Mountain Rescue Group

www.asrc.net

August 8, 2015

All,

The August 15th Board of Directors' meeting is going to be an important one. At that meeting we will start reviewing the documents that codify the ASRC direction we have discussed for the last two years. We started hammering out this direction at the 2013 winter retreat with efforts continuing at the 2015 AGM and the 2015 retreat. During this time there has been a constant flow of communications detailing current direction and status.

In this package you will find the documents for discussion at the meeting:

- Proposed Bylaws changes – The major changes in this proposed version of the bylaws are centered on two important areas. First, the bylaws have been changed to reinforce the concept that the ASRC is an organization of the member groups. It is the groups that are the primary entities and the ASRC's job is to support groups supporting other groups in their mission. Second, the changes required to confirm the ASRC as the credentialing agency for FTM & FTL certifications. The changes to the bylaws have been significant and reviewing them in a line-by-line change manner would be both tedious and inappropriate. Please review these in the light of a new set of bylaws, not changes to the old ones.
- Proposed Training standards changes – These are a number of small changes to fix some errors and omissions. These are more of a clean up than anything else. Getting this set of revisions approved with minimal effort would be helpful for the next task surrounding the training standards. I will discuss this in more detail later in this note.
- First pass of FTM & FTL PTBs – These Position Task Books are, in a way, the publicly visible part of the new ASRC direction. These PTBs are far from perfect, but they are an indication of the direction being taken. I expect to see changes in the PTBs prior to their approval and I would expect to see large changes after they are in effect for a period and we have experience using them. These PTBs are based on the current training standards, which as already alluded to will need some work.
- Credentialing Policy Update – The Credentialing policy proposal was introduced at the 2015 AGM. Updates and clarifications have been made based on input from the membership. Because this policy is key to the new direction, I expect stimulating discussion on this document.

As we have worked on the PTBs, an issue that we all knew about but chose to ignore has come to full light. That being that the current training standards and performance expectations are not specific enough to be tested in any consistent manner. This became abundantly clear to me as I started to try to match our standards against the ASTM standards. It became clear to the group working on the PTBs as they tried to use the current standards as check-off items in the PTBs. This view has been verified in my discussions with a number of groups in the organization.



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Leading me, along with many others, to the conclusion that the training standards are in need of a significant revision to bring them up to a level that matches commonly accepted criteria for a standard.

Some might say that this realization (or, in fact, acceptance of what we already knew) is a reason not to proceed with the current set of PTBs. I strongly disagree with that view. In all discussions, we have acknowledged that there will need to be changes in our Credentialing Policy as well as the procedures that support it and changes to the PTBs after we had had the opportunity to function under the new system. I see nothing that changes that view of the future. Moving forward with the current training standards and PTBs, as imperfect as they may be, allows us to test the overall credentialing system and use of a standard, cross group, method of tracking member progress. We should, and will, in parallel start an effort to bring the training standards up to a level of specificity that will allow consistent demonstration of performance.

I look forward to the discussions at the August meeting as well as those that will take place over the next year. We are on the path of making the ASRC a stronger organization and I thank you for your efforts.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Don Scelza".

Don Scelza, Chair
Appalachian Search and Rescue Conference