Conference Broadens Mission and Membership Base

Appalachian Alert provides inter-team communication, and reports information of interest to the wilderness search and rescue community in the mid-Atlantic states, describes activities of the ASRC Board of Directors and its committees, lists ASRC group and training events, and related business. When the winds are strong and the tides are strong, this newsletter is published 6 times a year in even numbered months.

Send news, including changes in team leadership positions to Peter McCabe at the address below, or email: m_sar@CapAccess.org

AppAlert is planning on using the ASRC Web Page, now under development, as a major distribution resource. Stay tuned for future information.

Next ASRC Board Meeting: February 24 (Saturday)

By-Laws Changed
At a general membership meeting on August 28, following the regularly scheduled Board meeting, the ASRC membership voted to change Conference By-Laws to:
- enable other SAR-type groups and programs to become affiliate members of the ASRC; and
- offer Associate Membership to individuals who wish to contribute time or services to the ASRC or an ASRC Group but do not want to become active ASRC members.

ASRC By-Laws were also changed to enable the Chairman and Vice Chairman to be elected from among ASRC delegates while the ASRC Secretary and Treasurer may be elected from the general membership of the Conference. (In the event the elected Secretary and/or Treasurer are not members of the ASRC Board of Directors, they will automatically be appointed as non-voting members of the Board.)

And, the By-Laws were changed to enable the ASRC to publish and enforce standards of procedure in the form of an ASRC General Administrative Manual.

Mission & Vision Statements
The following are proposed ASRC Mission and Vision Statements discussed at the December 16 Board of Directors meetings in Charlottesville. Statements will be circulated to each ASRC Group for their consideration and approval.

Mission: The Appalachian Search & Rescue Conference provides, when requested, professional volunteers trained in ground search, ground search management, semi-technical rescue, technical rescue, and PSAR in Virginia, Pennsylvania, Maryland and occasionally in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States.

Vision: To save lives, the Appalachian Search & Rescue Conference will continuously improve its ability to conduct search and rescue activities so that it will become the preferred volunteer SAR resource in the mid-Atlantic states.

Topo Map Prices Increase
Effective August 12, USGS prices for topo maps have increased to $4.00 for everyone. Forty percent discounts, with a $3.50 handling charge for each order mailed, are now available to commercial map dealers, non-profit organizations, and government agencies when ordering 5 or more sheets of the same title and ordered from USGS, Box 25286, Denver CO 80225.

ASRC-National Park Service Training Simulation Scheduled
A cooperative lost person training simulation with the National Park Service is tentatively scheduled for January 27-28, 1996 in Shenandoah National Park, Virginia. Other units planning to participate include dog handlers with air-scent dogs and tracking dogs from regional organizations, the air operations unit of the U.S. Park Police, and a unit from the Marine Corps. Further information may be obtained by contacting ASRC Training Officer Peter McCabe by after 2200 hours at (301) 596-9994, or by email at PMCCABE@MSN.COM

Staff/Command Recertifications
Recertifications for the ASRC’s 10 Incident Commanders, and 7 of the ASRC’s 20 Incident Staff persons are due in January-February 1996. Notices have been mailed to those persons effected.

Training Agreement Signed
The ASRC has signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with Search and Rescue Training Associates (SARTA) for use of SARTA field team member and field team leader training texts and materials as the Conference’s core FTI and FTL training material and base line reference. Copies of the MOA are enclosed for ASRC groups.

ASRC Training Committee Actions
The Conference Training Committee has recommended the following actions: (1) Members of ASRC Groups may arrange for their FTI or FTL written tests to be taken with other ASRC groups with the knowledge of their home Group’s
Training Officer. It is understood that some Groups may have additional requirements for FTM and FTL, in addition to practical field evaluations, that must be satisfied in the Member’s home Group. (2) The Incident Staff written test needs immediate revision. (3) Incident Staff in the recertification process need to provide a written record of their IS participation during their last certification period. Those persons without the required IS mission experience may retest with the ASRC IS test and the MSO written test, or they may choose to be reduced to FTL status. (4) Incident Staff persons whose ASRC certification expires while they are on Incident Staff person at the December Board meeting; (5) Candidates for initial IS certification should successfully pass either a Practical Search Operations (PSO) course from SARTA or a Search Operations Symposium (SOS) course from the Blue Ridge Mountain Rescue Group. (6) Candidates for initial IS certification should be required to have participated as a base staff member in incident command operations in a minimum of two missions. Recommendations are being developed into motions for the February 1996 Board meeting.

ASRC Operations Issues

The ASRC Operations Manual has been in a major revision process for nearly a year. Sections of the former Ops Manual have been placed in a draft ASRC Administration Manual. Version 2.1.1. (October 1995) of the ASRC Ops Manual updates the initial revision in February 1995. Sections will cover: general information and overview, ASRC non-incident policies; Group non-incident operational policies; ASRC alerting and dispatching policies; ASRC incident policies; Group incident policies; and membership policies. The revised Ops Manual will include 13 annexes. It is anticipated the ASRC Web Page will include the Administrative Manual, the Operations Manual, and all ASRC Training Standards.

Regional News

MARYLAND  Sarah Herbelin, Potomac Valley Rescue Group, is the new PVGR Operations Officer. She replaces Karen Vanderzanden. PVGR also has a new e-mail address: PVGR-staff@umailumd.edu. Peter McCabe, Maryland Search & Rescue Group, has temporarily filled the ASRC Training Officer vacancy following the relocation of Candi Capozzi (TSAR) to upstate New York. The ASRC has updated its resource listing with the Maryland Emergency Management Agency (MEMA).