Concept and Training

The main excuse for Wilderness EMS Day is to provide training for this year’s Pitt EMS Fellows. They’ll provide medical direction over the radio, and they and Keith Conover will discuss Wilderness EMS issues as they do this. Most of the scenarios are chosen so as to present them (and the students in the field) with thought-provoking medical issues specific to the wilderness context. (The word “flummoxed” has been bandied about.)

It also offers great training opportunities:

- **Incident Management** training at Base, important for those wanting to learn how to manage a large multi-casualty EMS incident, or a large lost-person search.

- **Land navigation:** all of the stations are in Kane Woods off trails, and you’ll need to navigate to them. If you don’t know already, you should learn how to at least read the contours on the map, and how to use the grid system. Learn more from the good navigators in your team. See [www.conovers.org/ftp/Land-Navigation.pdf](http://www.conovers.org/ftp/Land-Navigation.pdf) and read the speaker’s notes if you want a head start on this.

- **Radio Communications:** communicating during a large multi-agency operation is different than everyday radio use. Learn how from the SAR team members. You can download and use the ASRC Commo Crib Sheet if you wish: [archive.asrc.net/ASRC-Communications/2007-03-12-ASRC-Radio-Crib-Sheet.pdf](http://archive.asrc.net/ASRC-Communications/2007-03-12-ASRC-Radio-Crib-Sheet.pdf)

- **Medical:** stations will have an instructor and a mock patient. The instructor and patient will present you with a scenario, and you’ll have to figure out how to manage it, given your levels of medical training, and the equipment you have. For some stations, you’ll get advice over the radio from an EMS fellow.

Some of your learning will be from instructors at the stations, but a lot will be from cross-training with others on your team. On an exercise like this, everyone is a student and everyone is an instructor. Even if you’re a first-year medical student with just a couple of months of basic science classes and no other relevant training or expertise, you probably know about those basic sciences than even the attending physicians can remember. And if you’ve just finished your EMT course, you have the benefit of the newest teaching to share with the experienced EMTs and medics.

- **Safety Direction:** if you get lost, head downhill, and you will encounter a road.

- **Rules of the Mock**

  From the National Cave Rescue Commission, which does cave rescue simulations for training, we stole rules for how to do a mock rescue right, including **Stop!** and **For Real:**

- **Stop!**
  - If you hear someone shout **Stop!** then stop what you’re doing and pay attention for hazards.
  - If you hear someone shout **Stop!** then yell **Stop!** yourself; if everyone shouts **Stop!** then even those farther away should hear.

- **For Real**
  - If you hear someone say **For Real**, then that means what they’re saying is **For Real** and not part of the simulation.
  - If someone says "**For Real**, it really hurts..."
Radio Reporting

There are many formats for reporting a wilderness medical scenario. But one that we particularly like is given in the box here. We recommend you use it for this exercise. It’s also helpful to organize your thoughts – at least in your mind if not on paper – before pressing your radio’s push-to-talk button.

Rules of the Game/Simulation

Kane Woods is a nice little park, and after dark and with a cold rain it can seem a bit remote (take this as a hint). But it’s a little park. So to make the simulation more interesting, we pretend that it’s a wilderness area, and that the only road access is at Whiskey Point where we set up Base. Ignore those houses, cars, and marching bands. (Yes, we had a marching band practicing just above Station Six. Two WEMS Days in a row.) And there is no place to set up a helicopter landing zone.

Evacs

When we move a patient in a litter, we call that an evacuation. (As opposed to extrication from a car or downed aircraft, or transportation in an ambulance.) The ASRC’s Essentials for SAR (linked above) contains the basics of litter handling that you should read. If you want to more including about improvised evacuations (one of our stations), read: conovers.org/ftp/SAR-Evacs.pdf

When we do an evacuation, we need to remember that haste makes waste and causes injuries. Unless a minute or so makes the difference between life and death, take your time and do things right. As some say, slow is smooth and smooth is fast.

Safety officers will be charged with identifying those individuals who are exhibiting unseemly haste during evacuations and providing a bit of firm advice. Or maybe whacking them upside the head (just kidding).

Registration

When you register at http://asrc.net/register, (you are going to register, right?) you are asked about your medical/first aid background, search and rescue background, and outdoor skills level. This helps us make up teams with different skill sets so participants can learn from each others.