

***Montana Sheriffs & Peace Officers Association***

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**Search and Rescue Subcommittee**

Quarterly Meeting

**Date:** Tuesday, April 4, 2023

**Time:** 10 am – 12 pm

**In-person:** Fort Harrison, HAFRC, Room 113

**Remote:** Via Microsoft Teams

**MINUTES**

**Introductions** *Scott Secor (Chair); Scott Van Dyken (Vice Chair); Nanette Gilbertson (MSPOA); Jake Ganieany (DES)*

Scott Secor, Chair

Nanette Gilbertson, MSPOA

Corey Hansen, Cascade County SAR

Bill Pandis, Lewis and Clark County SAR

Kevin Wright, Lewis and Clark County SAR

Chelsea McKay, Lake County SAR

Tom Curtis, Lake County SAR

Doug Altrugge, Lake County SAR

Jake Ganieany, MT DES

Mike Brooks, Lake County SAR

Frank Pelli, Red Lodge SAR

Jon Trapp, Red Lodge SAR

Tim Jurgonski, Madison County SAR

Burleigh Curtis, Ravalli County SAR

Cindy Stuper, Missoula County SAR

Bill Cassell, Petroleum County SO

Kent O’Donnell, Yellowstone County SAR

Duncan Hedges, Madison County SAR

**Review and approve minutes from previous meeting (1-10-23)**

Motion to approve minutes from the January 10, 2023 SAR subcommittee meeting. Second. Approved unanimous.

**Old Business** (Issues previously discussed which require follow-up)

* 2023 Legislative Session
  + Mill Levy Bills – All tabled in committee
    - [SB 125](http://laws.leg.mt.gov/legprd/LAW0210W$BSIV.ActionQuery?P_BILL_NO1=125&P_BLTP_BILL_TYP_CD=SB&Z_ACTION=Find&P_SESS=20231): Limit certain property tax levies to 5 years without reapproval
    - [SB 251](http://laws.leg.mt.gov/legprd/LAW0210W$BSIV.ActionQuery?P_BILL_NO1=251&P_BLTP_BILL_TYP_CD=SB&Z_ACTION=Find&P_SESS=20231): Sunset or reapprove existing voter-approved tax levies
    - [SB 292](http://laws.leg.mt.gov/legprd/LAW0210W$BSIV.ActionQuery?P_BILL_NO1=292&P_BLTP_BILL_TYP_CD=SB&Z_ACTION=Find&P_SESS=20231): Revising the threshold for approval of a mill levy election

All of these bills have failed to meet required deadlines at this point and it is unlikely any of the bills will find a path forward this session. Prior to being tabled, all of the bills were amended to exempt public safety and SAR mill levies. These bills or similar concepts will be brought forward in 2025 and it will be critical to ensure mill levies which are essential and provide lifesaving services are exempt.

* + [HB 521](http://laws.leg.mt.gov/legprd/LAW0203W$BSRV.ActionQuery?P_SESS=20231&P_BLTP_BILL_TYP_CD=HB&P_BILL_NO=521&P_BILL_DFT_NO=&P_CHPT_NO=&Z_ACTION=Find&P_ENTY_ID_SEQ2=&P_SBJT_SBJ_CD=&P_ENTY_ID_SEQ=): Revising laws related to conservation licenses on state lands

It is possible that if this bill passes, additional conservation licenses will be sold and additional funds will go toward Search and Rescue accounts via the voluntary donation.

* Working Dog Legislation

No bill introduced in the 2023 legislative session to define working dogs. Draft language was distributed, which will provide people a starting point and plenty of time to decide if this is a statutory change the SAR subcommittee (or an individual) is interested in pursuing in the 2025 legislative session. Suggest caution about mirroring working dog legislation too closely to service dog statutes as that often turns contentious.

* Equipment Exchange

At the January meeting the subcommittee discussed the idea of a mechanism for a hosted SAR equipment exchange. Currently counties and SAR teams manage equipment in different ways and often times, old equipment simply gets cast aside. The hope is to develop a system to assist teams who want to gift, exchange, or sell equipment that is in good working order, but is no longer being utilized by their team connect with other teams.

Considered using a Survey123 online form for people to submit equipment; however, that is not a viable option at this time.

In order to move forward, Nanette will have a new page added to the MT SAR web page for equipment.

People who want to list something on the web page, will be required to complete the SAR equipment form (attached to email) and email it to Chair Secor and Nanette.

**New Business** (Emerging issues which require attention from the SAR Subcommittee)

* Explanation of “Unique Local Number” on Reimbursement Form

There is a required field for the unique local number on each reimbursement form and we have been getting inquiries asking for their county/SAR Team number.

This is a number that is typically generated by your county finance officer/auditor/treasurer’s office in order to track payments/revenue. If you do not know your number, ask your accounting department. The number is simply a means of tracking financial transactions so your county finance officer/auditor/treasurer knows where to put the money when the county is reimbursed by state DES.

If your county does not assign a number for purposes of tracking debits/credits, that is fine. If you do not have a unique local number, just put 1111 to satisfy the requirement.

* Advantages and benefits of a common mapping system

Subcommittee started to explore if it would be advantageous if everyone was using the same or similar mapping system to assist when there are mutual aid events. The main obstacle is that each individual county/SAR Team has currently made a decision about which mapping software to use and it is a decision best made at the local level to meet the needs of the particular team (financial constraints, number of people, topography, etc.)

Teams are currently using many different mapping software programs and they all seem to have their own pros and cons.

Teams present reported using:

Lake County: CalTopo

Cascade: Moving exclusively to CalTopo. Have used ArcGIS in the past.

Madison: CalTopo, but also looking into ATAK.

Missoula: Gaia.

Red Lodge: SARTopo, OnX, and Garmin InReach

Beaverhead: SARtopo with inReach and OnX

Jefferson: Terrain Navigator Pro

Lewis and Clark: Terrain Navigator Pro and Gaia

Gallatin County: SARTopo

SARTopo is great for mutual aid events as there is a QR code to scan and track all members in real time.

Terrain Navigator Pro can track people by pulling information from other GPS devices.

OnX backcountry has offered free or discounted access to SAR organizations.

Garmin inReach good for live tracking.

The SAR subcommittee has no authority to require a certain mapping software, nor is there any intention to impose a one size fits all approach on all teams; however, the subcommittee will continue to discuss the best ways to work together and how to integrate systems when a mutual aid event occurs.

This will remain an agenda item on the next meeting with updates from Jon from the conference he will be attending and from Tim regarding statewide coordination options via OnX.

**SAR Financial Update**

* Funds Balance

*See attached written report*

SAR DES Off Road Vehicle Account: $81,723.57 available to spend.

FWP Account: $63,809.25 available to spend.

* How much available for equipment reimbursements?

Equipment reimbursement funds are dependent on mission and training reimbursement expenditures. At the June 27 meeting, the subcommittee will review and approve all final mission and training reimbursement requests, take a break to calculate the amount available for equipment reimbursement, and then reconvene to review and approve the equipment submissions.

* Payout Review

Encourage all SAR teams to submit mission and training reimbursement requests.

If big counties are not putting in for reimbursement because they want to leave the money for the smaller teams, then wait until the end of the year and at that time submit reimbursements.

If funds are depleted, the subcommittee will prioritize reimbursement requests per the reimbursement guidelines.

These funds are appropriated specifically for Search and Rescue and it behooves all teams to spend the money and submit reimbursement requests.

**Training**

* 2023 Trainings
  + **Cascade County SAR**
    - **Search Management**
    - May 5-9 (Fri-Tues)
    - Great Falls
    - 24 students is the optimal number, but if there's a few more it's not a big deal and they can handle it.
    - FREE OF CHARGE
    - Contact Cory Hansen ([CCMPSAR17@gmail.com](mailto:CCMPSAR17@gmail.com).)
    - See attached Flyer and Instructor Bio
    - There will be two separate classes, the basic and an advanced set for May 8-9. You will have to register separately for the basic and advanced courses. The instructor did not send info for the advanced; however, it is a direct continuation for the basic class prior to it.
    - Training provided by ERI
  + **Red Lodge**
    - **UAS Workshop/Drone Training**
    - May 9-10
    - Red Lodge
    - Contact Jon Trapp for more information: [jon@redlodgefire.com](mailto:jon@redlodgefire.com)
    - See attached Flyer
    - Training provided by General Pacific, Inc.
  + **Red Lodge SAR**
    - **Rapid Extrication Module/Rope Rescue**
    - May 30 – June 1
    - Carbon County
    - 4 seats available for outside SAR teams. Seats released on a first come first served basis. If MT SAR teams don’t fill the seats, it will be opened up to fire and out-of-state SAR Teams.
    - Contact Jon Trapp for more information or if you would like to attend (jon@redlodgefire.com).
    - Training provided by CMC. Lighter, faster, and backcountry based. Smaller diameter ropes.
    - Free of Charge.
  + **Red Lodge**
    - **Swiftwater Rescue**
    - June 16-18
    - 6 seats filled, but there are some available for other SAR Teams. Unlimited seats for classroom on first day. Limit of 12 students in the water the second two days.
    - Contact Frank Pelli for more information: [frank@redlodgefire.com](mailto:frank@redlodgefire.com)
  + **Mountain Rescue Association Training**
    - June 6-11, 2023 in Flagstaff, AZ
    - North America’s premier conference for search and rescue education, mountain rescue research, and the latest technology and rescue equipment.
    - <https://mraconference.org>
    - Jon has been in the past and it is a great conference. Not necessarily to get certification for the team, but because the topics are excellent, varied, and relevant.
    - Would love a report for those who attend.
* Share upcoming training opportunities

Details for these trainings are not yet solidified. Once they are, details will be shared via email and available on the web page.

* + **Gallatin County** 
    - Swiftwater Rescue
    - Trying to schedule for the third weekend in May
    - Likely a basic and advanced. Whitewater Rescue is the company.
  + **Missoula**
    - May 18-21
    - Rope Rescue – High Angle – WRI
    - Check to see if there are slots available
  + **Petroleum**
    - Would like to do a basic SAR, but not sure if it is possible right now due to staffing issues. Will continue to explore.
  + **Lake** 
    - Tracking
    - Will send info when available
* Reminder that we are no longer conducting/hosting the SAR Rendezvous. Rather than one gathering, energy has been focused toward on-going quarterly SAR trainings shared and available to all SAR teams.

**Resource List**

* Updated Lists Provided via Email

**Reimbursement Requests**

* **Mission**
  + Cascade County SAR

October 20, 2022

Total = $331.62

Reimbursement Purpose = Mileage

***Resources****:* *2 Cascade County Deputies. 1 Fish and Game Unit. SAR 1, SAR 5, SAR 25, SAR 14*

***Narrative****: On October 20, 2022, an elderly couple was out hunting and stayed out longer (overdue). Did not notify children who became gravely concerned. Turns out they were located nearby and not in peril. SAR, FG, and CCSO Deputies were dispatched around the area to search for them as they were not at the campsite. They arrived back at their camp a short while later and all was fine. It was not like them to not keep their children in the loop and they became worried. There was no cell service in the area and their children had feared something had happened to them due their ages. Hospitals and all other outlets were checked before resources were dispatched.*

***Resolution****: Turns out they were located nearby and not in peril. SAR was dispatched around the area to search for them as they were not at the campsite. They arrived back at their camp a short while later.*

*Motion to approve the Cascade County SAR Mission SAR Reimbursement for $331.62 with funding authorized by State DES utilizing the appropriate fund source. Second. Approved unanimous.*

* + Judith Basin County SAR

November 16, 2022

Total = $1,757.75

Reimbursement Purpose = Mileage and Yellowstone Air Service

***Resources****: JBSAR – 3 units, 8 members. JBSO – 2 deputies. FWP – 1 Warden. Two Bear Air. Yellowstone Flying Service.*

***Narrative****: On November 16th, 2022 at approximately 2108 hrs, JBSO received a call of an overdue hunter. The hunter was hunting near Woodchopper Ridge in the Little Belt Mountains. Search and Rescue was activated, staging at the Blue Nugget Inn in Sapphire Village. SAR requested Two Bear Air but they were unable to fly due to bad weather in the area. SAR requested Yellowstone Air Service. Yellowstone Air Service flew the area and determined the weather was good in the area. They contacted Two Bear Air and they were able to assist in the search. Two Bear Air was able to locate the lost hunter. They landed, picked-up the hunter and flew him to Central Montana Medical Center in Lewistown. Hunter was possibly suffering from hypothermia and frost bite. Mission ended on November 17th, 2022 at 1430 hrs.*

*Motion to approve the Judith Basin County SAR Mission SAR Reimbursement for $1,757.75 with funding authorized by State DES utilizing the appropriate fund source. Second. Approved unanimous.*

* + Cascade County SAR

November 27, 2022

Total = $82.40

Reimbursement Purpose = Mileage and Air for Diver’s Bottle

***Resource****s: 8 Deputies were Deployed to the Scene. 1 MHP Trooper was Deployed to the Scene SAR 1 was deployed to the scene.*

***Narrative****: At 5:13 Cascade County Sheriff's Dispatch received a call that a young man had shown up on the doorstep of a house cold wet and shivering, claiming he had fallen into the river. CCSO deputies then learned that the young man had driven a pickup into the Missouri River just above Rainbow Dam and it was unknown how many individuals were in the vehicle. CCSAR was paged out to conduct a search of the area and dive on the submerged pickup. MHP, CCSO deputies, FWP Wardens, and SAR personnel searched the river and alerted dam employees. After diving on the vehicle and searching the river it was deemed no one else was in the vehicle.*

***Resolution****: The male on scene went to the nearest structure to get help. He advised he was in the bed of the truck when it went into the River and there were 2 other occupants in the vehicle. SAR and Deputies were dispatched. After a Search of the vehicle and other information, it was determined he was the sole occupant.*

*Motion to approve the Cascade County SAR Mission SAR Reimbursement for $82.40 with funding authorized by State DES utilizing the appropriate fund source. Second. Approved unanimous.*

* + Cascade County SAR

December 14, 2022

Total = $68.63

Reimbursement Purpose = Mileage

***Resources****: 3 CCSO Deputies CCSAR (7) GFFR (14, + 3 engines + 1 boat GFES (1 Ambulance and Crew)*

***Narrative****: SAR paged out, kids on the ice in the area of Fox Island Road. Told to stage at beginning of Fox Island and Wilson Butte Road. Upon SAR arrival CCSO had contacted kids and discussed the inherent dangers of their escapades. All SAR units cleared and returned to quarters.*

***Resolution****: The above Units were called to area of Fox Island Lane which is south of Great Falls. 4 Children were playing on the Ice by the River and they kept crossing over to the Island. Due to the nature of River Ice, an Immediate Page was sent out for SAR who responded along with the other above units and they were able to get the children off of the ice before anyone fell through.*

*Motion to approve the Cascade County SAR Mission SAR Reimbursement for $68.63 with funding authorized by State DES utilizing the appropriate fund source. Second. Approved unanimous.*

* + Madison Valley SAR

February 26, 2023

Total = $6,700.00

Reimbursement Purpose = Helicopter Fee

***Resources****: 2 Madison County Deputies, 4 Madison Valley SAR Members, Gallatin County SAR Heli team, Gallatin County SAR Ground team.*

***Narrative****: On 2/26/23 Madison Valley SAR was activated for an SOS notification of an ill and exhausted backcountry skier. The individual was located on the East Side of Circle Mountain in the Lee Metcalf Wilderness. Due to the location and accessibility from the Madison County side of the mountain range, Gallatin County was contacted for mutual aid. Gallatin County deployed a Heli team and a ground team as a contingency. The Heli team was utilized because of the remote location and avalanche concerns in the undisturbed wilderness area. The Heli team located the individual and flew him to the awaiting ambulance and Deputy in Madison County. Individual declined medical care.*

***Resolution****: Ill and exhausted backcountry skier was located and flown from wilderness to ground ambulance to be evaluated.*

*Motion to approve the Madison Valley SAR Mission SAR Reimbursement for $6,700.00 with funding authorized by State DES utilizing the appropriate fund source. Second. Approved unanimous.*

* **Training**
  + Cascade County SAR

November 5, 2022

Total = $4,970.61

*Training Type: Wilderness First Aid Training*

*Description: Health Care Provider CPR, Wilderness First Aid (Fractures, Dislocations, and any and all injuries that would be common in a Wilderness Rescue). This training got all members up to speed with Certifications. This was scenario-based training for all members who are part of search and rescue. Bringing victims out of the wilderness with any and all injuries.*

*Training Provided By: Aerie Backcountry*

*Motion to approve the Cascade County SAR Training SAR Reimbursement for $4,970.61 with funding authorized by State DES utilizing the appropriate fund source. Second. Approved unanimous.*

* + Powell County SAR

November 19, 2022

Total = $767.20

*Training Type: Wilderness Safety Training*

*Description: Sent one SAR Team Member to Intro to Wilderness Emergency Care Release and Assumption of Risk Hazard and Risk Analysis Legal Aspects When Training for Emergencies Patient Assessment including Head to Toe Practice and Pulse Practice Sample Scenario Vital Signs Practice SOAP Note and Scenario Wilderness Wound Care Bandaging Packing a Wound Tourniquet Application Bone and Joint Injuries Assessing Injuries Practice Splinting Practice/Splinting Stations Group Study and Review Discussion.*

*Training Provided By: Montana Health and Safety Training*

*Motion to approve the Powell County SAR Training SAR Reimbursement for $767.20 with funding authorized by State DES utilizing the appropriate fund source. Second. Approved unanimous.*

* **Equipment**

None

Submit SFY 23 Equipment requests in April-June of 2023. Requests will be evaluated and voted on at the last quarterly meeting of the year, which will take place in June.

* + Submit all equipment reimbursements ASAP.
  + Requests for the current state fiscal year will be accepted until **Friday,** **June 23, 2023**.
  + Equipment reimbursement requests must include a local match of 35% (35% local, 65% state).  This requirement is per [MCA 10-3-801 (3)(b)(i)](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fleg.mt.gov%2Fbills%2Fmca%2Ftitle_0100%2Fchapter_0030%2Fpart_0080%2Fsection_0010%2F0100-0030-0080-0010.html&data=05%7C01%7CScott.Secor%40gallatin.mt.gov%7C77459319a6b9453ef9f108db289e47e5%7C365095bb9a5548c8a2acf28280513784%7C0%7C0%7C638148433396741060%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=FjxbqZHQCyCWXF6iw3ZLhlS2%2FigtA8r7Neiw%2ByVodhQ%3D&reserved=0).
  + Reimbursement request must include documentation which shows proof of purchase, total purchase amount, and payment.
  + If you have already submitted an equipment reimbursement request, it will be included on the June agenda.
  + All requests will be reviewed and voted on at the final meeting of this state fiscal year, which is scheduled for **Tuesday, June 27, 2023.**
  + Funds will be disbursed based on available funds and need.
  + The equipment must be purchased and the expense incurred prior to submitting the reimbursement request.
  + Ensure you go through your required procurement process.

**Open Comment**

None

**Next Meeting**

* June 27, 2023