



2021
BERGTRAGE
ANNUAL REPORT



DEAR RESCUERS, ALUMNI, AND SUPPORTERS

2021 brought historic changes to Seattle Mountain Rescue.

At the end of 2020 SMR signed the final paperwork to become the proud new owner of a vintage building in North Bend. This gives us the opportunity to pursue our seven decades-long dream of calling someplace home. With that, 2021 became the year in which our volunteers would bring the shovel to the ground in all aspects of the meaning. Volunteers have been showing up every week to help transform this property into the Mountain Rescue Center (MRC). Whether it's pulling out drywall, pouring concrete, putting up siding, or framing windows; SMR rescuers are getting their hands dirty, helping us to achieve our end goal. In addition to manual labor, a crew of folks have been working tirelessly to fund the building. As I am writing this letter, we have achieved 78% of our funding goal. This is thanks to a state grant as well and the generosity of members and private donors. My hope is that you will continue to read on and about this project in the following pages and consider donating to the building campaign so we can open the MRC in 2022!

With a talented team of field members, admin members, board members, and committee chairs, we remain focused on growing our excellence in rescue. We continue to develop our Advanced Life Support (ALS) medical response with the help of our medical committee. Though understanding policies and licensing is a long process, we continue to chip away at barriers, and we hope to bring on ALS in the next three years. Our rigging and testing committee continues to explore new options and test new gear, to ensure we have the safest, strongest, and lightest equipment to make our missions more successful. In April we were able to train over 40 members on our new twin tension rope system, which consists of lighter ropes and hardware allowing us to go further faster. We officially adopted it as our new default system in May, and over the next year we will support the other teams in the county as they adopt it. We continue to expand our snow and avalanche training, and every year we have more members pursuing their Level 2 and Pro 1 avalanche courses. In 2021 our team trained more rescuers as drone pilots and purchased a thermal imaging drone to support this work.

In addition to our technical rescue skills, we continue to develop a more inclusive and diverse culture. We have started internally by establishing a DEIJ committee. It helps provide resources and opportunities to grow, and it has a seat at the table for any membership or community center project. We have revised our mentorship program and created a more community-centered approach to onboarding and training. We have also changed our recruiting practices to reach a wider diversity of climbers.

Finally, we would not be able to function without our community. Though COVID has made it challenging to engage in outreach events as we have historically been doing, we were able to hold virtual classes to discuss our services, provide wilderness education, and promote mountain safety. We continue to look for new ways to engage with our community to promote accident prevention. Over 81 times last year the pager went off to call the team to action. Our volunteer rescuers put their lives on hold and their skill into practice to help bring people home to their family and friends. Thank you for all your support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cheri Higman".

Cheri Higman
Chairperson | Seattle Mountain Rescue

2021

MISSION STATEMENT

Incorporated in 1948, Seattle Mountain Rescue is a volunteer organization of seasoned alpinists dedicated to saving lives through search, rescue, and mountain safety education. It specializes in mountainous terrain searches and high angle rescues, primarily in King County, Washington. It is a fully accredited member of the Mountain Rescue Association and the King County Search and Rescue Association.



Officers

CHERI HIGMAN

Chairperson

JAREK BAS

Vice Chairperson

DOUG HUTTON

Treasurer

DOUG MCCALL

Secretary

Board Members

Doug Caley
Leigh Ann Wolfe
Doug McCall
Anna Condino
Gordy Smith
Svenja Fleischer
Peter Tran
Imran Rahman
Brent Bishop



Strategic Priorities

Excellence: Leadership in operations, technical climbing, rope rigging, avalanche rescue, and wilderness medical services in King County and Washington State.

Team: Building team culture and pathways for development through training, internal education, mentorship, and leadership development.

Community: Providing educational opportunities to enable a culture of mountain safety within our community.

Cross-Unit Culture: SMR is an accredited mountain rescue team providing leadership in our community.

Field members

Alexis Leader	David Dunphy	Gordon Smith	Jim Pitts	Nathan Greenland	Russell Anshell
Allison Harmon	David Maltz	Greg Prothman	John Angulo	Nick Constantine	Ryan Davis
Andrei Maksimenka	Derek Newbern	Gretchen Lentz	Kaeli Gockel	Nik Jensen	Sara DeRosier
Anna Condino	Doug Caley	Imran Rahman	Karl Hangartner	Patrick Brewer	Sarah Stephan
Barton Place	Doug McCall	Jake Swan	Karl Themer	Patrick Erley	Stephen Allen
Ben Stone	Doug Pierson	Jared Carlson	Louis Dawson	Paul Bongaarts	Svenja Fleischer
Ben Stoner-Duncan	Drew Fletcher	Jarek Bras	Lawrence Panzarella	Peter Tran	Tim Halder
Brad Near	Emily Prewett	Jason Meng	Leigh Ann Wolfe	Petro Ksondzyk	Victor Mesny
Brent Bishop	Eve Jakobowski	Jason Oppler	Matt Meyers	Rick Samona	Vladka Behrova
Casey Marks	Gabriel Webster	Jim Gellman	Matthew Palubinskas	Robert Ricker	Wes Cooper
Cheri Higman	Garth Bruce				

Novice Members

Catherine Killien	Mimi Stone
Deb McNally	Simon Swalwell
Les Soks	Zephyr Feryok
Marne Zahner	

Administrative & Honorary members:

Al Errington	Katjarina Hurt	Raquel Gaston
Brock Gavery	Linda Thompson	Raquel Lackey
Debbie Higman	Pickles & Bungee	Warren Thompson

Committee Chairs

Membership Chair
Imran Rahman

Recruitment Chair
Vladka Behrova

Rescue Chair
Casey Marks

Training Chair
Wes Cooper

Equipment Chair
Doug Caley

Education Chair
David Dunphy

Investment Committee Chair
Emily Prewett



SUMMARY OF STATS

3,171

HOURS

87

MISSIONS

93

SUBJECTS

The Mountain Rescue Center (MRC)



For nearly 75 years, Seattle Mountain Rescue has been an organization without a home. This has made finding training spaces difficult and storing and drying equipment an endless dance after each mission. With a growing population in our region and a corresponding increase in recreation, we have seen the need for our services grow at a rapid rate. To meet this need the team has begun work on a rescue facility.

Located in North Bend, Washington, gateway to the Central Cascades and hiking and recreation activities near Seattle, the Mountain Rescue Center is uniquely poised to help us meet the growing needs of our community. It will enable us to store and maintain our rescue equipment along with providing a consistent training location for field members. The facility is also being designed to help bring the team closer together and to build the team's collective resilience to the stresses of our rescue missions. Finally, it will create a community classroom to offer mountain safety education in collaboration with other local partner organizations.

Finishing the building will take the continued effort of our members and our community. We have received generous donations, in-kind contributions, and support from our state representative to get the project started. Our members have worked endless weekends on the building, leveraging the professional expertise of our group and supporters.

To finish the Rescue Center this year, we will need your help! Learn more about the current project and how you can help close the funding gap and finish the MRC in 2022!



EQUIPMENT STORAGE

A base to dry, wash, care, and maintain our equipment and vehicles



TEAM TRAINING

A location to train our members on medical care, rigging practices, and avalanche operations



MOUNTAIN SAFETY EDUCATION

A space to engage our community on practices to reduce risk in a backcountry environment



TEAM RESILIENCY

A safe home to decompress and take care of rescuer well being

The Mountain Rescue Center: Timeline

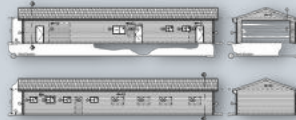
DEC 2020

Purchase of the property and building started with Opportunity Fund



WINTER 2021

Planning and Design Begins



SPRING 2021

State Grants Secured and Renovations Begin



FALL 2021

Major Donors help continue progress



WINTER 2022

Donations from Current and Former Members



HELP US FINISH THE RESCUE CENTER THIS YEAR!

SPRING 2022

Public Campaign Launch



Scan Me



FALL 2022



Special Thanks

The Buchannan Family
Lot Expansion Donation

Our State Representatives
Community Capital Fund Grant

Mike Perry of DIMENSIONS, Inc.
Architecture Design Time

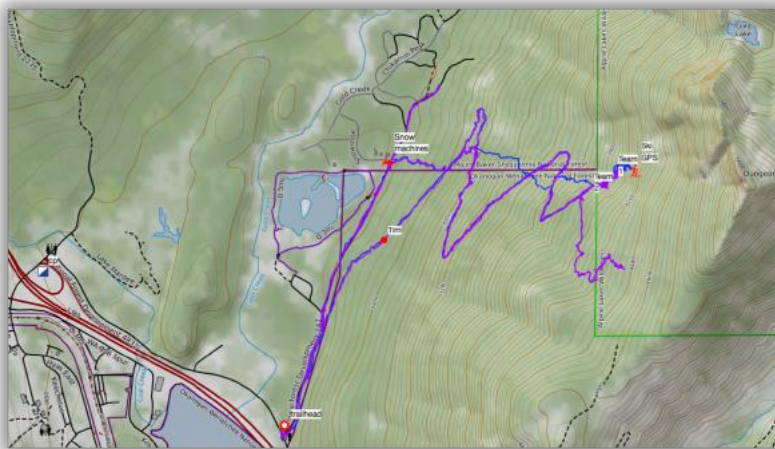
Miller Hull Architecture
3D Renderings

Seattle Mountain Rescue Opportunity Fund

The SMR Building Committee

INCIDENT TIMELINE:

- 8:00 - Avalanche training begins
- 14:30 - Training debriefing starts
- 14:58 - 911 call from cliffed out skiers
- 15:07 - Safety briefing for hasty team
- 16:11 - Team 1 heads in the field
- 16:40 - Team 2 SMR + SPART deploy
- 16:34 - Rescue truck arrives and command established
- 19:53 - Team 1 with subject
- 00:42 - All teams head home



Cliffed Out Skiers

On January 24th a group of six SMR members were debriefing after a day of avalanche rescue practice, when a page went out notifying the group that three skiers were stranded on some nearby cliffs. The team jumped into their vehicles and went to the Gold Creek Pond trailhead to start deploying for the mission. With a low avalanche danger forecasted, the group of three stranded skiers had decided to ski Martini Bowl, a line that feeds into Gold Creek. While descending, they encountered a steep, icy section in the couloir, and found that they could no longer make progress either up or down; they called 911.

At the trailhead and with diminishing light, the SMR team quickly went through their personal equipment to identify what resources they had on hand. The team discussed the avalanche hazard, ways to manage it, and the route to get to the stranded. It was determined that time was of the essence for a myriad of factors, including risk of hypothermia for the subjects and an increase in avalanche danger with an incoming storm. They decided the quickest way to reach the subjects was to approach them from the bottom, rather than skiing and rappelling to the stuck skiers. At just after 4pm the first team deployed into the field carrying personal ski gear and avalanche equipment, three pairs of crampons, three ice axes, extra clothing, a stove, several spare harnesses, two 30m ropes, pickets, and an assortment of carabiners and webbing. The team ascended northerly to just below the location of the stuck skiers, then ascended easterly through heavily wooded terrain to the base of a gully. Meanwhile, a second team consisting of one SMR member and one SPART member deployed, opting for an easier, yet longer approach on forest service roads. Between 4:30 and 5:00 pm, three SMR members arrived with our rescue truck and additional resources. Less than 90 minutes after departing the trailhead, team 1 made voice contact with the subjects. Given the limited resources on hand, one rescuer climbed to the skiers, assisted them with the harnesses, and then rigged an anchor so the skiers could clip in for safety. Once the subjects had regained their confidence and ability to move after having stood still for several hours, the rescuer helped everyone down multiple rappels to safe ground. In meantime, team two had scouted a descent line that was manageable for everyone involved. The rescuers and subjects skied out together, and were met by four Kittitas County snowmobilers that escorted the teams back. The team debriefed and concluded the mission at 12:45 am.



SMR members practicing avalanche rescue before the page went off

Winter Rescue Report – Missions

MISSING SKIER/ COWBOY MOUNTAIN

Date: 1/03/2021
Duration: 4 hours, 30 minutes
Attendees: 5 SMR Rescuers

LOST HIKER/ MOUNT TENERIFFE

Date: 1/14/2021
Duration: 4 hours, 48 minutes
Attendees: 2 SMR Responders

INJURED HIKER/ OTTER FALLS

Date: 1/23/2021
Duration: n/a
Attendees: 2 SMR Rescuers

INJURED SKIER/ SOURCE LAKE

Date: 1/23/2021
Duration: 3 hours, 18 minutes
Attendees: 5 SMR Responders

CLIFFED OUT SKIERS/ GOLD CREEK

Date: 1/24/2021
Duration: 4 hours, 48 minutes
Attendees: 11 SMR Responders

INJURED SNOWSHOER/ ANNETTE LAKE

Date: 1/31/2021
Duration: 5 hours, 45 minutes
Attendees: 1 Responder

MISSING SNOWBOARDER/ STEVENS PASS

Date: 2/16/2021-2/17/2021
Duration: 2 days
Attendees: 11 SMR Responders

INJURED HIKER/ BESSEMER TRAIL

Date: 3/06/2021
Duration: 12 hours
Attendees: 5 SMR Responders

CLIFFED OUT HIKER/ MOUNT SI

Date: 3/12/2021
Duration: 2 hours, 34 minutes
Attendees: 6 SMR Responders

INJURED HIKER/ MOUNT SI

Date: 3/13/2021
Duration: 2 hours, 7 minutes
Attendees: 2 SMR Responders

LOST HIKER/ MOUNT TENERIFFE

Date: 3/16/2021
Duration: 6 hours, 50 minutes
Attendees: 5 SMR Responders

INJURED HIKER/ LITTLE SI

Date: 3/17/2021
Duration: 1 hour, 34 minutes
Attendees: 5 SMR Responders



INCIDENT TIMELINE:

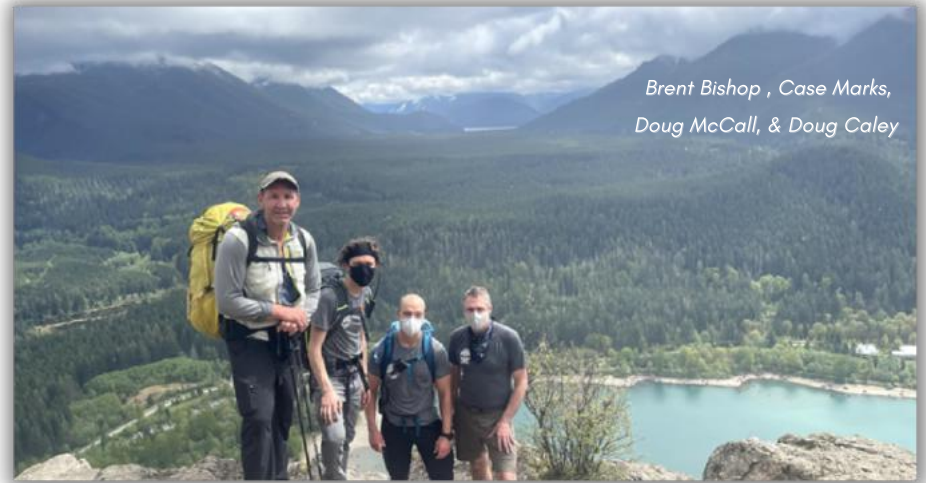
- 8:30 - Building work party
- 11:34 911 call for fallen hiker
- 11:35 RAD Team routed
- 11:45 Watershed deploys
- 12:04 SMR Team 1 leave base
- 12:13 SMR Team 2 + RAD leave base
- 12:30 Team 1 on scene
- 13:25 Subject back on top of ledge and walking out
- 14:20 Subject in base
- 15:34 All teams leave base for home



Miles Hanchett (left), Jim Lomax (middle left), and Doug Caley (middle right) confer with a Whatcom County Sheriff (Doug Gill) in the early 70s.

SPRING 2021

MISSION | MAY 1



Brent Bishop, Case Marks, Doug McCall, & Doug Caley

Rattlesnake Ledge

On May 1st a group of college-age students took a hike to Rattlesnake Ledge, a popular local hike with views of the Seattle Watershed and Snoqualmie Valley. One of the hikers had moved down the wet ledge for a closer look, then slipped and began to fall. Fortunately they were able to grab some branches and stop themselves on a rock ledge about 30ft down from the top and avoid plummeting off the cliff. Slowly they managed to get themselves into a more secure position and fellow hikers called 911.

Luckily for this hiker, there were a lot of resources ready to come to their aid on this Saturday morning. Seattle Watershed Staff, in charge of patrolling Seattle drinking water and managing the lands around the Rattlesnake Ledge, dispatched

two staff to the incident immediately. Explorer Search and Rescue (ESAR), King County's ground search and rescue unit, were fielding the outreach and rapid response team (RAD Team) for the day and were quickly able to reach the trailhead as well. In addition, several Seattle Mountain Rescue members were working nearby on the new Mountain Rescue Center in North Bend and quickly put down their hammers to head into the mountains to assist.

One of those responders was Doug Caley, who for over 50 years has been making sure that people come home to their family, friends, and loved ones. In his youth, Doug was a member of ESAR and had helped to form what is today called the RAD Team. The included photos show Doug in his younger years (photo on the left; center position, just behind the deputy) as well as capturing him in present day, just after this rescue (top photo, right position).

Over the years, Doug has helped the organization on all levels from Chairperson of the Board, to Equipment Manager to helping organize all of the work parties on the new Mountain Rescue Center. He has always maintained his Field responder status, serving as both a Field Member and Operations Rescue Leader on missions.

There is no telling how many times Doug has responded to Rattlesnake Ledge over the years, and this day the fallen hiker was lucky he was so close.

Doug arrived at the site with the second Seattle Mountain Rescue team and quickly established leadership on the scene. Acting as field leader he oversaw the rope system that was set up and managed incoming teams. An SMR member was lowered over the edge to provide the hiker with a harness, secure them with a rope and help them get back to safe ground. As the rescuer and hiker were brought back up over the edge, onlookers cheered. Doug laughed and jokingly said, "Well, that might be a first, usually nobody sees what we do". Once back on solid ground, an EMT from the ESAR team evaluated the hiker for injuries and everybody was able to walk down together. Many people from the mission headed home. Some continued on their RAD team outreach for the day. But Doug headed back to the MRC to continue working on the building renovations.

Spring Rescue Report - Missions

AVALANCHE/ CHAIR PEAK

Date: 4/3/2021

Duration: 3 hours, 40 minutes

Attendees: 14 Responders

AVALANCHE/ GREAT SCOTT BOWL

Date: 4/10/2021

Duration: 1 hour, 18 minutes

Attendees: 3 SMR Responders

MISSING HIKER/ CHELAN COUNTY

Date: 4/13/2021

Duration: n/a

Attendees: 1 SMR Responder

SICK HIKER/ MASON LAKE

Date: 4/16/2021

Duration: 2 hours, 36 minutes

Attendees: 3 SMR Responders

CLIFFED OUT RUNNER/ COUGAR MOUNTAIN

Date: 4/16/2021

Duration: 3 hours

Attendees: 5 SMR Responders

INJURED HIKER/ MOUNT SI

Date: 4/17/2021

Duration: 5 hours, 46 minutes

Attendees: 2 SMR Responders

FALLEN HIKER/ RATTLESNAKE LEDGE

Date: 5/01/2021

Duration: 3 hours, 56 minutes

Attendees: 8 SMR Responders

INJURED HIKER/ MAILBOX PEAK

Date: 5/05/2021

Duration: 9 hours

Attendees: 1 SMR Responder

INJURED CLIMBER/ SNOQUALMIE MOUNTAIN

Date: 5/15/2021

Duration: 4 hours, 44 minutes

Attendees: 5 SMR Responders

MISSING HIKER/ HIDDEN LAKES LOOKOUT

Date: 5/23/2021

Duration: 11 hours

Attendees: 4 SMR Responders

SICK HIKER/ BANDERA HIKER

Date: 5/31/2021

Duration: 4 hours, 28 minutes

Attendees: 2 SMR Responders

FALLEN HIKER/ LITTLE SI

Date: 6/12/2021

Duration: 1 hour

Attendees: 1 SMR Responder

INJURED SKIER/ SNOWLAKE

Date: 6/15/2021

Duration: 9 hours, 11 minutes

Attendees: 12 SMR Responders

LOST HIKER/ MOUNT TENERIFFE

Date: 6/16/2021

Duration: 10 hours

Attendees: 12 SMR Responders

INCIDENT TIMELINE

- 12:07 - SPOT activation
- 13:09 - SAR teams page out
- 14:30 - First teams in the field
- 16:30 - Drone launched for reconnaissance
- 16:40 - With patient
- 17:00 - Helicopter/ALS requested
- 17:40 - Patient moving
- 18:10 - Paramedics sent into the field
- 18:24 - Check-in with doctor
- 18:30 - Rope rigging begins
- 19:48 - Patient reaches the top of the Snow Lake Divide
- 20:35 - Doctor with patient
- 21:00 - Additional rope rigging required
- 21:30 - Patient back at trailhead

SUMMER 2021

MISSION | JUNE 27



Snow Lake

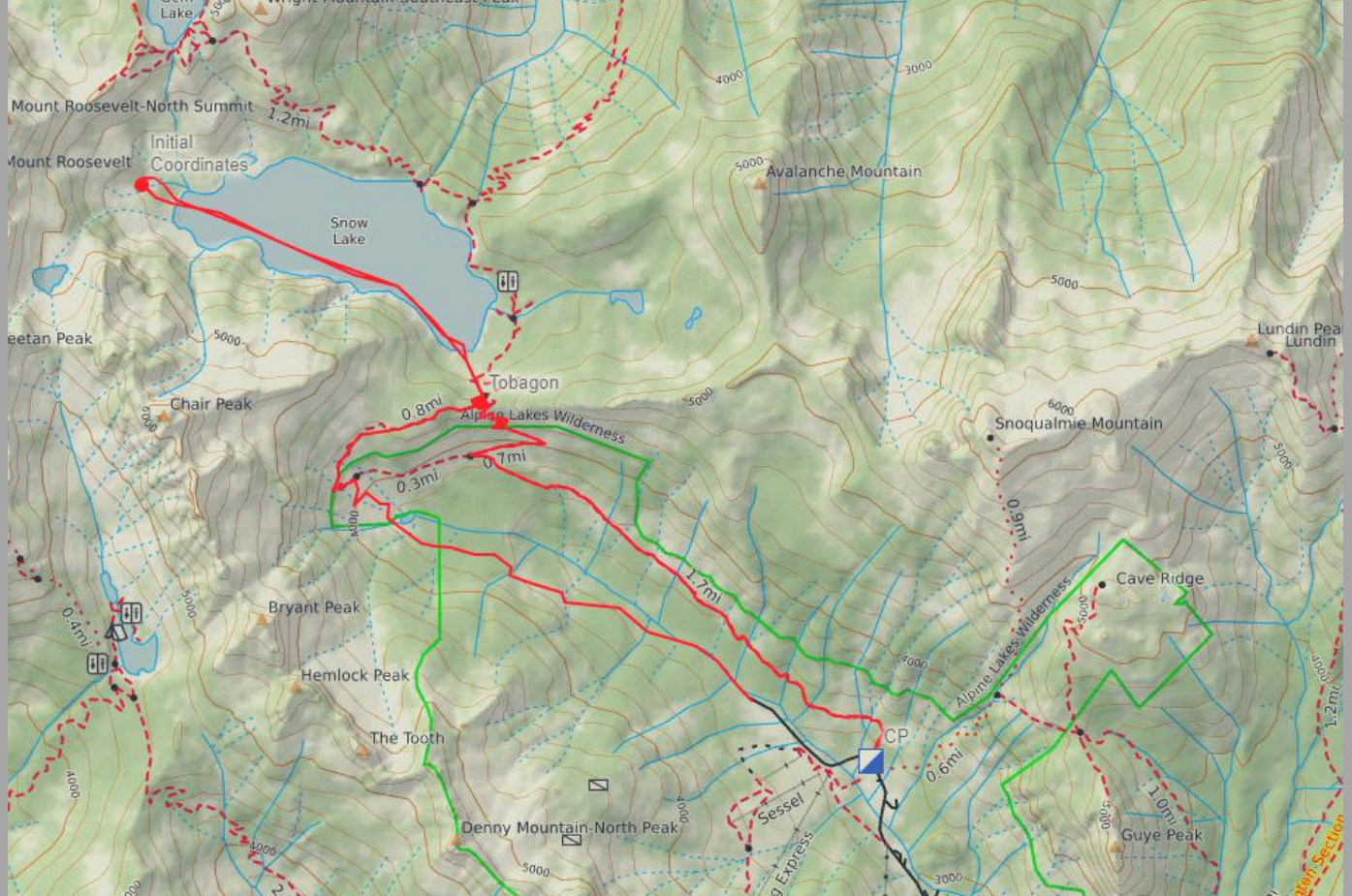
It is not often that you get a snow mission in June. But in the Pacific Northwest it is always a possibility, especially in a high snowpack year.

On this particular Tuesday in June, SMR was called out to a mission north of Snow Lake for an injured solo backpacker who had fallen off a cliff below Gem Lake. The mission would take over 9 hours to complete, with 31 field members from 7 responding agencies assisting. The extraction involved dragging the litter across the still frozen lake, completing multiple rope raises, and a toboggan ride. However, when they deployed, rescuers did not know yet what was in store for them. All they knew was that a one-way satellite distress signal from the Alpine Lakes Wilderness area had been received. It would be the job of the rescuers to assess the situation and to help save a life.

Teams arrived at the command post to mixed weather at Snoqualmie Pass, with rain and low clouds rolling through. A helicopter insertion seemed unlikely.

Command was established and a plan was developed. SPART, the Ski Patrol Rescue Team, would deploy a team on skis to evaluate the winter route, while 2 SMR teams and an ESAR team would head in through the standard summer trail. The initial SMR team arrived at a partially frozen Snow Lake. After careful evaluation SMR, SPART,





and an EMT from ESAR began to cross the lake as it was decided to be the fastest route to the subject. Another SMR team launched an aerial drone to see if they could evaluate the outlet of the lake and start looking for the subject near the cliff where the SPOT locator device had been activated.

The injured backpacker was located on the far side of the lake, at the base of the cliffs. They were in critical condition, but they had had the forethought to wrap themselves into a sleeping bag and tarp while they waited for help. This simple action likely saved their life, as it helped them to stay warm and mitigate hypothermia. After an initial medical evaluation, a request for immediate helicopter support was made over the radio. Despite the best efforts by the King County Sheriff's Department, Snohomish County SAR, and Whidbey Island Naval Air Station, no helicopter was able to make it through the dynamic mountain weather that day.

Knowing that time was of the essence, the rescue volunteers got to work to form a plan for a ground extraction while more resources were called upon to assist. The in-town SMR coordinator began calling the full unit roster to get more rescuers to head to the mission. One follow-on responder was an SMR ER doctor who was able to leave the hospital and head straight to the mission.

The ESAR team on-scene worked with more Mountain Rescue responders to carry in additional ropes and prepare the necessary raises to get out of the lake basin. SPART also sent another team to stage a toboggan at the Source Lake Divide, where downhill progress could more easily be made with this piece of equipment. Medical coordination was accomplished via satellite phone, InReach, and cell phone. The local fire department also sent two paramedics into the field with another team from Seattle Mountain Rescue.

As the sun set and teams switched on their headlamps, the injured backpacker was loaded into the back of a waiting ambulance. After 4 rope raises, 6 miles of travel, and one toboggan ride, all through mountainous terrain, the collective work of volunteer and paid responders had been able to bring this backpacker out of the wilderness and on their way to definitive care at the hospital.

Summer Rescue Report - Missions

MISSING HIKER/ MIDDLE FORK

Date: 6/21/2021 - 6/23/2021
Duration: 3 days
Attendees: 8 SMR Responders

INJURED HIKER/ ZIG ZAG

Date: 6/26/2021
Duration: 4 hours, 42 minutes
Attendees: 2 SMR Responders

HEADLAMP DELIVERY/ SNOW LAKE

Date: 6/27/2021
Duration: 4 hours
Attendees: 1 SMR Responder

SICK HIKER/ MOUNT SI

Date: 7/4/2021
Duration: 2 hours, 42 minutes
Attendees: 3 SMR Responders

INJURED HIKER/ SNOW LAKE TRAIL

Date: 7/12/2021
Duration: n/a
Attendees: 4 SMR Responders

SICK HIKER/ MAILBOX PEAK

Date: 7/18/2021
Duration: 3 hours, 24 minutes
Attendees: 1 SMR Responder

INJURED HIKER/ GRANITE MOUNTAIN

Date: 7/19/2021
Duration: 7 hours, 20 minutes
Attendees: 5 SMR Rescuers

INJURED HIKER/ NORTH FORK

Date: 7/24/2021
Duration: 5 hours, 41 minutes
Attendees: 9 SMR Responders

INJURED HIKER/ RATTLESNAKE LEDGE

Date: 7/25/2021
Duration: 3 hours, 45 minutes
Attendees: 1 SMR Responder

OVERDUE HIKER/ TALAPUS TO ALPENTAL

Date: 8/29/2021
Duration: 7 hours, 54 minutes
Attendees: n/a

FALLEN HIKER/ FRANKLIN FALLS

Date: 8/31/2021
Duration: 2 hours, 27 minutes
Attendees: 9 SMR Responders

STRANDED PARAGLIDER/ GUYE PEAK

Date: 9/4/2021
Duration: 5 hours, 36 minutes
Attendees: 8 SMR Responders

INJURED HIKER/ SNOW LAKE TRAIL

Date: 9/6/2021
Duration: 3 hours, 42 minutes
Attendees: 3 SMR Responders

HEADLAMP DELIVERY/ MAILBOX PEAK

Date: 9/6/2021
Duration: 1 hour, 1 minute
Attendees: 4 SMR Responders

SICK HIKER/ DENNY CREEK

Date: 9/16/2021
Duration: 4 hours, 11 minutes
Attendees: 4 SMR Responders

FALLEN HIKER/ MOUNT WASHINGTON

Date: 9/18/2021
Duration: 3 hours, 30 minutes
Attendees: 8 SMR Responders

MISSING HIKER/ OLYMPIC NATIONAL PARK

Date: 9/20/2021
Duration: n/a
Attendees: 4 SMR Responders

BY THE NUMBERS:

- Total of 12 ops periods
- During the first 11 days of the search, no physical clues were found
- A total of 67 agencies participated in the search effort
- Approximately 8000 person-hours of work went into the search effort
- Air assets included 3 helicopters: an Air Force Chinook, KCSO Guardian One and Huey aircraft
- More than 100 searchers responded per day for the majority of the search
- SFD personnel represented the largest number of searchers by far



FALL 2021

MISSION | NOVEMBER 2



One of Our Own

THE SEARCH FOR SEATTLE FIRE DEPARTMENT
DEPUTY CHIEF JAY SCHRECKENGOST

On November 2, 2021, Jay Schreckengost, a Deputy Chief with the Seattle Fire Department (SFD), was reported missing by his family after a day spent scouting terrain for elk hunting near the town of Cliffdell in Kittitas County. After failing to check in with his wife as expected, his vehicle was found 8 miles up a forest service road and a formal search was initiated. Thus began one of the longest and largest search efforts in recent WA history, driven by the persistence and tenacity of his family and friends, overwhelming turnout and motivation of search volunteers from the SFD, and the skills, discipline and professionalism of the volunteer and professional Washington state SAR community.

The large-scale search effort started early on the morning of Thursday, Nov 4th, with a large contingent of SFD volunteers beginning an enthusiastic search effort led by SFD personnel who had hunted with Jay in the past. At the same time, the Kittitas County Sheriff launched the multi-agency response one would expect for a missing subject of this nature. The unusually large number of volunteers from the SFD resulted in one of the unique challenges of the search effort: the integration and organization of a large group of highly motivated, physically fit urban firefighters, who are used to being assigned and accomplishing tasks at an incident in a matter of minutes or hours, into a wilderness search effort. This group of firefighters represented a massive advantage in numbers for basic ground searching, but the lack of training in wilderness search

techniques, unfamiliarity with the structure and pace of a typical search effort, and in some cases, the lack of basic outdoor equipment, clothing and expertise presented a unique and formidable set of challenges for the command and planning staff.

The main geographical feature of interest to the search effort was a large cliff band called “The Devil’s Slide”. After a report that Jay had been seen walking from a road towards this feature, this area became the main focus of a significant portion of the search. Approximately 3.5 miles long, this cliff band is an extremely complex, loose and treacherous series of benches and cliff faces interspersed with bands of trees, constituting the most technically difficult terrain in the search area. As a result, the vast majority of the searching of this feature was performed by MRA teams, with tactics ranging from UAV drone flights, top-to-bottom rappels and ascents of the entirety of the feature, targeted rappels probing the upper portion of the band where a subject might have come to rest after a fall from the top of the feature, and eventually, high-angle grid searches.

The first 7 days of the search were focused on finding a responsive subject, based on the idea that Chief Schreckengost was a well-equipped, disciplined master hunter with years of outdoor experience. The terrain of the search area around

Cliffdell can be characterized as a complex wilderness area, pierced by several forest service roads, and including multiple valleys and drainages. The area is heavily used by hunters and was well known to many of SFD responders who offered their expertise both on the terrain and on potential hunter behavior. Local hunters offered a large amount of information regarding the area and reported a reliable point-last-seen that eventually helped bring the search to an end.

As the search progressed beyond the first week, the focus shifted to finding a non-ambulatory, non-responsive subject, and the search techniques changed accordingly, with a focus on increasing the probability of detection for a given area. SFD and non-SAR searchers were briefed every morning on proper search technique, and as a result, search accuracy and efficacy rose considerably in a matter of days. Human remains canine searchers and their handlers were deployed into areas of interest on a daily basis. Most likely this would have led to locating the subject much quicker had it not been for the snow cover and sub-freezing temperatures in the area, which vastly reduced canine effectiveness due to lack of scent propagation from the subject. Each day, SFD volunteers and family members participated in large numbers, with SFD personnel exceeding 100 volunteers for most days of the search.



The last two days of the search were slated as a final push, with an aggressive callout to rescue units in the state in order to maximize MRA and other SAR turnout. During the second-to-last day of searching, command made the decision to focus MRA team efforts on the top band of the Devil's Slide area. Probing it with as many rappels as possible would rule out the possibility that the subject had fallen from the top of the cliff band. MRA team members spent hours rappelling in and around the steepest parts of the cliff bands. This concerted but ultimately unsuccessful effort in one of the last remaining unsearched high-priority areas led to the decision to commit all MRA resources to the bottom of the cliff band. On the final day of searching, all MRA teams were assigned to do a final high probability-of-detection grid search of the most challenging slopes at the bottom of the Devil's Slide band, focusing on the section of the cliff closest to the point-last-seen on the road above the cliff band.

The final day of searching began at the eastern edge of the Devil's slide. A team of 18 members from Tacoma, Everett, Olympic, Central Washington and Seattle Mountain Rescue conducted a tightly spaced type 3 grid search, moving east to west through 25-45 degree slopes covered in downed trees, loose rock, and steep terrain, making forward progress a challenge. The high level of training and discipline of MRA team members was evident throughout the day, and particularly notable when,

during an alignment check mid-slope, the call-out from the top of the team down to the bottom was almost arrow-straight. This would have been admirable in the middle of a perfectly flat field search, here it was downright extraordinary due to the angle of the terrain, difficulty of organized advancement, and the fact that there were a total of 18 searchers making up this single search line. As the day of traversing progressed, the upper section of the team began to encounter increasingly steep terrain, and a group of SMR members broke off from the main search to continue at great risk through a highly technical cliff band above a large basin. Meanwhile, the remainder of the group dropped down to bypass an impassible ridge, regrouped, and continued traversing through an alder-filled scree and boulder field. While traversing through this field, at approximately 1:15 pm on Sunday November 14, the subject was located in a small depression, approximately 10-15 feet away from terrain that would be considered steep angle. The search effort was halted, and after notifying command, the MRA teams gathered in the area in order to plan the extraction of the subject. After several changes in the plan, Chief Schreckengost was carefully moved to the closest forest service road. There he was met by a waiting procession of SFD members, friends and rescuers, who brought him back to his family waiting at the command post. He was escorted by a large convoy of SFD personnel and family to the medical examiner in Ellensburg with many fire departments along

the route turning out and saluting on overpasses as a sign of respect and farewell for their fallen comrade.

SMR and other WA state MRA team members played many roles in this search – we responded en-masse as ground searchers and technical responders, offered much-needed leadership for groups of enthusiastic but relatively non-wilderness savvy SFD responders and Schreckengost family members, served as part of the command and planning staff, provided hours of UAV drone flight coverage, managed highly technical rope-based searches in areas that were not accessible to any other search assets, accompanied canine search teams in challenging and difficult terrain, and ultimately ended up conducting an organized, disciplined and effective high-angle type 3 grid search that proved to be the decisive element in finding the Chief at the end of the search effort.

Ultimately, this was a successful search effort, albeit with a tragic outcome. The presence of MRA members in every facet of the search was a decisive factor in allowing us to bring Jay back to his family and to give them a small measure of peace. Thank You to all SMR members who responded - your presence was truly and greatly appreciated. We made a difference on this mission.

Fall Rescue Report – Missions

INJURED HIKER/ MOUNT SI

Date: 9/21/2021
Duration: 5 hours, 35 min
Attendees: 5 SMR Responders

WEATHERED OUT CLIMBERS/ THREE FINGERS LOOKOUT

Date: 10/09/2021
Duration: 12 Hours, 30 minutes
Attendees: 2 SMR Responders

INJURED HIKER/ MOUNT SI

Date: 10/13/2021
Duration: 3 hours, 50 minutes
Attendees: 3 SMR Responders

STRANDED MOTORISTS/ MIDDLE FORM

Date: 10/24/2021
Duration: 5 hours, 18 minutes
Attendees: 1 SMR Responder

LOST HIKER/ OLYMIC NATIONAL PARK

Date: 10/26/2021
Duration: n/a
Attendees: 2 SMR Responders

PLANE CRASH/ CALLIGAN LAKE

Date: 10/28/2021 - 10/30/2021
Duration: 3 days
Attendees: 31 SMR Responders

MISSING HUNTER/ DEVIL'S SLIDE

Date: 11/04/2021 - 11/14/2021
Duration: 11 days
Attendees: 27 SMR Responders

LOST HIKER/ SNOW LAKE TRAIL

Date: 11/07/2021
Duration: 10 hours, 24 minutes
Attendees: 3 SMR Responders

SICK HIKER/ MAILBOX PEAK

Date: 11/07/2021
Duration: 5 hours, 12 minutes
Attendees: 6 SMR Responders

LOST RUNNER/ COUGAR MOUNTAIN

Date: 11/14/2021
Duration: 4 hours, 57 minutes
Attendees: 2 SMR Responders

OVERDUE HIKER/ APEX MINE

Date: 11/15/2021
Duration: 3 hours
Attendees: 1 SMR Responder

SICK HIKER/ TOKUL CREEK

Date: 11/30/2021
Duration: 1 hour, 15 minutes
Attendees: 2 SMR Responders

INJURED SKIER/ SOURCE LAKE

Date: 12/19/2021
Duration: 2 hours, 45 minutes
Attendees: 9 SMR Responders

Multi-Unit Snow Training

Seattle Mountain Rescue (SMR), while primarily based in King County Washington, provides rescue services throughout the Pacific Northwest when called on by our fellow mountain rescue teams, National Park Service and neighboring county Sheriff's offices. In order to maintain proficiency in these multi-agency rescues, we strive to plan, host and train with multiple rescue teams at least once per year.



phone signal, had become missing themselves.

To further complicate the training event for the rescuers, a multi-party avalanche was reported on a nearby ridge, forcing leadership to make decisions on how to manage the increasing complexity of the operation. Ski teams, medical personnel, and avalanche search dogs were inserted and ferried between the two scenarios by snowmobiles and the Navy's helicopter. Teams assessed the residual avalanche danger and worked to locate missing skiers in a scenario that closely mirrored a real-world fatal avalanche that had recently occurred in Utah.

All in all it was a difficult and high-paced day that doled out realistic training for the teams, encompassing multiple learning objectives.

DEVELOPMENT

In March 2021 SMR put on a training event near Hex Mountain with Kittitas County Search & Rescue, King County SPART (Ski Patrol Rescue Team), and Naval Air Station Whidbey Island Search & Rescue.

The day started as personnel arrived at the Command Post with a mock mission for two injured skiers. Teams were

initially briefed on the situation, before organizing themselves and heading into the field. As the scenario unfolded, it became clear that there were (simulated) life-threatening injuries to at least one of the skiers, and that the reporting party, who had attempted to go to higher ground on the mountain to obtain a cell



Mountain Rescue Challenge



On October 9th this year, Seattle Mountain Rescue (SMR) organized and hosted the first regional Mountain Rescue Challenge for teams from surrounding counties.

Participants descended on the Middle Fork wilderness area of the Snoqualmie River over a 10 mile course comprising 4 rescue scenarios.

Six 9-person teams were given 10 hours to complete the training challenge, which focused on organized mock rescue scenarios to test mountain rescue skills

proficiency as well as boost intra-team cohesion and cross-unit camaraderie. The event required that teams operate in a mountainous environment, while stabilizing injured patients, employing technical rope rescue techniques, and safely evacuating injured recreationalists.

The course was strategically set up to provide an endurance element to the challenge, while spacing teams out enough to complete 4 dedicated scenario stations:

Station 1 provided teams with a Steep Angle rescue of an injured mushroom picker in a wooded area above the Garfield Ledges. Using ropes, they were required to place the hiker in a litter safely move them down a steep slope back to the trail.

Station 2 required teams to complete a medical evaluation and pack out of an injured trail runner who was having seizures.

Station 3 tested teams on their ability to quickly build a river rope crossing to evacuate a stranded hiker.

Station 4 involved a high angle pickoff of an injured climber, requiring teams to lower a rescuer and then raise the pair back up to the top of the cliff.

All of the scenarios were based on actual missions that teams have faced in the past. But putting them all together in a single day really tested everyone's physical stamina over a mountainous course. The event was a fun learning experience and bonding space for teams across the region.

Participating Teams included members from:

- Seattle Mountain Rescue (SMR),
- Tacoma Mountain Rescue (TMRU),
- Olympic Mountain Rescue (OMRU),
- Bellingham Mountain Rescue (BMRU),
- Naval Air Station Whidbey Island SAR (NASWI), and
- King County Explorer Search & Rescue (ESAR).

Supporting Teams who helped to coordinate and manage the event included:

- King County Incident Support Team
- King County 4x4 Team
- King County Sheriff Office
- The Soup Ladies

WOMEN IN RESCUE

"A woman is like a tea bag; you never know how strong it is until it's in hot water."

-Eleanor Roosevelt

2021 FIRST WOMAN CHAIRPERSON



Now in 2021, the organization again continues to mark milestones with Cheri Higman becoming the first woman Chairperson of Seattle Mountain Rescue. Women hold roles in SMR such as, the unit's Medical Director, Snow and Avalanche committee Chair, Membership committee Chair, Recruiting committee Chair, Building Development Committee Chair and four out of the nine board members have been undertaken by women. 18 members are women among 82 members (~21%) and 8 women are in leadership positions out of 20 positions (~45%).

Under Cheri Leadership SMR continues to bring a focus of inclusion, not just for women but for other underrepresented groups in the SAR space.

The Seattle Mountain Rescue Council (MRC) has long claimed to be (one of) the first formal Mountain Rescue groups in North America. Incorporated in 1948, yet operating (according to early member Bill Lahr) back into the 1930s, Seattle Mountain Rescue Council has a longstanding history that runs in parallel with the Hood River Crag Rats organization and the Rocky Mountain Rescue Group of Colorado.

In the early years, women played a critical role in Mountain Rescue in the Pacific Northwest and on Seattle Mountain Rescue. As far back as the early 1950s, before mobile phones and the internet, the paging for Seattle Mountain Rescue Council was managed by a group of women who jokingly referred to themselves as the "call girls". They made sure that information was disseminated and that rescuers were called and organized in a moment's notice. Some of these women, who had significant climbing resumes (Matie Daiber, Marian Alloway, Leona Dreyer and Marge Mueller, as examples) not only managed the call-outs, but also held Board positions and corporate office (Secretary) years before joining the ranks of the field membership roster.

As the unit entered the late 1960s and 70s, husband-wife couples were continuing to join the organization. Women, such as Marty Lentz and Deborah Riehl, combined their expert climbing capabilities with their skills as nurses to begin responding as field members for the unit. Recounts of this time describe Marty Lentz and Deborah Riehl as the first field members as a seemingly "non-event" because of their skills and passion. However at that time they opened the door for all future women Field Members on the Seattle team. Over the next few decades women continued to make strong contributions to SMR and to help progress the unit. Throughout the 2000s women were among the team's top responders and continue to shape the organization.



MRA PRESIDENT

Doug McCall

Seattle Mountain Rescue is a proud member of the Mountain Rescue Association (MRA). Started in the Northwest in 1959 the MRA goal was to improve the quality, availability, and safety of mountain search and rescue across the country. Now the MRA has close to 100 Teams from around the U.S. The goal is to promote collaboration between rescue teams and through a peer evaluation process facilitate an accreditation process for member teams in Snow, Rock and Search.

The MRA hosts an annual Spring Conference that brings together MRA teams as well as guest teams from around the world (most recently from Italy, Spain, Taiwan and Australia) and covers a variety of technical rescue topics. The MRA Spring Conference is open to all and will be held in Estes Park, CO June 10-12, 2022.

In 2020 Seattle Mountain Rescue field member Doug McCall took on the role as President of the MRA. Doug has been working with other MRA member teams to help expand training resources and sharing for MRA member teams, build partnerships with the outdoor industry and government organization as well as the financial stability of the association. Search and Rescue is a team sport that requires collaboration and constant training. We are thankful for Doug's leadership and service as the MRA president.



COMMUNITY

Collaboration

Snoqualmie Falls is a sacred place, one that is viewed with great importance by the Snoqualmie People. While tourists and onlookers watch the mighty waters plummet nearly 300 feet to the pools below, the Falls hold deep meaning as the water transforms to mists which are said to serve as a connection to Heaven and Earth.

Over the last few years we have seen a rapid increase in recreational users in our area due to the rapid population growth. For Mountain Rescue this has meant an increase in missions for injured and lost people who require our assistance. For the Snoqualmie Tribe this increase in recreation also means impacts on all of their sacred places, including Snoqualmie Falls. And each year, SMR responds to at least one fatal accident for someone who has fallen to the riverbed below.

In September, SMR organized an event for the unit, and to collaborate with the Snoqualmie Tribe, Explore Search and Rescue (ESAR) and Puget Sound Energy, to best prepare ourselves for the next call that we get to respond to this sacred ground. For the team, the training day began with a traditional cedar blessing and an orientation as to the spiritual importance of the land. It is with this perspective that our team could then practice setting up ropes systems to raise and lower lower rescuers off the steep cliffs around the falls.

At the end of the day volunteer rescuers left having learned more about the Snoqualmie Tribe, the importance of the land, and having practiced safer techniques for this area, should we be called to respond to these cliffs at a later date. The Tribe and Puget Sound Energy were also very grateful for our help in cleaning up litter and debris from the valley floor, helping to restore it to its natural condition. SMR looks forward to collaborating with these groups in the future for continued training. And our members are extremely grateful for the opportunity to learn about the Snoqualmie Tribe's sacred grounds.



KING COUNTY SEARCH AND RESCUE ASSOCIATION

REBRANDING



King County has many volunteer non-profit organizations that assist the county Sheriff's Department with Search & Rescue activities. These units each have a specialty purpose and work together to ensure the right resources are available when a 911 call for help is received.

On January 4th, 1965, members from the county Sheriff's Office and Civil Defense Director met with Seattle Mountain Rescue Council (SMR), Seattle Explorer Scouts (now KC Explorer Search & Rescue), and Seattle 4x4 Rescue Council (now KC 4x4 Search & Rescue). Together these organizations formed an advisory association committee (KCSARA) that could represent the individual units with the Sheriff's Office and provide assistance and guidance in matters affecting the organization, training, alerting, and operational utilization of rescue units.

Over the years, this charter remained largely unchanged with the inclusion of new areas to help the units collectively best serve our community. Today KCSARA also supports coordination of shared radio repeater communications, hosts regular round table meetings, and even manages the administration of a special King County grant fund to enable member teams to conduct search and rescue operations.

In 2020 the association undertook a project to revise the public branding to better capture the essence of the work that the teams do. Members of Seattle Mountain Rescue, along with many of the association's other member teams, participated extensively. As a result, in 2021 a new logo was unveiled which better showcases the wildland urban interface in which these teams conduct their search and rescue operations.

SMR is proud to highlight the work and symbolic nature of this new design. When you see this emblem in the community, know that it represents volunteers from across multiple teams who will drop everything, no matter the time of day, and no matter where someone needs help, all in an effort to bring people home to their friends, family, and loved ones.

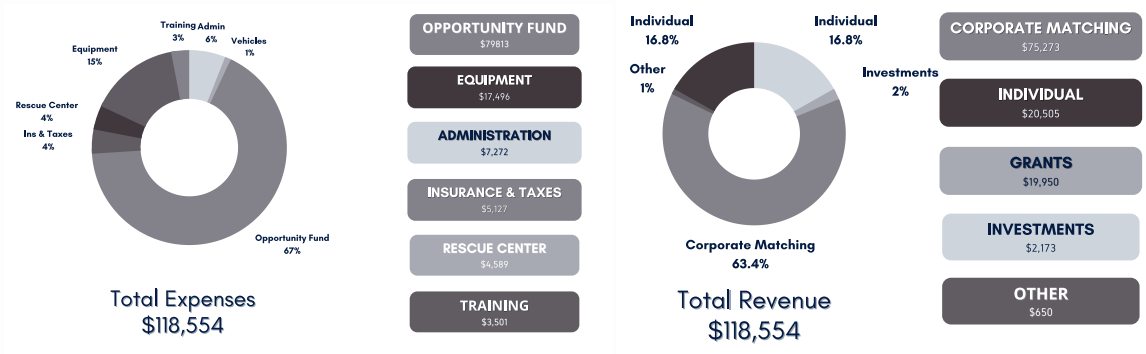




2021 FINANCIALS



* This financial chart represents the operational fund for the organization and excludes the current building capital campaign.



WISH LIST

BUILDING FUND

- HELP US MAKE A MOUNTAIN RESCUE CENTER A REALITY THIS YEAR!

OPERATIONS FUND

- COVER MOUNTAIN RESCUE'S ANNUAL OPERATING COSTS, SO THE TEAM MAY BE READY TO DEPLOY

MEDICAL

- ADVANCED LIFE SUPPORT (ALS) PROGRAM \$10,000
- MEDICAL TRAINING \$5,000

RESCUE EQUIPMENT

- RAPID DEPLOYMENT KITS \$30,000
- AVALANCHE SAFETY EQUIPMENT \$8,400
- ROPES AND RIGGING EQUIPMENT \$6,000
- RESCUE WHEEL + LITTER \$4000
- DRONE EQUIPMENT \$6,000
- COMMUNICATION EQUIPMENT 15,000

TRAINING

- AVALANCHE SAFETY TRAINING \$5,500
- ADVANCED RIGGING TRAINING \$7,000
- MENTAL HEALTH TRAINING \$2,000

Donate Today!



SCAN ME



Seattle Mountain Rescue

Your Donations At Work!

In 2021 the team made several key investments with donations we received to build our rescue capacity and improve safety for our volunteers. We strive to continually invest in equipment and training that allows our members to deploy in any weather and on any terrain. We would like to take a few moments to highlight a few ways in which your generous donations have helped the unit.



Rock and Rigging: The team has completed the changeover to a new, lightweight rope system. We have made several adjustments compared to our previous systems, thus implementing a state-of-the-art twin-tension rope rescue system at the same time we have reduced the overall weight to save over 10 pounds. Your donations helped us purchase the ropes, carabiners and other gear to put together these kits. In 2022 we will also invest in more teaching equipment and additional instruction to better prepare all of our members on advanced techniques. Your donation makes sure we have the right gear.



Snow and Avalanche: We added additional avalanche transceivers, shovels and probes to our rescue truck to ensure that we are always properly equipped for any winter mission. Money has also been set aside to help cover avalanche safety and member training costs. Your donation will keep our members safe in our most dangerous operating terrain.

Rapid Deployment: Our team continues to invest in field first aid kits that each member can keep in their pack. Sometimes members arrive at the command post prior to our rescue truck, and we want everyone to be able to deploy into the field as soon as possible, and without having to wait for gear from the truck. This coming year we hope to build similar rope rescue kits for field members and to make radios available for purchase by members at a reduced cost. Your donations get us to people in need faster.

Take Flight: Thanks to a generous donor we were also able to upgrade our UAS drone to a state-of-the-art model with more capabilities for SAR missions. The team currently has about 8 drone pilots who have completed the FAA certification as well as many hours of internal training. The new drone provides them with thermal imaging capabilities that will help find people at night and in winter conditions more easily. Your donation helps us innovate.





Contact Us



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