

Founding Member: Mountain Rescue Association

Rescue

Web Edition



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QUEEN'S RIVER SEARCH, PART 2 – OCTOBER 7-8, 2016 K9 PARTICIPATION—ANN MOSER

When Gregg asked if the K9 team was interested in going back to the Queen's River, my first thought was "Yes, but we don't have enough cadaver dogs." Siw Lea and Uki had moved to western Washington over the summer. Then Jen Skeldon took Kato and moved to Wyoming! And Linda Kearney was recovering from back surgery. That left just my HRD dog Cricket, and Jamie Simpson with Yoki. With Gregg's approval, I asked Snake River Search (a small, independent search team in Idaho Falls) for help. Our K9 team has been training with them for many years and we coordinate on certification events with the National Search Dog Alliance. Two long-time handlers, Dave Ferguson with Lily and David Forker with Loki, agreed to come help us.

Upon review of the search area, we decided we wanted to send two of the dog teams up the trail about three miles to bivy on Friday night so the dogs would be fresh to search on Saturday. Each dog team had two flankers: Mike Mancuso and Tom Wheless with me, and Jim Findley and Mike Johnson with David Forker. We started up the trail at about 5 p.m. on Friday, letting the dogs work as we hiked in. We had heard there was a wolf pack in the area, so David and I decided to take our "pup" tents for the bivy because we were concerned about the dogs being out at night. Our concerns were justified, as we found a wolf rendezvous site between the



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trail and the river. (A rendezvous site is a place where a wolf pack congregates and meets up after getting separated. The meadow grass was tramped down and there were tons of wolf poop and scattered animal bones.) It was a little spooky when we found pieces of an old boot, including the boot tongue, which fortunately was not the type of boot that our subject was wearing. I could imagine wolf pups playing tug-of-war with the boot!

We reached our bivy site at the first river crossing at about 7 p.m. It was an uneventful night, but I think we were a little disappointed that we didn't hear any wolves howling.

The two teams separated in the morning, with one team on each side of the river, starting below the river crossing and working up past the second crossing. The goal for each team was to work close to the river in one direction, then go farther inland in the opposite direction. Meanwhile, the other two dog teams started at base camp and made their way upriver toward the first river crossing.



Terrain along the river was often relatively difficult to search. Sometimes the river narrowed and the sides were steep with large boulders blocking our path. A forest fire had gone through the area several years ago, so there were lots of downed logs to climb over and under. We checked log jams whenever we could. Most of us came out with bruised shins, but we did not find any

clues, nor did the dogs have any areas of interest. Even when we don't find anything, it feels good to know we did a thorough search.

QUEEN'S RIVER SEARCH, PART 2 TRACKING TEAM PERSPECTIVE--MIKE ROWE

Going into the mission, some of the tracking team knew that we were going to hike into the area where family members of our subject had found some possible clues. We also knew that we were going to bivy prior to our search, which gave us time to prepare properly. Our OL Gregg Rettschlag conducted briefing at the compound and made the team assignments and search areas. Team 1 consisted of Aaron Burdin, Scott Walls, Charles Neal and myself. After some radio communication adjustments, we hit the trail.

We left base camp at approximately 1620 hours and hiked 6 miles up the Queen's River Trail, with two river crossings, using large logs that spanned the river. Finding a suitable bivy location proved to be a task within itself. Nothing was really flat or hospitable until we found one area south of the search area that we made work for a site to rest. We were even able to find a couple of trees for Aaron to try out his new hammock. The night was very clear and cool and I was glad I brought a sleeping bag. We kept seeing a light flickering on and off the side of a mountain that had us perplexed. We later came to the conclusion it was moonlight reflecting off a section of ice and the flickering was a result of clouds passing the moon. After breaking camp in the morning, we hiked the additional 1.5 miles up to the top of our

search area. I was glad we decided to bivvy where we did because there was nothing flat beyond there until we made it to the Nanny Creek crossing.

We split into two 2-person teams to cover both sides of the river. The terrain and vegetation varied from open brushy slopes next to cliffs, to bogs and fallen timber, which made the searching difficult. The team would start and finish a search line at the river, checking for any footprint evidence on the banks. Despite the slower flows in October, I could see that any crossings during the June timeframe would have been fairly treacherous. Unfortunately, we did not find any additional evidence of our subject, and we made the long trek back to base camp.

QUEEN'S RIVER SEARCH, PART 2 – BASE CAMP --KEN SWICKARD

Advance notice of this search enabled us to better assess our personnel and equipment needs. The Elmore County Sheriff's Office gave us the frequencies of their Bald and Steel Mountain repeaters, and Rod programmed our field radios and those in the comm trailer. The Steel Mountain repeater provided great radio communications throughout the weekend.

Vicki and I left with the comm trailer ahead of our other personnel and were able to set up in a good position just as the first carload of IMSARU searchers drove up.



O.L. Gregg Rettschlag put two 3-person K-9 teams and one 4-person mantracking team into the field to bivouac that evening and be ready to start fresh in the morning at their assigned search areas. Base camp stayed active until all three teams were in their bivouac areas; lights went out at the comm trailer at 2100 hours but the primary radio frequency was monitored all night on a hand-held unit.

The second group of searchers left the Compound at 0500 hours on Saturday and arrived at 0800 hours. The O.L. sent out two additional K-9 teams and four ground teams; with one team being a family member and the civilian search coordinator. All of the assigned/suspected areas received a tight grid search with negative results. By 1500 hours, all teams had returned to Base and, after all team debriefings, we broke camp and all personnel returned to the Compound in Boise.

IMSARU'S ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY – DECEMBER 3, 2016
--CHARLOTTE GUNN

The Fish and Game building on Walnut Street was again the location of our Christmas party and we thank them for it, as it has all the right facilities and is conveniently here in town. Several members showed up early to move furniture around, set up tables and chairs, and arrange the potluck buffet area in the kitchen. Attendees brought a spectacular array of food, from appetizers through main dishes, salads and desserts. We didn't manage to eat all of the available food, but certainly gave it a good try.

Our out-going president, Jimmie Yorgensen, gave a summary of the year's missions (demonstrating once again that there is no such thing as "a typical mission"), training and other activities. Diane Mathews and Charlotte Gunn, as usual, had found opportunities to poke fun at minor events and presented "non-serious awards" to those involved.

Jimmie then presented blue fleece vests to two members for especially dedicated work: Taylor Grisham was recognized for his responses to missions, for his work as co-leader of the K-9 Team, and for pitching in whenever something needs to be done. Vicki Swickard received her vest in recognition of her many hours of work in base camps and extensive participation in safety education programs.

In-coming president Mike Johnson then took the floor to present IMSARU's highest award, "The Rock," to Jimmie Yorgensen, who joined IMSARU ten years ago, jumped in with both feet, and is only now taking a break. Not only has Jimmie worked on a high percentage of missions and served as president for the past five years, but he also pitches in on public events, communication with other agencies, helping new members and visitors feel at home, even mowing the grass and raking leaves...and is certified as a Journeyman mantracker.

The final program was presented by Suzanne and Jim Shemwell...a vivid and personal account of their misadventure 13 years ago, when they went snowmobiling for 3 hours and spent 6 days in the snow due to a series of things gone wrong: getting down into a "hole" where they couldn't get out, wrecking the machines, 2-1/2 feet of new snow within a short time, minimal equipment because they were planning for a short ride. IMSARU participated in the massive search (though there are only half a dozen of us still active members who were there) but it was Suzanne and Jim who refused to give up and slogged their way back, improvising shelters each night and shouting to friends who had gone out again on the sixth day when the weather finally broke.

Many thanks to all for a good party, including the willing volunteers who cleared and cleaned at the end, and Happy Holidays to all who read this.

THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU! For DONATIONS

The Race to Robie Creek
Diane Mathews & Tim Henning

Mr. Ron Christensen
Mr. Kris Walker
Suzanne & Jim Shemwell

The Capitol Gypsies
Mr. Arthur Carlson

2017 TRAINING SCHEDULE

Dec. 13, 2016	Winter Pack/Clothing	(No Field Training)	7:00 p.m.
Jan. 10	Avalanche – Classroom		7:00 p.m.
Jan. 14	Avalanche – Field		
Feb. 14	Winter Survival – Classroom		7:00 p.m.
Feb. 18	Winter Survival – Field		
Mar. 14	SAR Management – Classroom		7:00 p.m.
Mar. 18	SAR Management – Field		
Apr. 18	Navigation – Classroom		7:00 p.m.
Apr. 22	Navigation – Field		
May 9	Mission Software/Coms		7:00 p.m.
May 13	Mock Mission – Field		
June 13	Equipment and Vehicles – at the Compound		7:00 p.m.
June 17-18	Bivy/Overnight		
July 11	Water – Classroom		7:00 p.m.
July 15	Water – Field		
August	NO Training – Corn Booth at the Western Idaho Fair		
Sept. 12	Patient Packaging/Litter – Classroom		7:00 p.m.
Sept. 16	Patient Packaging/Litter – Field		
Oct. 10	Navigation – Classroom		7:00 p.m.
Oct. 14	Navigation – Field		
Nov. 14	Air Ops – Classroom		7:00 p.m.
Nov. 18	Air Ops – Field		

NOTE: The second Tuesday of most months is Training night, with sessions at the Compound. Time and place for Field sessions on the weekends will be announced as those dates approach. Plans may change for various reasons; e.g. mission calls trump all other activities.

These classes are for all members. If you can't do the Field exercise, you are still urged to attend the classroom instruction.

SAFETY ED CLASS FOR EAST VALLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL OCTOBER 24, 2016 --VICKI SWICKARD

Patricia Stevens, from East Valley Middle School, invited IMSARU to present a “Wilderness & Safety Education ” program to 120 six-grade students, which included 4 classes and 3 teachers. The students had just finished reading the book “Hatchet,” a story involving a 13-year-old boy who survived a plane crash while en route to Canada and landed in the wilderness. Ken started the program by introducing our members, and explained the purpose of Search and Rescue and how we are here to help them when they need us.

Vicki presented the Hug-A-Tree program to the group and talked about the importance of telling someone where you are going, and of staying in one place if feeling lost. She demonstrated the proper survival techniques by asking for volunteers from each class and using a plastic bag as a temporary shelter. She then addressed the importance of wearing bright-colored clothing, and of carrying a whistle and mirror. Ken used a mirror and flashlight as an example of signaling aircraft for rescue.

Dodi, Ken, and Vicki then presented the Ten Essentials while providing a show-and-tell from our 24-hour packs. Dodi explained the importance of carrying a small “first aid” kit, water, food, and sun protection. Jerry handed out Hug-A-Tree and IMSARU pamphlets, along with lightsticks, to take home and share with their parents.

The group then came up to our table, discussed all of the items in our packs, and had the opportunity to ask any additional questions.

The students were so impressed that one of the teachers came to our IMSARU meeting the next evening and gave 63 “thank you” letters to Ken.

Presenters were: Jerry Holmes, Dodi Newbill, Ken Swickard, and Vicki Swickard.



THANKSGIVING DAY MISSION – NOVEMBER 24, 2016 --Based on report by CHRIS BROOKMAN

A subject and her dog had gone hiking above Bogus Basin and were farther up in the hills than she planned as darkness fell. Not being prepared to be out after dark, and certainly not to spend the night, she managed to hike to the Deer Point TV towers and call 911 for help. Twelve members responded, including three with ATV’s.

The team was ultimately able to drive truck 901 to the junction of Shafer Butte Road and Boise Ridge Road, hike up to the subject and escort her down to there. We then transported the subject and dog back to their vehicle at the main Bogus parking lot. One of our members then drove the subject’s vehicle back into town, as she was not feeling comfortable with the drive down the hill after her cold, dark experience.

Many thanks to the IMSARU members who went out pre and post turkey dinner: Kevin Brizzi, Chris Brookman, Juan Burzaco, Francisco Castellon, Kristen Freeman, Bill Lindenau, Eric Rust, Liz Swan, Ken Swickard, Eddie-Dean Thomas, Tom Wheless and Mike Wilson. Rod Knopp was in-town Coordinator.

BOISE HOLIDAY PARADE – NOVEMBER 19, 2016

--CHRIS BROOKMAN

IMSARU once again participated in the Boise Holiday Parade, with this year's theme of "The Magic and Music of Christmas." Most of us met at the Compound at 0800, and joined the rest of the group at the staging area, at 11th and Jefferson. We were #32 in line, a few spots back from last year's #7 spot but still near the front. We had another good turnout, with Ron driving 901, Jimmie driving 902 with the trailer, K-9 Team members, mountain bikers, ATV's and members on foot.

Ken had bought considerably more candy canes to hand out to the spectators, to avoid running out like we did last year; we handed out a multitude of candy canes but still had several bags left over when we reached the end of the parade route. We thank the parade officials for organizing this event and including us again this year, and a big "Thanks" to all the members who came out to participate on that Saturday morning.



MAKE AND KEEP A NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION!

As noted in the last edition, IMSARU has elected officers for 2017, and that should not be the end of the story. It takes a lot of time, energy, skills and work to keep a SAR group ready for when that page goes out. You don't have to be an expert in anything; just look around and volunteer to do a waiting project or ask one of the dependable workers how you can help. Few of the jobs are glamorous, but it's satisfying to know that you make a difference behind the scenes regardless of whether you are able to respond to the majority of missions.

FOR EXAMPLE:

We have a three-part mission—Search, Rescue and Safety Education. That last part, as of the end of November, had included this year:

32 presentations to various groups and ages, in locations across the Treasure Valley
If you add the number of IMSARU participants at each presentation, the total is 145.
There were 1,341 audience members—809 minors and 532 adults.

YOU COULD BE PART OF THIS!

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