

# RESCUE HAS BEEN THE VOICE OF IMSARU SINCE JANUARY 1962

Founding Member: Mountain Rescue Association

Rescue



Web Edition

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Press on the calendar to see upcoming events

## BIVOUAC TRAINING – JUNE 14, 2014 --TED MARX

Eleven IMSARU members headed out for the 24-hour bivouac training, suggested by our Training Director as a good time to see what it would be like to spend the night with what we normally carry in our field packs...but allowing us to throw in some extras in case we weren't as routinely well prepared as we thought. The training tested not only the 24-hour packs but our physical training, with a 3.5 mile hike up the upper Crooked River Trail. The Idaho mountain back-country scenery was the host on our way to our destination beside the Crooked River.

Upon arriving at waypoint 12, we all set up our shelters for the night, ranging from tents to basic tarps. A few gathered firewood. Favored meal for dinner was Mountain House beef stroganoff. After dinner, a few members set out for some Tracker training with others rested and shared stories around the campfire. Our mascot for the training, Jen's K-9 Kato, spread welcome attention among the group. Late into the night, Kato went on patrol to ensure we were all safe and secure in our bivy shelters. KATO, COME...NOW!!! echoed through the camp as Kato was called back to bed.



It was a great time for all to get out and relax, especially for Mike because it's the only time he gets to go camping.

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Participants included Delinda Castellon, Ron Christensen, Taylor Grisham, Scott Hecker, Dan Herring, Mike Johnson, Amanda Leader, Ted Marx, Tom Rand, Gregg Rettschlag and Jen Skeldon with certified K-9 Kato.

(Both camp photos by Ted Marx.)



## **BOGUS BASIN RECOVERY – JULY 24, 2014 --CHRIS BROOKMAN**

We received a request from the Boise County Sheriff's Office to perform a recovery operation on Bogus Basin Road, where a mangled truck had been spotted by searchers approximately 400 feet down the embankment and the driver was deceased. The subject was reported to have gone mountain biking in the Bogus Basin area on Tuesday evening and failed to return home. It took some time for searchers to find the truck, which was not immediately visible from the road. (In fact, IMSARU had been called to help search, then cancelled soon after when the subject was found.)

IMSARU members were paged just after 5 p.m. Despite the frustration of trying to respond to a mission during rush-hour traffic, we had a good response with most members meeting at the Compound and some who lived on the Bogus side of town going directly to the scene. The group from the Compound arrived on scene at approximately 6:30 p.m. and received a short briefing from those already on scene. We quickly realized this was a very similar situation to a recovery mission we assisted with in February of 2013.

Boise County Chief Deputy Dale Rogers assumed incident command, while Dan S. was IMSARU O.L. and Mike J. was tech team leader. Tech team members assembled the haul and belay systems, using the tripod for the edge transition. Once the system was set up and safety-checked, the litter attendants (Gregg R., Tom W., Mitch P., and BCSO Deputy John McIntosh) were lowered to the subject. Similar to last year's mission, a knot pass was required approximately three-fourths of the way down.

Upon reaching the vehicle, the litter team packaged the subject while the topside tech members tied off the ropes and converted to a mechanical advantage system for the litter raise. When the subject was packaged and secured to the litter, and all team members were ready, the haul team began the raise operation. This was a slow process, again due to the need to pass the knots through multiple pulleys.

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Roadside technical setup. Photo by Liz Swan

At approximately 9:30 p.m., the litter team reached the top and the subject was transferred to a funeral home's vehicle. With little daylight remaining, the team quickly packed up gear and returned to the Compound. Special thanks go to Mike for going to the Compound the next day to reorganize and repack all the tech gear! And, as always, thanks to all the members of IMSARU for another mission completed safely, effectively and professionally.

IMSARU members responding were Justin Ahlin, Chris Brookman, Delinda Castellon, Moises Chavez, John Ferguson, Taylor Grisham, Scott Hecker, Dan Herring, Mike Johnson (tech team leader), Amanda Leader, Carolyn Lyon, Ted Marx, Mitch Pelham, Alisa Rettschlag, Gregg Rettschlag, Dan Scovel (O.L.), Kris Scovel, Craig Swan, Liz Swan, Bryan Walker and Tom Wheless. Charlotte Gunn was in-town coordinator.

## **THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!**

The Razoo Foundation (an online fundraising platform)

Ronald Christensen

The Intermountain Combined Federal Campaign via United Way of Northern Utah

Ken Swickard and family for donating materials and labor to replace the floor of the Corn Booth trailer.

Justin Ahlin for his professional expertise and other members who helped re-grade our parking lot and spread new gravel, to make the after-rain Lake IMSARU disappear.

Nick Irwin, Vice-President of Vision X USA for donating three LED work lights for our new truck.

Tom Wheless and his assistants for all the work on getting our new 901 truck ready for use.

Jake Gillis for taking over as Medical Director during Colin Sesek's absence.

In addition to gifts mentioned in the previous newsletter, the following have made donations to IMSARU in memory of Martha Vandivort:

Patricia and Richard Bangert  
Daniel and Kris Scovel

Beverly Vandivort & the John A. Beadles Trust  
Charlotte Gunn

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## **SEARCH AT SWAN FALLS – JUNE 23-24, 2014 --GREGG RETTSCHLAG**

Alisa and I were just finishing up a cherry-picking visit with Jeff Munn when all three of our cell phones went off. After a bit of confusion over different messages between voice and text, we determined we did indeed have an “Urgent” callout to the Swan Falls area. This meant a dash across town to grab our equipment and get to the Compound just as a large IMSARU contingent was ready to leave. We made a quick gear transfer to 901 and hit the road. As hectic as the start was, I was glad to know Dan S. was going direct to the scene, so I wouldn’t have to worry about O.L. duties this time.

We arrived on scene and were told our mission was a search for a 19-year-old male described as high-functioning autistic, who had left a note at home indicating intentions for suicide but not including a destination. Earlier in the day, an aerial search had located his vehicle near the rim overlooking the upper end of Swan Falls reservoir. Dan was already on scene, working on initial assignments; also on scene were several family members and Ada County Sheriff representatives, and the National Guard had several Apache helicopters flying over the area. My hopes of being assigned as a field team member were dashed when Dan pointed out that our initial plans needed to include tracking work near the subject’s vehicle. Dan (journeyman tracker) and Alisa (basic tracker) were our only certified trackers on scene, so he passed the O.L. hat to me and they moved out toward the subject’s vehicle a little over two miles down a rough, dusty road.

We moved 901 out by the subject’s vehicle and a team of three foot searchers to the same area, hoping to keep this team in reserve to work any leads the trackers might develop. All other personnel—two K-9 teams, two foot teams and motorized resources to move people into their search areas—were sent to the base of the rim.

Sunset approached quickly as teams carried out their assignments. The trackers were challenged by the immense amount of traffic in the area surrounding the vehicle. With no quick leads to follow, we sent the ground team on the rim to investigate a light seen moving in a side canyon to the south. At one point, the tracking team was put on a protective rope system in order to investigate lines of sign near the canyon rim. Teams below the rim were also dealing with safety issues, working next to a canyon wall with sections of unstable rock. And there was very little air movement, making K-9 work considerably more challenging. All teams were out of the field by just past midnight, with little new information to show for our work. It was unknown if ACSO would be continuing the search on the following day, so all teams returned home for the night.

We were paged to meet at the Compound at 6:30 the next morning and I was to be O.L. again, hopeful that daylight and a bit more time to think about strategy would help us advance the search. We deployed fourteen field members, again with a tracking team of two (Jimmie and Alisa) working around the vehicle, basing their tactics on a debrief with Dan from the night before. Two additional ground teams (Brian and Ted, Ron and Steve) were asked to investigate the light in the canyon as well as other clues reported by friends of the family the previous evening. The two K-9 teams worked in the canyon bottom, up to the wall more directly below

the subject’s vehicle. ATVs manned by Everett and Ken helped move the K-9 teams into place. Yesterday’s lack of wind became an extremely gusty day, handing big challenges to the K-9 teams and to the trackers, covering lines of sign with the loose talc-like dirt of this area. Scott arrived shortly after we had everyone else deployed into the field, so I asked him to take the long solo hike across the dam and then the trail up-river to give us a more “zoomed-out” view of the canyon wall. Our orange shirts worked perfectly, as I was able to watch his progress from my base camp perch.



Primary search area

—Photo by J. Yorgensen

Two Idaho Power employees arrived, offering to help and demonstrating extensive knowledge of the area. They deployed to a road running down the canyon wall, well upstream of the subject’s vehicle, hoping to uncover any clues if our subject had walked the canyon rim in the upstream direction.

Shortly after the ACSO I.C. team arrived, they received word that our subject had been found in the hospital in Elmore County. A passerby had found him wandering many miles away from where we were in Ada County and having crossed into Elmore County. The report said the subject was dehydrated and disoriented when found, but apparently otherwise unharmed. We pulled all our teams out of the field, relaxed a few minutes while the K-9s took a cooling dip in the reservoir, and were back in Boise in time for lunch.

IMSARU members responding one or both days included Moises Chavez, Ron Christensen, Don Fridrich, Jake Gillis, Taylor Gresham, Steve Hunt, Amanda Leader, Sage Lee, Carolyn Lyon, Mike Mancuso, Brandon Mart, Ted Marx, Brian Mitchell, Ann Moser with K9 Watson, Mitch Pelham, Alisa Rettschlag, Gregg Rettschlag (O.L.), Dodi Salee, Dan Scovel, Jamie Simpson with K-9 Yoki, Craig Swan, Liz Swan, Ken Swickard, Scott Walls, Everett Wood and Jimmie Yorgensen. Rod Knopp and Charlotte Gunn handled in-town coordination.

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Our truck 901 has covered a lot of miles, carried a lot of people and equipment, been the object of affection and of swearing. Some members volunteer to drive it; some hide when the subject comes up. We are guessing that Everett is not the only one to give it a final hug before it is replaced by our shiny new truck.

## **JHPTS TRACKING CLASS AT LUSK, WYOMING - JUNE 6-8, 2014 --KEN SWICKARD**

On the beautiful sunny afternoon of June 5, Vicki and I spent 15 minutes on a self-guided tour of the entire town, locating the Niobrara County High School where the class was scheduled to begin the next morning. My son (Deputy Sheriff of Dawes County, Nebraska) drove in and we checked into our hotel; we discussed how we were going to “attack” this training and how, together, we planned to make the best Novice team in the field. Early the next morning, after a great breakfast provided by the Niobrara County SAR Unit, our plans went up in smoke when JHPTS instructors Joel Hardin and Dick Wilker made sure that the young, good-looking, tall LEO was not paired with the old, gray-haired, overweight guy.

All of us novices were herded into a separate room where we learned the concepts, challenges, progression and basic instructions for becoming certified trackers in this program. After an enchilada lunch, the entire class (all levels) headed out into the field. The early afternoon was mild with a slight wind and a few clouds. By the time the pulled-pork dinner was served in the field, it was very windy and cold. The clouds said “rain,” but it only slightly drizzled until about 1900 hours, then the rain came in torrents and we finished our first day at 2230 hours, totally soaking wet. During this time, we followed our course footfall by footfall. It was very challenging, as the course was placed in pine-wooded rolling hills with ample wildlife and a few hundred head of cattle. The grass and brush did allow us to study the effects of aging on sign along the entire layout and the rain added an element that one might well have in an actual search situation.

The next morning, we got to “stay in” out of the rain and sit in on the Certification Board for two individuals testing for Apprentice and three testing for Basic certifications. After the Board and another great lunch, we headed back out to our sign lines with the rain not letting up one bit. It was wet but, as the afternoon advanced, the rain and wind slowed down to a dull roar and we got to see how “sign” changed with the changing weather. It really was a very good learning experience. We headed back for a Western Outdoor BBQ but the weather forced the group to move indoors; however it was a great dinner that would be hard to beat.

Sunday morning found us out at the field course removing flagging, marking sticks, etc. We



also had a field debriefing to discuss what we had learned and how to continue our training when we get back to our home units. Joel and Dick presented certificates to the five individuals who had passed the Certification Board, we all said our goodbyes and I headed back to the Land of the Great Potato.

I found this course to be very challenging, but extremely educational. I learned a lot and with the guidance of our own IMSARU professional trackers, I look forward to my continued goal of certification.



VISIT THE IMSARU CORN BOOTH AT THE WESTERN IDAHO FAIR, AUGUST 15-24!



Searching at Swan Falls Photo by K. Swickard

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