

**WEB
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RESCUE

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**IDAHO MOUNTAIN SEARCH
AND RESCUE UNIT, INC
BOISE, IDAHO**

FOUNDING MEMBER:
**MOUNTAIN RESCUE
ASSOCIATION**



**IMSARU ASSISTS VALLEY COUNTY IN SEARCH – JULY 2, 2011
--JIMMIE YORGENSEN**

We received a call from the Valley County Sheriff's Office late Friday afternoon, asking for assistance in locating a woman whose car had been found parked in McCall. Valley County Sheriff's Office personnel, EMS and Fire Department personnel, and Valley County SAR had been searching without any success. Ten of our members deployed early Saturday morning with maps and materials for the search. The woman had been missing for close to 24 hours by the time we arrived. Valley County especially wanted our canine teams to search along the river in case she had been swept into it. (The river was running at 2,760 CFS, which is 8 times the norm for July first.)



Amanda, Judd and Zora

—Photo by J. Yorgensen

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Valley County had established the I.C. Post about three miles downriver from where the vehicle was parked, choosing a spot that had plenty of parking for vehicles and easy access to the Payette River. IMSARU members joined Valley County SAR members and other volunteers to form teams and receive assignments. Judd with K9 Zora, Amanda and Lucy were assigned to a raft and operator to float from where the missing woman's vehicle was found back downstream to the I.C. Ann with canine Watson, Tom and Johnathon were assigned to join another raft to float from the I.C. downriver to the Smyley Bridge. Gregg and Mark manned kayaks and joined four other local volunteer kayakers. Trevor and Jimmie maintained base operations and helped coordinate search activities. Local volunteers on jet-skis also deployed to assist with the search.

At 11:11 a.m., Gregg radioed base that the missing woman's body had been found by a kayaker in a log jam at an area called Blackhawk, about six miles downstream from where her vehicle was parked. Recovery efforts quickly followed, with the help of many people.

IMSARU members then spent the next couple of hours getting the rest of our personnel and equipment off the river for the return trip back to Boise, with a much-deserved lunch in Cascade en route. Thanks to Valley County for allowing us to assist. They were great to work with. Our condolences and best wishes go to the family of the victim.

IMSARU members participating included: Judd Ballard with Zora, Amanda Leader, Trevor McLaughlin, Ann Moser with Watson, Gregg Rettschlag, Lucy Robbins, Mark Westerdoll, Johnathon Wheless, Tom Wheless and Jimmie Yorgensen. Charlotte Gunn and George Gunn handled in-town coordination.

[Editor's Note: The family spokesperson was quoted by the media as saying that the subject was fond of walking by the river and collecting driftwood, and that they were assuming she was pursuing that activity when swept away by the swift water.]

WORK DAY AT COMPOUND – JULY 23, 2011 --CHARLOTTE GUNN

Like all property owners, we have to face up to maintenance issues from time to time, and it's more enjoyable to do them as a group. This day included such projects as: regrading at the back corner of the garage to decrease the chances of water seeping in when it rains (Jamie swings a mean shovel), cleaning the gutters (that was Scott on the ladder), loading trash onto the Gunns' trailer for disposal, weeding and trimming the flower bed, thinning and rearranging accumulated stuff in the garage, cleaning the meeting room, etc.

Thanks to Facilities Manager Brad Acker for organizing the chore list and for supplying the BBQ lunch; nobody had to feel guilty for eating burgers and chips and chocolate after all that exercise.

Participants included: Brad Acker, Andy Anderson, Jeff Ball, Francisco Castellon, Charlotte Gunn, George Gunn, Aimee Hastriter, Scott Hecker (future member), Linda Kearney, Tom Kearney, Carolyn Lyon, Mike Mancuso, Gregg Rettschlag, Jamie Simpson, and David Oren (who showed up after lunch to add trim to front windows—poor timing, David.)

SEARCH FOR MISSING COUPLE – JULY 31-AUGUST 1, 2011 **--CHARLOTTE GUNN**

An elderly couple were reported missing by their adult children when they failed to attend a family barbecue on Saturday afternoon and “this is not typical for them.” Having checked the house, they guessed the couple might have gone for a drive in Boise County to one of the father’s favorite destinations, and either gotten lost or had medical problems. The Boise County Sheriff’s Office requested our help for a search of roads in the area. Twenty of our members responded to the field, thinking they were prepared for the task. However, even our experienced back-road veterans discovered some new roads, forks in roads, and forks in the forks in roads; in places it was even difficult to decide what qualified as a “road”.

Jimmie and Charlotte set up base at Banner Ridge, hoping to be able to communicate from there with at least some of the field teams some of the time. The first main area stretched from Edna Creek Campground to Banner Ridge, with a wide swath on the east side of Highway 21. As roads were cleared and reports came in from witnesses who thought they had seen a vehicle matching the missing one, the search spread in all directions, with Everett and Mike eventually driving all the way to Atlanta in pursuit of a reported dark green pickup with same-color shell.

Later in the afternoon, Danny was able to fly some of the main area with Jake as observer; they had the same luck as the rest of us. At least they didn’t have the same problem as one of our vehicles, which became mired in mud...although Tom assured us it was only one wheel that was stuck. Other teams found roads blocked with gates and at least one fallen tree. (There had been a major windstorm the previous night.)

After searching all the accessible roads and spurs in the described area, the teams reassembled at Banner Ridge, then Edna Creek Campground, then at Trudy’s in Idaho City for enough calories to get us home and colorful descriptions of various search assignments.

On Monday, Ada County Aerial Sheriffs’ pilot Larry Taylor flew the area with Jimmie and Kim as observers, looking for the vehicle beside the roads or in trouble where it might have gone off the road. Again, no luck. The Boise County Sheriff and the family had in the meantime put out media notices about the missing couple and asked anyone with information to call. The surprise was a solid-sounding identification of the two having attended a flea market in Cascade on Saturday afternoon, at about the time when they were expected at the family get-together. As of this printing, no further information is available.

IMSARU members participating included: Jared Belsher, Francisco Castellon, Danny Cone (pilot on July 31), John Ferguson, Jake Gillis, Aimee Hastriter, Scott Hecker, Kim Juda, Linda Kearney, Tom Kearney, Amanda Leader, Michael Mancuso, Jerry Newland, Rebecca Shaver, Jamie Simpson, Luke Sugden, Tom Wheless, Everett Wood. Charlotte Gunn and Jimmie Yorgensen shared the O.L. duties with assistance from Alex Shaver. George Gunn was in-town coordinator.

THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

Detective Schlechte for two lightbars and other emergency equipment for our vehicles.

Rocky Canyon Saitoads (Race to Robie Creek) for a generous cash donation.

George Gunn for a cash donation in memory of Milton Crocker.

Idaho Mountain Search and Rescue Unit, Inc. is an all-volunteer 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation. We have no paid staff and we never charge the people whom we rescue. We respond when requested by any law-enforcement agency, and are supported by donations and fundraisers, such as our sale of corn-on-the-cob at the Western Idaho Fair.

SCHEDULE FOR I.D. CARDS

--LINDA KEARNEY

For members who need them, Delinda Castellon and I will be taking photos and making I.D. cards at the first meeting of each month, September through January. Bring or wear your orange shirt and be at the Compound between 6:30 and 7:15 p.m. on the first Tuesday of the month. Cards will be made only for those who have paid dues, attended the orientation class and completed their pack checks—in other words, for the field-ready, including several who have been ready for months but waiting for the system to catch up. Our goal is to have all backgrounds and shirts the same on all I.D. cards. We may set up a Saturday in October or November if that is the only time to get this done.

Note: If a member is already in the system correctly and hasn't really changed, then we will re-use the photo on file. If you have a current I.D. card but were not wearing your orange shirt or had a different background from the one we are using, we will notify you and redo your card for next year.

[Editor's Note: Thank you, Linda and Delinda, for taking over this project! And thank you to all the members who have waited for us to get reorganized.]

BIVOUAC SKILLS TRAINING – JULY 14 AND 18-19, 2011

--MIKE JOHNSON

The goal was to become familiar with the items in our 24-hour packs, and confident in our ability to spend the night in the field while performing the duties and responsibilities of an IM-SARU member and return safely. The classroom portion on Tuesday evening told people what to expect and suggested how to prepare.

On Saturday, we met at the Compound at 10 a.m. and headed up to Cottonwood Creek, just north of the uppermost end of Arrowrock Reservoir. There were fourteen in attendance, plus three canines. When we arrived at the trailhead, Gregg briefed everyone on the training plan,

which included a short hike (around 1.5 miles), a little orienteering and map reading along the way, and a compass course awaiting at the bivy site.

Everyone kept an eye on the clouds while hiking in, as the weather reports were predicting an 80% chance of rain. It was looking like we picked the right weekend for bivouac training! Arriving at our site before any rain, we all decided to set up our tarps, bivy sacks, lean-to's, tents and whatever you call Jake's set-up (bear buffet?). Then the rain started. First it was just tiny droplets, almost like heavy mist, but soon it began to rain a little harder. Tom had brought along a large heavy-duty tarp (I'm pretty sure I saw this on the 24-hour pack list) which we tied between four trees so we would have a place to get out of the rain.

With bivies established, boredom overcame rain and any apprehension about getting footwear even wetter. Nine people volunteered to tackle a navigation course that had been set up on Friday. The course had five legs, involving various map, compass and GPS skills. The first leg required the teams to locate a feature (gully) marked on the map while hiking the trail along Cottonwood Creek. The teams used the feature to direct their approach to Point One just outside the brush-filled gully. The idea here was to avoid the gully while using it for orientation. From there, Point Two was found by navigating to a knob 700 feet above their starting point on the trail; the route involved a meandering approach, due to brush stands and a very steep direct line. Point Three required them to recognize a feature (ridge) marked on their map and then to shoot a bearing (305 degrees magnetic) from the current location to determine the intersection point. Once at Point Three, teams needed to determine coordinates for Point Four marked on their maps and use their GPS to navigate to that location. The difficulty here was that the best approach required traversing along a contour rather than into and out of small drainages feeding Cougar Creek. Finally, Point Five was a simple matter of putting a known coordinate into a GPS and navigating to that location.

The primary goal of the course was to demonstrate the concept of matching a map to the actual terrain as well as the technique of taking the easiest walking route between points. Considering the varying levels of navigational experience, I think the teams did quite well in working their way through the course. I certainly appreciate their efforts, as this was my first time at setting up such a course. I've learned a few things that I can now incorporate into any future courses. Finally, thanks go to Judd for taking on the role of instructor while participating in the exercise. Judd did a lot of thinking out loud, which allowed those with less experience to follow along and learn from the challenge. He also helped with GPS setup for those who had not previously used their GPSs for point-to-point navigation.

A few of us had stayed in camp to collect firewood, and by the time everyone returned we had enough for the night. We lit the fire and all sat around it getting warm and dry, then prepared dinner. When we were planning this training, Judd and Ann had wanted to work on a couple of night-time canine search scenarios. However, with the rain, no one wanted to get wet again after finally getting warm and dry (the dogs agreed), so we opted to work on this in the morning before leaving.

Sunday morning brought clear sunny skies. We quickly ate breakfast, packed up all our gear, then sent a few "subjects" into the field for each of the dogs to locate. All did very well despite

the steep and brushy terrain. Shortly after, we hiked back to the parking lot and returned to the Compound.

Thanks go to Gregg for putting together the compass course, selecting the bivy location and contributions to this article. I would also like to thank everyone for coming out for this training!

Participating in the field session were: Judd Ballard with Zora, Delinda Castellon, Francisco Castellon, Craig Damm, John Ferguson, Jacob Gillis, Scott Hecker (future member), Mike Johnson, Amanda Leader, Ann Moser with Watson, Gregg Rettschlag, Kimber Smith with Marci, Johnathon Wheless and Tom Wheless.



Jake really roughs it when he bivouacs.

—Photo by T. Wheless

THANK YOU, GRAINGER INDUSTRIAL SUPPLY —LINDA KEARNEY

It's important for people to know where their donations go. IMSARU depends on those donations and we're very thankful for them. On July 22, a few of our members took the new truck and command post trailer over to Grainger to show them how their generous donation was used. This donation helped pay for the equipment and systems that transformed a pickup truck into a SAR vehicle. We parked the truck and trailer in their parking lot and set up equipment, as well as displaying a 24-hour pack, radio equipment and some of the other gear used on missions. Grainger staff came out to visit with us and get a better understanding of how the company's money was spent.

IMSARU members participating were Danny Cone, George Gunn, Scott Hecker, Linda Kearney with K9 Cayenne, Jerry Newland, Gregg Rettschlag, Alex Shaver and Rebecca Shaver.



Pilot Tom Horner showed us his bird at the end of our Landing Zone Operator class on July 5.
—Photo by J. Yorgensen



Award-winning author, David Francis, shared from his poignant memoir at the August General Meeting. He came to Idaho to thank the volunteers who spent so much time working to recover the remains of his son Jon.

The Francis family has established the Jon Francis Foundation to assist families and SAR volunteers with extended searches.