

# Inyo County Search and Rescue April 2019 General Meeting Minutes

April 4 2019

## Call to Order

The April Inyo SAR general meeting was held at the Posse Hut, called to order at 7PM by president Elsbeth Otto.

A number of new people attended the meeting: Janet, a recent transplant from the Bay, who talked to Erik at the Banff film festival, Ben who just moved to Bishop, and Amanda Smith and Ben who were on the Yosar valley team & also did SAR in Moab.

## March 2019 Events

**08 – 14 Mar Kraft Search:** On March 08 (or thereabouts), we had a report of an overdue skier. Lieutenant Matt Kraft, a 24-yr-old Marine from 29 Palms who had previously been through the Mountain Warfare Training program at Pickel Meadows, was attempting a solo traverse of the Sierra High Route from Kearsarge Pass to Bridgeport in 8-10 days. This route is 200+ miles spanning multiple counties, parks and agencies. Was reported missing by his dad after he was overdue for 1-2 days.

We worked with a Marine-led Unified Command out of the posse hut with SEKI, YOSE, Fresno, Mono and Madera Counties, with 11 operational periods. These were mostly aerial assessments of the route and checkouts of thermal imaging hotspots, with a few teams (ours, Mono and SEKI) getting tracks on the ground. Ground ops included initial searches for Kraft's vehicle at the Onion Valley trail head, drops with H82 to assess snow conditions and Recco sweeps.

Ski-in assessment revealed very unstable snow conditions that didn't warrant further ground effort. Ian reports that 100 inches of snow had fallen between start and missing dates for Kraft. Nate reported that helo teams mapped hundreds of slides from Bishop to Independence.

Ed was part of an early team searching for Kraft's vehicle. Reported that they started high and failed to clear all the lower campgrounds, including the one where the vehicle was eventually located. Lesson learned: 'trust but verify!'

**16 Mar Winter Race #3:** Cam reported there were ~45 participants and everything went smoothly. Thanks to Ed for organizing! Ed reports our total for the 3 races is around \$8000, with \$1000 in donated coupons outstanding – people should contact Ed and help convert those remaining coupons into \$\$ for SAR!

**Mar Snowcat Trainings:** Mike led a snowcat training for a small group. Nick reports they went out three times, twice up Onion Valley, once to South Lake. In theory, the snowcat can go to 45 degrees, but Ryan has only attempted 38 so far. Could comfortably fit 6 people, and went about 4 miles in 15 minutes. Apparently the snowcat had some carburetor issues and had to be hotwired for the South Lake outing, but was reported to be dependable once hotwired. Ryan, Chris Usher and Nick are now trained to drive it.

**21 Mar Radio Training:** Vic led a Thursday-evening hut training on how to use the radios. We all learned useful things, like how to select and scan multiple channels while communicating on

another, which Erik reported came in handy during the DV callout two days later (see below). We also reviewed comms etiquette, and codes for delicate situations.

**24 Mar Bottomless Pit Recovery:** As reported by Max, there was a spot activation on the evening of the 23<sup>rd</sup>, in the Grapevine Mtns south of Titus Canyon. One subject was retrieved that night by China Lake helo, our CHP crew headed up the next day to retrieve the other subject (deceased) and called in a technical crew in case we had to rap in for the retrieval. Ian, Erik and John W. responded but aborted when CHP was able to land and retrieve the body. Max reports there are plans to go back in a week or two and investigate the scene, as the sequence of events and mechanics of the incident are still not fully understood.

**30 Mar Ventura MRA Accreditation:** Ventura Fillmore team staged out of the hut for their 30 March MRA snow-and-ice accreditation. No detailed report was given.

### **Team Business:**

The board discussed and approved voting Steve Parmenter onto the team. Steve was unanimously approved by all members present. It was pointed out that Steve brings many qualities to the team that significantly outweighed our disapproval of the long-term eyesore of his van in Grove St and his vicious attack doglet.

Vic reports that we are already getting multiple calls of overdues, etc., so the backcountry is opening up, and we should be thinking about Whitney season. A team that headed up the Mountaineer's Route on Saturday reported multiple tents at lower boy scout & iceberg lakes.

Nate reports that all bids for the new First-out are now over, both for the truck and the body modifications (I believe the body is ready to go), so things are moving along! Also that DWP is getting a bunch of new snowcats, which means that we might be able to get some hand-me-downs out of it. Also that the Sheriff personally inspected the hut facility and disapproved of the state of several broken-down vehicles that have been sitting around. So they are not sitting around anymore, and the Sheriff's department is incentivized to clean up broken stuff around the hut.

On that note, the garage bay door that got dented will be fixed this week.

Also note the new door code is 435.

### **Upcoming dates:**

**Dates not recorded:** Todd will be leading both trainings this month, on snow travel, self-arrest, etc. It was reported that last year's training included great practice for self-arresting from a wide variety of possible orientations, even if you happen to be familiar with a particular one.

### **Adjournment**

Elsbeth Otto adjourned the meeting at 7:50pm.