



British Columbia Search and Rescue Association

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# Leveling The Playing Field

Search and Rescue New Initiatives Funds

Final Report

September 2012

# **Table of Contents**

<b>ACRONYMS</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>PROJECT RATIONALE</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>KEY OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1. OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH &amp; SAFETY</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>2. FUNDING FOR EQUIPMENT &amp; SAR TRAINING</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>3. OPERATIONAL AND MAINTENANCE FINANCES</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>4. SUPPORT FOR SAR GROUPS</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>5. SAR DELIVERY MODEL</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>6. SAR PREVENTION</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>7. GROUP SUCCESSES</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>8. GROUP INHIBITORS</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>9. INCREASED BCSARA SUPPORT</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>10. TESTIMONIALS</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>APPENDIX A - PROVINCIAL PROVIDERS</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>APPENDIX B – SAR DELIVERY MODEL</b>	<b>29</b>

## Acronyms

ARA	Air Rescue Association
BCAS	British Columbia Ambulance Service
BCSARIS	British Columbia Search and Rescue Information System
CAA	Canadian Avalanche Association
CASARA	Civil Air Search and Rescue Association
CISM	Critical Incident Stress Management
DACUM	Developing a Curriculum
DND	Department of National Defence
ECC	Emergency Coordination Centre
EMBC	Emergency Management British Columbia
EMD	Emergency Management Division
ESS	Emergency Social Services
FNESS	First Nations Emergency Social Services
FSLG	Fire Services Liaison Group
GPEG	Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch
GSAR	Ground Search and Rescue
GSARCC	Ground Search and Rescue Council of Canada
GSTL	Ground Search Team Leader
IRT	Initial Response Team
LUSAR	Light Urban Search and Rescue
JI or JIBC	Justice Institute of BC
JRCC	Joint Rescue Coordination Centre
MIT	Members in Training
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NIF	New Initiative Fund
NSS	National Search and Rescue Secretariat
OAR	Organized Avalanche Response
OHS	Occupational Health and Safety
PEMO	Provincial Emergency Management Organization
PEP	Provincial Emergency Program
PIO	Public Information Officer
PREOC	Provincial Regional Emergency Operations Centre
PRTC	Pacific Regional Training Centre
PWC	Personal Water Craft
RR	Rope Rescue
SAR	Search and Rescue
SAREX	Search and Rescue Exercise
SARM	Search and Rescue Management
SOG	Standard Operating Guidelines
SRT	Swiftwater Rescue Technician
SSTC	SAR Stakeholders Training Committee
TTT	Train the Trainer

## Project Rationale

BCSARA's Search and Rescue-New Initiatives Fund (SAR-NIF) project, **'Leveling The Playing Field'** was dedicated to ensuring that lost or injured persons will have a chance of the best possible outcome, regardless of where the incident occurs in British Columbia.

The BCSARA board (and formerly the SAR Advisory) heard for many years about the challenges SAR groups and their members face in many areas of the province. This project provided an opportunity to confirm best practices, outline what is required, and established a baseline for future projects. The 'Leveling the Playing Field' workshops were not in response to concerns over the quality of response in specific incidents.

The workshops provided a forum for exchanging ideas of what works well, what could be improved, and discussed solutions to identified issues. Best practices were captured and will be communicated to other regions, incorporated into training, and documented for potential use in other jurisdictions. These outcome documents will list the identified issues and solutions, which will form the bases for future provincial projects under programs such as SAR-NIF.

These workshops were not about one specific region. These workshops were about finding best practices, learning how groups work with outside agencies in their communities and learning how groups fundraise, train, as well as manage other aspects of their SAR groups. It was a proactive means to collect best practices and will be shared with other regions that could benefit from these practices.

Thank you to all of the SAR volunteers, managers, team leaders, executive members and Regional Directors throughout the province for their participation, assistance, guidance and support.



This project proved to be an excellent opportunity to foster a better understanding of the capabilities, concerns and views of all the stakeholders within the SAR family, giving opportunities to improve communications, safety and interoperability between the individual agencies.

## Key Objectives

BCSARA undertook the SAR-NIF project and ‘toured’ the province of British Columbia, visiting all 6 SAR regions, hosting workshops with invitations to attend sent to all SAR groups, Police, BC Ambulance, EMBC and other agencies involved in SAR. A total of 63 of the 81 BC SAR groups in B.C. (77% SAR group participation) attended in addition to 7-RCMP, 8-BCAS, 1-BC Parks, 5-CASARA, 1-Regional Police, 1-Fre, 9-EMBC, 2-CAC, 1-CARDA, 1-ESS, 2-Swiftwater Rescue and 1-Emergency Radio Communications representatives.

## Schedule

North East Region, September 24-25, 2011	Fort St. John	26 participants
North West Region, October 1-2, 2011	Smithers	30 participants
Central Region, October 15-16, 2011	Kelowna	35 participants
South East Region March 10-11, 2012	Cranbrook	28 participants
South West Region March 31 – April 2, 2012	North Vancouver	32 participants
Vancouver Island April 21-22, 2012	Parksville	36 participants
<u>Total</u>		<u>187 participants</u>

The Project Manager along with representatives from the BCSARA Board facilitated the workshops. Breakout groups were tasked with answering questions on the following items;

- 1) Occupational Health and Safety
- 2) Funding programs for equipment and training/ SAR Training
- 3) Operational and maintenance finances
- 4) Support for SAR groups
- 5) SAR delivery model
- 6) SAR Prevention

Key objectives of the project were met as outlined below.

### 1. Coordination and facilitation of 6 2-day regional workshops

- ✓ Workshop coordination commenced April 2011.
- ✓ Executive meetings with BCSARA President, Director at Large, Regional Directors, SAR Team Leaders and Project Manager.
- ✓ Agenda, pre-workshop assignment and workshop guidelines established including subject matter expert input from Association President and Director at Large.
- ✓ Logistics organized for 187 SAR member participants regarding workshop attendance, travel, accommodation, catering and member reimbursement.
- ✓ Facilitation of 6 – 2-day regional workshops consisting of project description and expectations, establishing subject matter expert co-facilitators, data collection, addressing questions and data analysis.

### 2. Collection of best practices

- ✓ Compilation of best practices from 6 different SAR topics.
- ✓ Best practices were collected from 63 of the 81 BC SAR groups in B.C.  
(77% SAR group participation) in addition to 7-RCMP, 8-BCAS, 1-BC Parks, 5-CASARA, 1-Regional Police, 1-Fire, 9-EMBC, 2-CAC, 1-CARDA, 1-ESS, 2-Swiftwater Rescue and 1-Emergency Radio Communications.
- ✓ Best practices were shared at each workshop during interactive ‘face to face’ exchange amongst regional SAR members.

### 3. Acquisition of challenges faced

- ✓ Compilation of challenges faced from 6 different SAR topics.
- ✓ Challenges were collected from 63 of the 81 BC SAR groups in B.C.  
(77% SAR group participation)
- ✓ Challenges were shared at each workshop during the interactive ‘face to face’, exchange amongst regional SAR members.

### 4. Provincial statistics compiled

- ✓ 77% provided team statistics i.e. members in training, active members, ‘uber-active’
- ✓ 8.5% submitted pre-workshop assignment i.e. team finance, expenditures, inventory

## 5. Provincial perspective gained

- ✓ Evidence and data collected at each workshop immediately gained provincial perspective for attending BCSARA members, EMBC representatives, Regional Directors, Team Leaders, SAR members and outside agency delegates.
- ✓ Positive feedback was expressed at each workshop noting the benefits of 'face to face' with neighboring teams, BCSARA, EMBC, subject matter experts and outside agency affiliates.
- ✓ The Association and EMBC gained provincial perspective from the data collected.
- ✓ Attending members and outside agency representatives also gained provincial perspective, however focused on regional issues and outcomes.

## 6. Shared knowledge and expertise

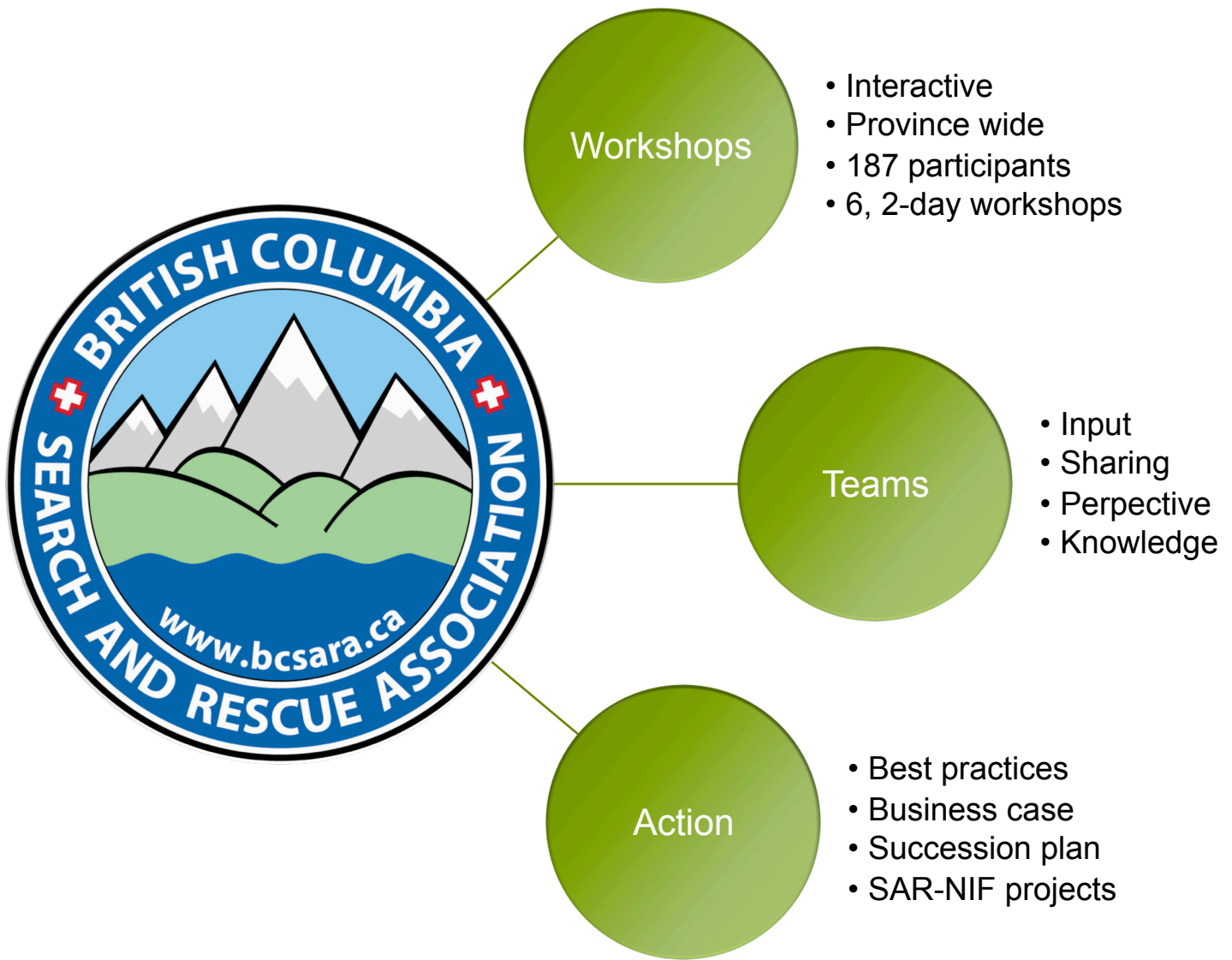
- ✓ A wealth of knowledge and expertise was accessible at each workshop.
- ✓ All levels of SAR in B.C. attended each workshop from MIT's and Team Leaders to BCSARA Board members and the B.C. SAR Specialist.
- ✓ Key figureheads from EMBC and the Association addressed group issues directly, assisting members immediately, allowing attendees to leave with more information than what they came with.

## 7. Statistics will support future action plan and business case

- ✓ Data collected will greatly assist with future SAR-NIF project applications.
- ✓ Final project report will become a helpful business case with reference to 6 important SAR topics.
- ✓ Project analysis determines succession planning, regional needs, provincial plans and targeted action items.

## 8. Face to face connection with all levels of BC Search and Rescue

- ✓ Overwhelming feedback in relation to hosting 'face to face' workshops.
- ✓ Members greatly appreciated the effort made by BCSARA to facilitate sessions.
- ✓ Members left with 'more' than they came with. i.e. SAR practices, community connections, grant writing insight, administrative tips and SAR prevention strategies coupled with placing a 'face' to a 'name'.



## **Observations, Best Practices, Challenges and Recommendations**

The following notes reflect the discussions from all 6 workshops arranged by theme, in addition the entire 'raw data' (notes gathered from all breakout groups and plenary sessions) have been captured and retained for reference. Given the volume of observations the input is arranged by sub-themes.



# 1. Occupational Health & Safety

Note: Based on the input from the workshops the BCSARA Board and EMBC have formed a Joint Volunteer Health and Safety Committee. A number of the identified challenges have been, or are currently being addressed at the time this report was written.

## 1.1 Roles and Responsibilities

- The employer vs. employee situation has yet to be clarified. The original OHS program has been rolled back after it was rolled out because some shortcomings were discovered.
- The various stakeholders and what they are bringing to the table require assessment.
- Plans are to re-define who is ultimately responsible and accountable for aspects of SAR.
- EMBC needs to provide training and funding to maintain proper use of implemented the OHS program.
- BC SAR members are covered by Work Safe BC and therefore must follow Work Safe OHS regulations as an employer. Members agree that BC SAR work falls under Work Safe BC OHS regulations.
- Identify what elements of SAR create costs i.e. specialized clothing, equipment.
- On a provincial level submit to 'employers' for funding what the costs are above and beyond members means.
- When members are covered by WCB they are classified as an 'employee', not a volunteer, therefore you as a Manager, Team Leader become the 'supervisor', and the responsibility falls on the supervisor's shoulders. "How does the Provincial Government play this role?"

## 1.2 Implementation and Current Status

- EMBC is willing to assist groups to establish templates and assist groups with establishing and meeting their legal requirements.
- Some members don't care that there is an OHS policy at all.
- It's important to make sure all responders know the limitations of their training – what they can and can't do. Right to refuse unsafe work.
- Who is going to oversee the development and implementation of the OHS program locally and regional to ensure consistency and accuracy?
- Shear volume of OHS is overwhelming.
- SAR line of work currently does not have a hazard rating/risk rating.
- Funding burden for small teams i.e. \$1200 for 10 people to take first aid.
- Members want clarity, simplicity, direction i.e. use of convergents and identifying the difference between using convergents vs. rescue members.
- A supervisory safety-training program could be put in place to educate team leaders on Worksafe and OHS procedures and requirements for team supervisors and members.
- Identify regional skill sets in order to provide training for other smaller teams.
- Individual SAR members are not interested in OHS paperwork.
- Establish implementation dates to engage involvement and increase awareness.
- Develop decision-making tools, similar to Avaluator to assist Managers/Leaders.

- Need to address OHS as a sub-committee of BCSARA Directors; the Directors need to be working on the big picture, not dealing in the day-to-day issues.
- Directors need to use sub-committees to address the “specific needs” and then they can approve the package brought forward.
- Implement a Provincial database of training records, programs and record keeping.
- Implement a strategy that consistently rolls out the program to all groups at all levels and to tasking agencies.
- Online training, i.e. e-learning.
- BCSARA should provide a set of templates/sample plans that are accessible to all members on the website, with references, clear instructions, standards, etc.

### **1.3 Best Practices**

- Practical training on a regular basis and in different disciplines.
- Safety as a ‘culture’ of SAR.
- Consistency in training, equipment use and messaging.
- Maintaining member database of qualifications, training, certifications and re-certifications.
- Easy access to OHS resources including subject matter experts, manuals and materials.

## **2. Funding For Equipment & SAR Training**

### **2.1 Tracking System for Equipment, Training & SAR Training**

- GSAR matrix, including advanced training, personal data, certifications.
- Informal at best.
- Rely on individuals to track their own certifications, training, etc.
- Training logs (maintained by individual members).

### **2.2 Proactive methods BCSARA could assist with funding programs**

- Provide an ‘all-inclusive’ communications system/tracking system to inform groups of opportunities, fundraising ideas, grant writing. More than the website.
- Offer interactive, easy, simple technology that is user friendly for all levels.
- Provide licensing and insurance for vehicles.
- Offer groups’ unique SAR license plates to ID the volunteers, similar to RCMP.
- Supply radio licensing as one Provincial license.
- Offer SAR tax break of \$1,000-\$2,000 per year, per member.
- Arrange for GSAR training to be completed in one weekend.

## 2.3 Proactive methods BCSARA could assist with SAR Training

- Money.
- Ensure GSAR manual is current and up to date.
- Provide paid Executive Director to oversee training.
- Allow input from regions to determine what training courses are required.
- Develop a support system for smaller groups.
- Assist with travel expenses outside regions.
- Assist with recruitment and retention in all regions, providing a provincial service.
- Create 'resource kits' for each group to use, reference and follow.

## 2.4 Best Practices

- Flexibility
- Mentorship
- Track all training components.
- Encourage members for ideas, topics.
- Inter-team fundraising.
- Productive delegation.
- Working with established festivals i.e. Banff Film Festival, provides good return on investment.
- Establishing productive relationships with community members, local groups, media and political officials.

## 2.5 Recommendations

- Provide training schedule based on need.
- Rewrite GSAR manual.
- Offer more training for training officers.
- Organize corporate sponsorship for BCSARA.
- Provide funds for all aspects of SAR training, SAR is an 'essential service'.
- Establish region specific, paid employees as proposal writers. SAR members join to provide SAR service, not to fundraise.
- Tap into subject matter experts i.e. Neil Brewer/Grant Applications, Sandra Riches-Ferguson/SAR Prevention-Education.
- Create provincial connections for provincial fundraising plans.
- Recognize that everyone is using his or her own personal equipment at individual's cost. Some groups won't upgrade to more specialized skills because they cannot fund equipment.
- On average it costs \$2,000-\$5,000 including cost of travel to training, etc. including equipment that take part is SAR.
- Encourage groups to create relationships with companies like MEC and Arc'Teryx providing SAR group discounts.
- BCSARA should be able to define where and why SAR groups are necessary, evaluate regional teams currently being used.

- BCSARA should have paid regional SAR coordinators.
- How will OHS change SAR provincially? (MOU with government, move to have groups funded at a more local level, a 100% provincially funded model would look much different than the current model).
- Create regionalized training, especially in the North where travel expenses are high, even if the numbers do not meet JIBC minimum standards.
- Each group could provide E-SAR Training (essential SAR training) providing a one- day course on use of GPS, compasses, search patterns and basic stretcher skills.
- Keep training funds in the Northern regions, even if training isn't fulfilled.
- Revamped training model for particular groups.
- Sliding scale regarding reimbursement of travel expenses (currently 65% no matter how far you travel).
- Ferry access must be funded.
- Involve as many people as possible in tasks/training events, which assists with motivation and mentorship.
- Better communication.
- Recruit from the younger demographics as SAR currently has a higher number of retired members who have time and money to be a part of SAR, but younger members need to be encouraged to join, learn and participate.
- Access to training i.e. Archipelago SAR some members will never be able to attend off island training within the current reimbursement schedule.
- More up to date audio-visual aids would be helpful to ease workload on GSAR instructors.
- Out of province training should be recognized.

## 2.6 Sources of Funding

- Grants (regional, municipal, districts).
- Fundraising
- Gaming
- Joint Emergency Preparedness Program - JEPP (few apply).
- Private company donations/sponsorship.
- Shaw
- TELUS.
- BC Hydro
- Foundations
- Long-term plans are required on a provincial basis for each region.
- Some smaller, more remote teams gain access to storage, share space, vehicle and equipment because they have no source of funding and/or budget.
- Teams are advised to use resources i.e. Neil Brewer as subject expert for Gaming applications.

## 2.7 Fundraising Hours / Commitment

- Many teams don't track fundraising hours / commitment.
- Portion of teams don't fundraise at all.
- Estimated between 100-200 hours per person for fundraising per year.
- Ranging between \$4,000 in a poor year (Nanaimo SAR) – \$28,000 (South Columbia SAR), varies for all teams.

**See appendix A for Provincial Providers, page 28.**

## 3. Operational and Maintenance Finances

### 3.1 What support systems would help you manage and fund O&M costs?

- Have a 'grant writer' for common needs on a provincial basis.
- Link 'treasurers' to 'treasurers' and 'training officers' to 'training officers' to learn from successes and share expertise.
- Provide support in relation to call outs equaling higher funds allotment.
- Purchasing bulk equipment for the province (i.e.: ropes, helmets, PPE, etc.) would save money and create a professional image (i.e.: jackets/helmets) across the province.
- Contribute to standardization province wide, which assists operationally with training.
- Administration support.

### 3.2 Best Practices for fund raising and equipment procurement

- Targeted fundraising events that are linked to services that we provide.
- Teambuilding
- Provide certificate/plaque to places that donate.
- Publicity/Exposure.
- Recognition of donators by SAR – publicity.
- Press release/advertising – identifying service provided, hours dedicated, value to community, number of groups, identify regions contact person.
- Register as a charity.
- Hosts a SAR seminar to inform the public about BC SAR, volunteer work.
- Share how to write applications for grants.
- Share tips and tricks for fundraising/grant writing.
- Maintaining personal and professional networks/communications within your region.
- Media contacts help us raise profile, which increases donations and support.
- Corporation grants help with fund raising.
- Continued liaison with local politicians, corporations, PR committees.

### 3.3 Recommendations

- SAR groups should not need to spend countless hours fundraising.
- Critical to raise the public awareness about BCSARA, which will return in support/knowledge and potential funding.
- Smaller teams needs guidance on fundraising, spending, direction overall.
- Some teams have applied for Grants, but because of the labor intensity of the process, they are deterred from doing them over the last few years.

### 3.4 Challenges

- Rescues cost the same if you do three or 30.
- SAR is essential, “why do we have to beg for money to buy equipment to save lives”.
- Industry Canada should not be requiring SAR teams to pay for radio licenses.
- Command vehicles take a considerable amount of funding to maintain.
- The Deputy Minister, during meeting regarding BC Gaming, was astonished that volunteers had to fund raise funds through BC Gaming to supply their needs.
- Worked for five days to prepare a grant proposal; they received \$500.00.
- BC gets over half of the calls for the entire country.
- The geographic challenges in Central and Northern BC are vast. We have to use convergents to search.
- For newer teams face unreasonable expectations to be so well equipped with the huge challenge of finding funding to pay to be appropriately equipped.
- Community recognition of SAR needs in terms of how much equipment and personnel it takes to affect a search.
- Disparity between regions with regards to response resources as well as cost reimbursement.

## 4. Support for SAR Groups

### 4.1 Best Practices

- EMBC supports with 1 million for training annually.
- BC Parks integrates MOU's, interagency cooperation, partnerships agencies, etc.
- Kent Harrison SAR: inter-team relationship building.
- JI and BCSARA with administration and reimbursements.
- Mutual Aid from neighboring teams/groups.
- Municipal governments.
- Local media support teams with articles, promo and interviews.
- ESS supports teams.
- Service clubs support teams and advertise their logos/business name on the gear/equipment.

- Shared SAR Managers.
- RCMP is moving towards greater integration with SAR Teams.
- SARVAC Support – sticker, set up insurance, little to no interaction from SARVAC.
- External support – radios, computer, log books, one-off equipment occasionally provide provincially, webpage/awareness, events such as LTPF and AS, insurance, regional director (not used very much).
- Joint training with neighboring groups.
- Heat, phone, rent, covered by regional district.
- Federally funded and EMBC.
- In-kind arrangements with local business, in exchange for free advertising.
- Rotary
- Friends of the Comox Valley book club (over \$5000).
- Thrifty foods – card program – sold \$50,000, and got 12% back.
- Canadian Tire
- BCSARA for courses.
- EMBC – task expenses.
- Lotteries
- Private citizens (\$50,000 from a will).
- Legion
- Internal – a lot of time toward administration, documentation, society business
- Repairs, PPE, clothing/packs, vehicles, trucks, trailers, sled, ATV's, boats, storage of gear.
- External – RCMP (training, funding, background checks), BCAS (body bags, consumables), Fire, Local Government (buildings, equipment, storage, meeting rooms, money).
- CISM
- BCSARA
- PAC's (School based, Parent Advisory Committees).
- Helicopter services, training.
- Newspaper free ads to promote SAR.
- Community support i.e. library offers meeting rooms.
- Tim Horton's supports with coffee/donuts.
- BC Parks supports with staff on call outs.
- Ministry of Forests supports with staff on call outs.
- BCAS supports with consumables.
- Managers Field Kit is available thru SAR Specialist.
- Most members support their team by providing all their own equipment.
- Pro Deals from dealerships.
- Snowmobile Clubs waive club costs.
- Businesses offer food, support in kind.
- Employers – offer time off for call outs.
- Mohawk Station – fuel for trucks (PG).
- NIF Projects provide support to teams, directly and indirectly.
- Travel money for training outside region.
- Reimburse for training consumables or damage.
- Radio license for reimbursement.
- Best Practices - Great working relations with RCMP, Parks Canada, BC Parks.

- BCSARA – Funding, advice, radios, FA training, support, sounding board, assistance, website, funding for society insurance via government unsure of flow of money.
- EMBC – SAR Specialist, Operational costs, regional office support, volunteer recognition, forms policies, some equipment, large-scale coordination, advice, and advocate.
- There is support via mutual aid, search management to teams without SAR manager, rope rescue, swiftwater, HETS, mock searches and exercises.
- Outside of BCSARA and the JIBC support is sporadic or virtually non-existent.
- Fire department provide some gear, funding, some districts provide buildings.
- Local snowmobile clubs support, verbal agreement.
- Government that gives tax support.
- Service clubs that give ongoing or one time large donation.
- Government that pays all rent and utility expenses. Local government.
- Recognition of SAR in community.
- Specialized training.
- Consistent policies for different groups.
- Overall, BCSARA is doing well with SAR groups.
- Inter group training (i.e. GSAR).
- Mutual Aid Support.
- Maintaining good relationships with other groups/agencies.
- RCMP provides extra support in the form of requests for specialized resources.
- Contacts with local media.
- Working with municipal government.
- Fundraiser events gain support.
- Service club donations.
- Donation of meal allowances goes back to the group.
- Community businesses offer services for our teams (i.e. truck maintenance, storage space, free building).
- Snowmobile/ATV clubs offer training, local knowledge and some equipment loaners.
- Outdoor stores give discounts.
- Communications and relationship building with other groups.

## 4.2 Challenges

- Mission SAR: operational friction with Fire Departments.
- Would benefit teams if Gaming was on a 3-year funding model commitments.
- High RCMP turnover results in slow tasking.
- Helicopter retention issues.
- Big delay in from tasking agency - Both RCMP and BCAS.
- Remote SAR groups have no coroner in area, resulting in big time delays.
- Lack of public education and media relations from BCSARA.
- Lack of tax break similar to firemen.
- Lack of technical advice on equipment purchases.
- Lack of administration support.
- \$200 for out of region training or in region training is inadequate, especially when course aren't offered close by.



### 4.3 Recommendations

- More education to SAR groups on Grant application writing.
- More consistent funding for all groups in province.
- Public education and media relations from BCSARA would help.
- Supply teams with technical advice on equipment purchases.
- Software for tracking information necessary as well as administration support.
- Better communications wanted with BCSARA, EMBC re: general running of a SAR group, ideas, administrative advice, and guidance.
- There should be multi-team funding applications.
- Some groups want clearer instructions/outlines on demands that are put upon them.
- Administration tracking (smaller teams may do nothing), or its old school (pen and paper).
- Online training / e-training.
- Use of technology i.e. iPhone apps re:mapping, gps, weather apps, communications, sar specific apps) we need to all be using new technology to our advantage, from field use, to command centre to tracking/administration.
- Supply members with a 'job / volunteer description'.
- Financial contribution to support a full time position for fundraising, OHS, administration.
- Regionalize for group purchases.
- Regional committee to approach districts to complete funding requests.
- Review IRT model for smaller teams responding with other teams.
- More contact with BCSARA Regional Director's at team level on non-task related level.
- RD's should talk to each group regarding regional model, expectations.
- RD's should attend each of their teams AGM's (have the SAR groups requested this?).
- Members would like to see 'faces' put to 'titles' with BCSARA, EMBC.
- Share resources like training, pro-deals, and equipment.
- Facilitate media training workshops, including SM workshops.
- Better recognition of unique regional challenges.
- Regional meetings, 'face to face', EMBC funded.
- Regional training, EMBC funded.
- Increase training funds.
- Media – media training would be beneficial offered by BCSARA/EMBC.
- Important to create synergy between local governments/partners/stakeholders to overcome friction between paid professionals and unpaid professionals.
- Suggesting that a supervisory safety-training program be put in place to educate team leaders on Worksafe and OHS procedures and requirements for team supervisors and members.
- Identify regional skill sets that can be sent around to provide training for other smaller teams.
- Recruitment for specialized tasks i.e. administration, fundraising, event planning, tracking, recruitment, prevention, education.
- BCSARA is at a 'crossroads' as to whether they should be more involved operationally or remain as simply a support/advisory body.
- EMBC needs to stop using volunteers to fund SAR, need to switch from provincial to regionally based plans.

## 5. SAR Delivery Model

**See appendix B for SAR Delivery Model flow chart, page 29.**

### **5.1 How does the SAR Delivery Model currently work for your group?**

- It doesn't.
- Some teams can't manage the structured layout.
- There is too much room for interpretation.
- It's not easily understood.
- Unclear as to what the SAR delivery model is (NSAR).
- We are given an incredible amount of leeway to proceed as a group as we wish.
- It's not clearly understood, acknowledged or communicated to group.
- This model does not accurately reflect what is occurring.
- General SAR members don't care what it looks like.
- BCSARA does not belong on the 'delivery' model.
- Does not accurately reflect what is being done.
- Doesn't show any linkages between the province and the federal agencies.
- Doesn't reflect the relationship between the authorizing agencies.
- Elaborate on Outside Agencies Delivery Models.
- Should not thrust volunteers into jurisdictional roles. Jurisdictional piece missing during rescues in particular.
- BC Ambulance has been resistant to become involved if they are not directly involved in the response i.e. they come in once subject has been evacuated. Communication can also be a challenge. It is put upon the shoulders of the SAR Volunteer to take the initiative to reach out to the tasking agencies.
- PEP policy is interpreted differently within each Region. For small teams in smaller communities it is difficult for these teams to maintain enough people within their SAR teams to provide effective response therefore we bring in convergent volunteers (albeit highly skilled ones) to assist in certain responses.
- SAR Delivery Model is missing the link between EMBC and SAR groups, which should be the emergency program and their coordinator.
- Important to meet with local RCMP because of their high turn over.
- Need to education public to contact RCMP first, not SAR first.

### **5.2 How could the model be enhanced to better support your group?**

- Basic guidelines need to be laid out in written format.
- Improved communications from BCSARA.
- Ensure members are introduced to the model and held accountable once understood.
- Clarify relationship between BCSARA, EMBC and JIBC with all members.
- Ensure model is a 'working model' with reviewing and adjusting when necessary.
- Expectations of the groups (even basic rules) need to be written.
- Consistency needs to be created.
- If tasking agencies understood it even as well as we did, it would help.

- RCMP is the main tasking agency, may be a little faster to be contacted by RCMP dispatch.
- Local teams, need to have a close and working relationship with 'tasking' agencies.
- RCMP, EHS, etc. understand how that works.
- Meet with all agencies, monthly.
- Meet with call dispatch twice a year.
- Have 'pre-plans' for specific calls, areas i.e. Mt. Washington, swiftwater.
- Tasking agencies need to understand the model thoroughly.
- Educate the 911 operators about SAR.
- Some of the operations take years of relationship building. Doesn't happen overnight, can be set back by changes in leadership. Pre-plans for trouble spots (between SAR, Fire, Ambulance) where there are frequently joint responses.
- Clarity around task and non-task models might help with SAR delivery model.
- Training awareness for ECC dispatch and as changes happen.
- Involve CASARA early so they can get organized.
- Call mutual aid early.
- Practice with close groups.
- Establish protocols and working agreements.
- Develop regional resource teams and training. Need call out procedures.
- Paid regional coordinator to make teams work together and train together.
- JI training is out of synch with what is happening on the ground. Rope, GSAR and OAR courses are all out of date.
- Create different delivery models for different groups.
- Archipelago SAR relies heavily on MOF and Parks Canada and BC Parks, where do these other agencies fit in the delivery model?
- Are convergent volunteers with special training covered (WCB) during training? How do we train without being covered? Contractors?
- Can't be up to individual groups to determine training levels. Clear delineation of what is accepted is desirable.
- Major concern over possibilities of being sued. Clear concern for many persons.
- It's missing the relationships with outside expertise.
- Delivery model agreed that it is NOT clearly understood by groups. Understood by SAR managers but likely not by general searchers.
- Liaison assigned for each agency to give some continuity one solution.
- Inclusion of flow sheet of agency responsibility in GSAR.
- Disparity between acceptable standards in BC SAR and other jurisdictions/agencies/ Industrial NFPA standards. Somewhat due to terrain challenges as compared to industry.
- Decide what levels of standards are appropriate for our situations.
- Recognition of outside agency skills needed.
- Challenges using convergents who are not team oriented.
- Memorandums between agencies needed to establish "clear cut" rules about how these agencies can be used/paid.
- Agencies getting used/paid is in best interest in subject.
- Volunteerism is fading. The SAR delivery model must address retention/ recruitment.
- The smaller the community the greater the reliance and relationship to outside resources.
- "Unfortunate" (possibly unacceptable!) that SAR, Agency and corporate response is determined largely by who the subject is (i.e. socio-economic status). This was widely agreed upon with Mount Elisabeth Search given as one clear example.

- The key is multi-agency training. It is crucial for positive outcomes.
- DFO should be included in the SAR model; they are widely utilized and very effective.
- We need to be better with managing risk at every level.
- It's missing emergency management services, emergency program director, ESS.
- Need to utilize the tools available.
- Need to use the best tool for the job.
- Helicopter policy is too restrictive particularly for remote areas.
- Varied utilization from RCMP.
- Inconsistent SAR usage by BCAS.
- Lack of clear policy on implementation of STARS vs. BCAS.
- BCAS not always referring wilderness calls appropriately to SAR.
- More support needed for the model i.e.: paperwork, recruitment, operational is fine.
- There is not enough support for smaller groups to maintain themselves in the model.
- Training can be enhanced.

### 5.3 Best Practices

- Unified command.
- SAR Delivery Model works just fine as is – it's reviewed on a regular basis, which helps with the understanding of the model.
- Authority to make decisions.
- Consistent decisions.
- EMBC deciding on aircraft use by regional manager.
- Conference calls.
- SAR Specialist.
- SARM in all groups.
- Communication – ongoing outreach to agencies.
- Orientation training ongoing with agencies to catch new members.
- Early callout for SAR Teams.
- Improves access to helicopters for access and local hasty search where ground resources are unlikely to be as effective or timely.
- 24 hours access to task number.
- Managers show members how it works.
- ICS training helps understand the Delivery Model.
- Pre-planning with outside agencies helps with interagency events.
- Meeting with other agencies can be educational.
- Get to know members of all agencies on an individual basis.
- Discussions with commercial operators i.e. logging, mining, ski hills help make sure they know how we operate.
- Host mock scenarios, which assists with interagency incidents.
- Debrief after large events with all players.
- No matter the SAR Delivery Model, smaller team, without SAR Managers will be tasked or integrated by other fully functioning teams.
- 'Face to face' meetings are best practices. Having recommendations followed up is necessary to keep SAR volunteers buying in to these meetings.
- Education for RCMP regarding SAR tactics and methodology has worked well.

- Share the Region specific notes separate from Provincial notes.
- Keep action items, suggestions, recommendations itemized by regions to progress.
- Activities to build team building.
- Recognize members who are active.
- Training with other groups.
- Use of logs books.
- Encourage signing on BCSARA webpage as SAR volunteer.
- JIBC has resources online.
- CAA has resources online.

## 5.4 Recommendations

- Build relationships with tasking agencies to enable good jurisdictional communication during tasks, e.g. attending detachment meetings.
- Have tasking agency take part in SAR Commander Course.
- EMBC contract to prepare pre-plans for SAR Teams (now every team has to take extra time to do that in-house with volunteer hours). Significant risk management benefits to having this model.
- Training with other groups would make mutual aid more effective. Have EMBC support these training opportunities on a more comprehensive level. Hold PEP card until member is GSAR trained (Several groups are following this procedure). This gets members-in-training covered by PEP during training.
- Ensure you get a police file number so that you can get a task number prior to conversations with RCMP regarding advice.

# 6. SAR Prevention

## 6.1 Team Participation with AdventureSmart, SAR Prevention & Awareness

- Presentations delivered to schools, camps, community groups, and outdoor clubs.
- Booth at tradeshow.
- Newspaper articles have been done but difficult due to time / effort to produce a polished / professional piece that reflects well on SAR.
- Newspaper articles.
- Some regions could use another AS presenter course, follow up, support, guidance.
- Message should be visible at airports, in Tourism BC, outdoor gear sales/stores, on buses, at snowmobile dealerships, regularly in the papers throughout BC.
- There should be an ongoing, sustainable media plan to continue with the message.
- Groups work with local snowmobile clubs and have joint training days.
- Teams volunteer in community events, increasing the public's awareness.
- Occasional displays at emergency preparation events, municipal events.
- Youth Training.

- SAR and Survival Training for Local Air Cadets.
- Fire Prevention Week.
- Canada Day – Showing of our capabilities and recruiting.
- Candlelight Parade – Mission.
- Distribution of trip planners.
- Developed a recruiting video to show the public.
- Avalanche Awareness, Media/Public Safety, Community Awareness/Liaison (NSAR)
- Websites, Community Events (e.g. Local mountain bike race), Canada Day Celebrations, BC Senior Summer Games, Call Out SAR TV.
- Media - very good working relationship with local TV, radio and newspapers in some regions, not in others.
- When recruiting new members, recruit people specifically for SAR prevention, education and increased awareness.
- Safety days in the community, annually.
- Branding to make an impression is a great prevention strategy.
- Outreach to First Nation communities regarding prevention can be successful.
- Limited time to take on prevention, already performing SAR activities and response.
- Very active in some communities where society and community embrace the program.
- Team social media sites are a great opportunity to reach out, sharing a consistency provincial message.

## 6.2 Recommendations

- Provincial database of relevant articles that could be easily adapted for a specific SAR area and provided to media.
- Need to talk to politicians not public servants, important to get the right people onboard to help make the change.
- It would be helpful to share regional updates on AS Training (TTT's).
- Put AS signage at trailheads throughout the parks systems.
- Use YouTube to share safety tips, social media, AdventureSmart is PERFECT for this. (will support the already existing Twitter account).
- Identify resources available to the teams, share trip planner brochures, information.
- Promote throughout Tourism BC.
- Public safety announcements (PSA's) i.e. hotel rooms, airplanes, airports.
- More people need to be trained in the North with AdventureSmart / SAR Prevention, specifically with the Survive Outside Snowmobile Program (some local snowmobile associations/organizations may be willing to support the training).
- Snowmobiling safety education needs to have some emphasis throughout the province and into Alberta to decrease injuries / deaths and increase safety awareness surrounding mountain snowmobiling, preparation, gear, technology, equipment, terrain, avalanches.
- HATAS was delivered in the past, including Junior First Wardens, Grade 7's had orientation delivered by SAR groups, limited program delivery now.
- Using personal and professional connections to spread awareness, find opportunities to reach local groups and tradeshow annually (takes lots of volunteer hours in addition to call outs).

- Focus should be on snowmobile and avalanche safety doing HATAS including video's like 'A Fine Line', 'Respect', and 'Little Respect'.
- Not enough man power to support SAR prevention.
- The NSS / SARVAC is limiting program delivery by only having SAR members as AdventureSmart trainers, as compared to utilizing outdoor club leaders, scouts/guide leaders to assist with outreach.
- It's one more thing for SAR volunteers to 'do', that has been put on their plates of SAR volunteers, where girl guide/scout leaders have the opportunity to pass along the information within their existing jobs/volunteer work.
- Frustration in the North about lack of funding, resources for their area in relation to SAR prevention and education.

## 7. Group Successes

- Dedicated executive those are willing to do the extra work and go the extra mile.
- Great training officer who excels at organizing and delegating tasks (we put in 5000 hrs. towards SAR, excluding call outs).
- Dedication of members.
- Support (family, friends, employers).
- Team President and Team Leaders.
- Members and commitment.
- Core group of members that do most of the work.
- High profile calls, media and experience members.
- Our community makes us successful.
- Team pride.
- Professionalism
- Good, cohesive team dynamics.
- Interesting training.
- Group dynamics.
- Ownership of our duties, volunteer work.
- High standards.
- Confidence
- Diversity in our group.
- Experienced, long-term volunteers.
- Members take ownership, many involved experienced members, and diverse group. Membership is willing to point out problems and come up with solutions.
- Experienced volunteers in key roles.
- Strong relationships with neighboring SAR groups.
- Training, appearance, consistency, professionalism, clearly stated expectations, Members take ownership of what needs to improved or completed, interview process for members who need to take leave, serious about work without developing ego, ability to express concerns, good core group of people with professional image.
- Sense of community, inclusiveness and diversity of members.
- Highly skills members in a relatively flat structure (Sunshine Coast).



- Commitment and dedication of a few key members.
- Being creative.
- Adaptability
- Working with our members and their schedules to get the training they need.
- Members take ownership, many involved experienced members, diverse group. Membership is willing to point out problems and come up with solutions.
- Location to backcountry.
- We are a small team with limited members so we have developed a Duty Crew to ensure can field a complete team. The duty crew revolves around the three SAR managers that are on call for one week. The team members are divided up to form a minimum of 5 team members, including one TL, OFA III and one EVO driver.
- We are unclear what makes us successful at this time.
- Cohesiveness
- Ability to preform as a team and work together.
- Community minded people drives heart of our team.

## 8. Group Inhibitors

- Recruitment and retention.
- Availability of good training.
- Personal capacity and limits.
- GSAR and road rescue prevents some applicants .
- We may be outgrowing the organizational structure we have.
- Administrative responsibilities.
- Conflicting priorities.
- Burnout
- Fundraising
- Lack of clear, defined path to become involved.
- Teams and executive are not on the same page.
- Retention due to transient people in town.
- Team varies with alpha types to retired people .
- The rise in calls for some small groups changes the dynamics of a low-key group, requiring more efficiency and responsibility.
- The possibility of the no succession planning.
- Proper fundraising needs to be addressed.
- Lack of capital funding.
- Minimal regular funding for ongoing expenses.
- Internal strife, personal agendas, hard to stay completely organized with the amount of tasks and paperwork that must be kept up.
- Low cost, low call out volume, making it challenging to transition to a more equipped or more trained group for example.
- Reworking guidelines and constitution so there is no conflict.
- Strong personalities prevent cohesion.



- Policy to cancel membership is written in EMBC Training, appearance, consistency, professionalism, clearly stated expectations.
- Lack of templates for developing capabilities (too much re-inventing the wheel).
- Communications from Board to members via Regional Directors.
- Distribution of workload.
- Access to funding.
- Having to rely on Grants year to year doesn't allow for long term planning.
- There really is no incentive to join a SAR group, public awareness is skewed, as they think members are 'paid', it's a common misconception.
- Members are not really acknowledged.
- We may be outgrowing the organizational structure we have. As our membership and areas of responsibility have grown. We're having to look at administration and fundraising like never before.
- Former limitation to one GSAR course per year.
- Ongoing loss of members (relocation, loss of interest, illness, change in jobs etc.).
- Big question remains with the downward trend on volunteerism, funds, lack of tasking's, lack of energy for unpaid endeavors.

## 9. Increased BCSARA Support

### 9.1 What could BCSARA and other agencies do to increase support?

- Provide appropriate training i.e. including fundraising, education, and recruitment.
- Consult with groups on provincial projects.
- Assist with recruiting.
- Broadcast message to all SAR teams needs members to help.
- Streamline the administrative overload.
- We don't yet have the capacity to take full advantage of what they offer. This seminar might be a good start. (Vancouver Island).
- Provincial advertisement (i.e. SAR prevention, public awareness, recruitment).
- Advocate for tax credits for all members, similar to \$3000 for fire fighters.
- Legislation to ensure SAR volunteers has job protection when they're on tasks.
- Take care of the legwork re: administration, making it easier for teams to 'search'.
- Develop OHS templates for easier usage.
- Provide more guidance on many levels.
- Offer regionalization, fleet insurance, purchasing power.
- Drive the issues of SAR in BC.
- Limit the administrative Burden of SAR Teams.
- Set standards for teams for BC.
- Communicate more effectively.
- This workshop is a great example of support.
- Increase regional funding as needed.
- Facilitate administrative workshops to assist with administrative challenges.
- Distribute BCSARA info. More efficiently.

- Create a package for groups to refer to when assembling/managing a SAR group, i.e. reference guide.
- Increase the public awareness about BCSARA, members, SAR, volunteer work, etc.
- Share fundraising ideas amongst SAR groups.
- Facilitate workshops for members to get more insight on administration, recruiting, retention, i.e. soft skills.
- SAR Support for BCSARA needs to assist groups with gaming and administration
- Treat all teams equally.
- More calls does not mean lower level of training or dedication.
- Have a provincial standard allowing volunteers to be equally trained.
- Call out volume seems to be the deciding factor on how things are done.
- We don't yet have the capacity to take full advantage of what they offer. This seminar might be a good start.
- Provide recruiting assistance.
- Executive management training.
- Framework of how a SAR team should be set up and organized based off of best practices of other teams.
- Web based reporting and recording of tasks and training (PEP).
- Courses to assist with management, training on search software, mapping software.
- Updates from BCSARA with improved communications from Regional Director.
- Don't know what BCSARA can offer.
- Annual island wide SARM meeting/workshop – recommendation to BCSARA.
- Advertising recruitment campaign. Paid radio technician.
- Fund! Provide training, generally act as though we matter.

## 10. Testimonials

*“This project proved to be an excellent opportunity to foster a better understanding of the capabilities, concerns and views of all the stakeholders within the SAR family, giving opportunities to improve communications, safety and interoperability between the individual agencies.”*

North East BC SAR Volunteer

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*“I just wanted to report back to all team members how impressed I was with this interactive 2 day session. Many issues which were discussed and raised. There will be follow up minutes of discussions sent out but I can only encourage more members to attend these sessions in the future as it lays a foundation for SAR Teams to discuss how to adapt or be aware to a future of increased expectations.”*

South West Region BC SAR Team Leader

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*“It was a fantastic networking experience. It built lasting relationships and resulted in a sharing of information that would not normally happen. Kudos to BCSARA for launching this project and taking the initiative!”*

North East Region Volunteer

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*“I realized that many of the same difficulties our SAR group face is the same as other groups.”*

South East Region BC SAR Volunteer

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*“It was a great opportunity to learn new ideas about how to improve our own group regarding management of liability and lack of finance and experience.”*

Vancouver Island BC SAR Volunteer

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*“It was a huge eye opener on the discrepancies between teams, the models used for finance and how difference some groups are compared to others in relation to funding, access to funds and how to apply for them.”*

Central Region BC SAR Volunteer

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## **Appendix A - Provincial Providers**

- Staying Alive First Aid Academy
- Mag First Aid
- Veti Adventures
- Selkirk College / first aid
- Yeti Adventures
- Kootenay Swiftwater
- Elk Valley CISM
- M & L Safety – ATV & Snowmobile Safety
- Local EPC – ICS 100
- Bighorn Helicopters – Hover exit
- Metchosin Volunteer Fire Department
- RCMP / K9 Unit
- Maple Ridge First Aid School
- Dam Helicopters
- High Terrain Helicopters
- Selkirk College (First Aid and Avalanche)
- ARCSAR – Ross Hayes
- Worksafe T Solutions
- Blackcomb Helicopter – Safety
- Pacific Alpine Training - First Aid
- In House (GSAR, Rope, Avalanche, Boat)
- STARS (Shock Trauma Air Rescue)
- Parks Canada
- ATV/Snowmobile – Dave Merritt
- Hy-Ridge Helicopters
- Northern Lights College
- EMBC
- JIBC
- Raven Rescue
- Rescue Canada
- Dive Rescue
- BCAS
- BC Parks
- Parks Canada
- EMERGO
- UTS (Universal Tracking Services)
- BCTA (BC Tracking Association)
- Canada Safety Council
- Conservation Officer Service
- St. John Ambulance
- Alpha Safety
- Charter Helicopter
- Canadian Avalanche Centre
- Contractor-Wilderness Survival
- Local Colleges
- AdventureSmart
- ATV Providers
- Snowmobile Providers
- CASARA
- RCMP K9
- BC Coroners Service
- Ministry of Forests
- St. John Ambulance

## Appendix B – SAR Delivery Model

### OVERVIEW OF RESPONSIBILITIES FOR SAR IN CANADA and BRITISH COLUMBIA

