



The Rescue

SNOHOMISH COUNTY VOLUNTEER SEARCH AND RESCUE

FALL 2016

Why I Support SCVSAR Rescue from Three Fingers Mountain

John McKeon - Grateful Father, and SCVSAR member since 2009.



A lookout stands perched atop of the exposed crag of the South Summit of Three Fingers.

"Three Teens Trapped on Three Fingers Mountain" the news read back on Tuesday evening through Wednesday evening, August 26-27, 2008. **Those were the "best-worst days" of our lives, since one of those teens was ours (and another we had custody for).** My wife, Heidi, mother-in-law, Cheri, and I first discovered that the boys' overnight adventure had turned terribly bad when we heard the report on the late night TV news. Assuming it was our boys who were trapped, we drove to the Green Mountain Forest Service Road (RD 41) off the Mountain Loop Highway, where the Sheriff's Deputy confirmed our worst fears and allowed us access up the road all the way to the trailhead (today that road is blocked miles from the trailhead).

The weather had changed significantly, and the boys were trapped in a storm at the 6,300 foot level not far from the 6,854 ft. summit, but unable to make it to the lookout tower, which was their overnight destination. Although it was late summer, it was raining, snowing and hailing where they were at, with wind gusts of up to 40 mph. Fortunately, they were high enough up the mountain to have cell phone contact with 911.

Being a father, I naturally assumed I would begin my hike at midnight, in the rain, with a glacier and cliffs in the vicinity of the boys' location, with an injured knee and improper equipment, in a desperate attempt to find my son. I also assumed it could very well be my last hike (ever), but what parent

President's Letter

*Randy Fay, Snohomish County
Volunteer Search and Rescue President*



Welcome to the first edition of "The Rescue". In this, and upcoming newsletters, we hope to share with you the stories of Snohomish County Volunteer Search & Rescue. We also want to let you know how your support has made a difference. And if you are not already a supporter, we encourage you to think about adding your support to others in our community.

Let me tell you a bit about SCVSAR and why I believe it is so vital to Snohomish County.

Snohomish County Volunteer Search and Rescue (SCVSAR) is an all-volunteer organization with over 300 volunteers on-call, 24-hours a day, to assist with emergencies and disasters in Snohomish County, including locating missing children, saving injured hikers, and performing rescues and recoveries during storms, floods and other natural disasters like the Oso mudslide catastrophe. SCVSAR is a non-profit 501 (c) (3), serving all of Snohomish County and its 750,000+ residents. In addition to our rescue work, we also attend a variety of educational outreach events designed to help people learn about ways to stay safe outdoors.

Randy Fay

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RESCUE FROM THREE FINGERS MOUNTAIN

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wouldn't readily sacrifice their life for their child's?

That was the night we were first introduced to Snohomish County Volunteer Search and Rescue (SCVSAR). Prior to that night, we had no idea it existed here in Washington. I was told by Tim Dehnhoff, President of SCVSAR's Operations Support Unit, who was on scene as OSU's Team Leader, to "not to even think" about heading out on the trail - I would only complicate a search that already was in progress and draw searchers and resources away from our son and his friends. In fact, there already was a "hasty team" more than an hour up the trail, fully equipped with headlamps, cold weather and overnight gear, ice axes and crampons for the glacier, in constant radio contact with the SAR Command Vehicle, and moving at a pace much faster than I would be able to muster even on my best day. So we remained at the Search and Rescue Base Camp near the trailhead, with Tim regularly providing what information he was allowed to share with us.

The night was terrifying, not knowing if your child was going to live or die. It was too risky to get to the boys at night with the bad weather, cliffs, and rough terrain in the vicinity, **so the hasty team got as close as they could safely go, and by 7am found the boys cold, wet, (moderately) hypothermic and exhausted, but very thankful to be alive.** The hasty team immediately got the boys warm, dry, fed, hydrated and rested, and started to figure out how to extract them (our son had injured his back in a fall).

All throughout that night and into the following day, more searchers arrived, not just from Snohomish County but also from neighboring counties as well. I discovered that the only person who was paid to be there on the side of that mountain was the Sheriff's Deputy assigned to Search and Rescue and that everyone else, who dropped everything they were doing on a Tuesday night and following Wednesday, were all volunteers. One of the 3 boys walked out with searchers Wednesday afternoon. Searchers accompanied the

remaining two boys from where they were at on the side of a cliff to a spot further down the mountain where the helicopter (Snohawk 10) could safely land. They also had to wait for the weather to break long enough to safely allow for a pickup. At 8pm Wednesday night, our son was the last to be helo'd off the mountain. During our 20 hours at base camp, we were amazed by the more than 70 Search and Rescue volunteers that showed up for our son and his friends. We were kept well informed from the Command Center, and well fed from the Food Truck. Not since my days in the Navy had I witnessed anything as amazing as I did on the side of that mountain.

My family is forever grateful to Snohomish County Volunteer Search and Rescue. In the months following the Three Fingers rescue, Heidi, Cheri and I all joined SCVSAR and to this day continue to be members of the Operations Support Unit. Currently, Heidi and I are both OSU Team Leaders and Response Coordinators. Heidi is also OSU's Vice President and the County Board's Secretary. Heidi and Cheri are frequently called upon to do documentation in the Command Vehicle, while I prefer Planning and Operations. Recently, I volunteered to be on the Family Support Team, knowing what it feels like to be in the shoes of a terrified family member on a mission, when it's your loved one's life at risk.

Not everyone can put in the time to become a Search and Rescue Volunteer, but many people who love the outdoors can financially support the people who will drop everything that they are doing to help others in need. Someday, the mission could very well be for you or for someone that you love!

Please consider making a tax deductible donation to Snohomish County Volunteer Search and Rescue (www.scvsar.org), a 501(c)(3) organization, this year, and consider donating to SCVSAR every year. Know that your dollars are going to a great cause; know that your funds would be carefully and thoughtfully allocated to where they are most needed; and know that you're making a tremendous difference to families such as ours.



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It is the mission of Snohomish County Volunteer Search and Rescue to search, rescue and/or recover those who become lost, missing, injured or killed while outdoors and to educate people on outdoor safety and wilderness recreation.

MISSION DATA

From January 1, 2016 to September 6, 2016 our teams have deployed on 91 missions, logging 10,284 volunteer hours.

Thank You, John Fahnestock!



John D. Fahnestock was recently recognized by the SCVSAR Board of Directors for over 41 years of raising funds for search and rescue. John focused on Snohomish County business with his team of phone callers. Their efforts contributed to the success of many rescue missions by SCVSAR. To this day John continues to raise funds so "that others may live!"

Thanks to our Community Supporters!

We are fortunate to have been the recipient of a number of grants and donations over the past year. We are grateful to the following organizations for their support.

- **The Intermec Foundation and The Everett Clinic Foundation** for the purchase of 5 AED's for our rescue trucks.
- **The Tulalip Tribes Charitable Contribution Funds Program** for funds to outfit our new Operations Support Unit Rapid Response Vehicle.
- **The Nysether Family Foundation** for new tracking equipment and bracelets for Project Care Tract
- **The Lucky Seven Foundation** for agility equipment to be used in the K9 Disaster Readiness Project.
- **Ash Grove Cement Company, BASF Company, Concrete Nor'West, Superior Concrete** for labor and materials for the parking lot improvements at Taylors Landing.

Meet our Units and Teams

In this and future issues we'd like to introduce you to the units and teams that make up SCVSAR

SCVSAR Mountain Bike Team

The SCVSAR Mountain Bike Team gives Snohomish County Volunteer Search and Rescue the ability to quickly cover ground where other mechanized vehicles may not be able to go. In searches where a subject is located on or near a trail that can be navigated by bike, we can often locate a missing person faster than a standard ground team.

The Mountain Bike Team can also repeatedly cover a trail faster than a team on foot. This is useful for containment purposes, and for subjects who may be wandering within the search area. They are also used to resupply other ground teams on extended searches, to transport information for verification and expedite the response of advanced medical personnel should a subject be located and need medical care. An Electric Mountain Bike equipped team



enhances these benefits not only by a reduction in time to reach the subject but more substantially by allowing the responder to conserve energy for off-bike SAR duties, should they also become required for the mission.

SCVSAR Tracker Team

The Snohomish County Tracker Team is composed of volunteers and law enforcement personnel who are dedicated and highly trained to perform urban and wilderness search and rescue operations and assist with crime scene investigations in Snohomish County, Washington.

In partnership with other elements of Snohomish County Volunteer Search and Rescue, the Tracker Team is on call 24/7 to assist the community under the authority of the Snohomish County Sheriff's Office.

Living beings moving through an environment leave evidence of their passage, known to trackers as Sign. Tracking is the art and science of identifying and interpreting sign.

Identifying: Trackers find evidence of the subject's passage through terrain first by finding the sign, then by determining whether the sign was made by the subject, another human,



or by natural causes such as animals or weather. This skill only comes about through extensive training and experience.

Interpreting: Once the subject's sign is identified, additional value is gained by determining where the subject was going, what the subject was doing, and how long ago the sign was made.



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The Rescue | SNOHOMISH COUNTY VOLUNTEER SEARCH AND RESCUE NEWSLETTER

FALL 2016

New Trucks!



Recently we put two new rescue trucks into operation.

The Operations Support Unit (OSU) Truck (SAR78) is a rapid response vehicle designed for early arrival at missions. This will allow OSU to be up and running with mission operations much more quickly.

The K9 truck (SAR21) carries a lot of specialized equipment needed by the K9 team. In addition, it is setup with a computer system that allows for real-time tracking in the field. This allows mission commanders to see where teams are in real time and to track progress in covering specific search areas on a mission.

Support SCVSAR

There are many ways to support the work we do.

JOIN: Become a search and rescue volunteer. You can find out more information on our website at www.scvsar.org.

DONATE: Your donation supports the work we do and helps assure that our volunteers are always "mission ready"! You can also provide support through your company giving or matching gift program.

SHARE: Do you have talents and skills to share? We are in need of graphic designers and writers to help with production of newsletters and brochures. To learn more, contact info@scvsar.org.

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