

# The Rescue

SNOHOMISH COUNTY VOLUNTEER SEARCH & RESCUE | FALL 2022



## Helicopter Rescue Team (HRT) – Recent Rescue & Team Capabilities

*Taylor Isabell, SCVSAR, Snohomish SAR Unit Member*

On a sunny Monday afternoon in August, Ryan Mueller and his party began to work their way tentatively across a snow and ice field at 5900 feet of elevation on Three Fingers Mountain. It was day two of what was supposed to be a three-day backpacking trip that, so far, had gone almost perfectly. The day before, some light rain had blown through, clearing the mountain air of lingering wildfire smoke, making for breathtaking views of the surrounding peaks. Ryan, leading the group, moved into an exposed area of the snow and ice field and assessed the conditions.

A seasoned hiker, backpacker, and climber, having logged some thirty years of experience in the mountains, he made the call that the snow was too slick and the remainder of his party too inexperienced to attempt the summit of Three Fingers that day. As he turned to relay the news to the group, standing over 2000 feet above the valley below, his left foot slid out from under him.

The slip sent Ryan tumbling and sliding downhill where, a hundred feet below where he started, he slammed feet-first into exposed rocks, stopping his fall. After taking a few moments to collect himself,

he realized his right ankle was certainly broken, and that it would be impossible for him to climb back up the way he came. Fortunately, Ryan wasn't more seriously injured. He was carrying an InReach, and activated its SOS function.

At 2:13 that afternoon, SCVSAR's Helicopter Rescue Team (HRT) was notified of the mission and paged their volunteer crew members to respond. Two crew chiefs and a flight paramedic responded, and with two Snohomish County Sheriff's Office pilots at the controls, "SnoHawk10" lifted off and headed for Three Fingers.

Arriving at 3:40 PM, the crew quickly located Ryan on the rock face, lowering the Flight Medic to his position 160 feet below the hovering UH-1H "Huey." After helping him in to a "screamer suit", a device that allows rescuers to hoist subjects to the helicopter in a seated position, Ryan was hoisted the 160 feet back up to the aircraft and flown to the emergency department at Providence Hospital in Everett. But first, the HRT delivered the rigging gear Ryan was carrying to his party on the ridgeline.

Since the accident, Ryan has undergone surgery to repair three broken bones in his foot and two ankle fractures. "All things considered, I'm doing pretty well," he said. Ryan caught up with the HRT crew in Taylor's Landing later in the summer, saying, "It was amazing to meet everyone who was part of rescuing me that day and seeing your facility in person. I'm really thankful for the volunteers who were there that day."

SCVSAR's Helicopter Rescue Team is an "all hazard" response team that conducts more than 80 missions per year throughout the Pacific Northwest. Though the majority of the missions are within Snohomish County, the team also provides assistance for out-of-county emergencies. Calls include missing children, lost Alzheimer's patients, overdue hikers and rafters, persons trapped by flood waters, and injured climbers and skiers. The terrain varies widely from urban areas to the most remote sections of the rugged Cascade Mountains. The Bell UH-1H "SnoHawk10"

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# President's Letter

2022 has been a "returning to normal" for Search & Rescue, with more in-person meetings and training occurring, rather than remotely as was the "norm" for 2020 and 2021. Motivated volunteers have always been the lifeblood of our organization, and we are always looking for a few good men and women to join us. We also do not charge for rescues, but we do rely on donations to meet our financial obligations.

Volunteering with SCVSAR has been our family's response to this amazing organization, following the rescue of our son and his friends off Three Fingers Mountain back in 2008. What would be your response if your life were saved, or the life of a loved one?

SCVSAR volunteers attend monthly meetings with their "home" Unit: Alderwood, Everett Mountain Rescue Unit (EMRU), Explorer (ages 14-18), Marysville, Operations Support Unit (OSU), or Snohomish. Anyone with any skills at all, and with the right heart and attitude, can meaningfully support this wonderful organization. We need field qualified personnel to go on missions; one of our most common missions is a "pack out" of an injured hiker from any one of our very popular trails. We need motivated field qualified personnel to be trained for special operations units and teams, such as EMRU (technical & snow mountain rescue), the Swiftwater Rescue Team (SRT), the K-9, 4 x 4 and Tracking Teams, and the Helicopter Rescue Team (HRT). We even have an Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) team, operating state of the art drones to assist in rescues and recoveries.

There are plenty of opportunities for support roles in Search & Rescue. The Operations Support Unit (OSU) supplies the support personnel for the Command Vehicle (documentation, mapping, communications & planning), and for the Food Truck. If you are interested in volunteering, please go to [www.scvsar.org/volunteer](http://www.scvsar.org/volunteer).

While not everyone can put in the time to become a Search & Rescue Volunteer, 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 & Rescue ([www.scvsar.org/donate](http://www.scvsar.org/donate)), a 501c3 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. Thank you very much.

**Heidi McKeon**

Snohomish County Volunteer Search and Rescue President



## ADDRESS

Snohomish County Search and Rescue  
5506 Old Machias Rd.  
Snohomish, WA 98290

## CONTACT INFORMATION

Office Phone: 425-388-3328

Email: [info@scvsar.org](mailto:info@scvsar.org)

Online: [scvsar.org](http://scvsar.org)

## OFFICERS

Heidi McKeon, President

Mike Loney, Vice President

Tom Richards, Treasurer

MacKenzie Brosnahan, Secretary

## THE RESCUE

John McKeon, Editor

Sarah Kulfan, Design

Printed by K&H Integrated Print Solutions

**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.**

## Helicopter Rescue Team ... Continued from page 1

is used primarily as the rescue helicopter. It is equipped with a Rescue Hoist, which is the best tool for inserting rescuers and extracting injured subjects.

HRT responds to emergency situations when the nature of the injury or terrain requires extraction by air. They bring life-saving equipment, rescue personnel and paramedics directly to

patients to help reduce disability and to improve their chances for survival. HRT resources include pilots, crew chiefs, helicopter rescue technicians, flight medics/paramedics and ground support personnel. Although some of the pilot positions are filled by Sheriff Deputies, the vast majority of the positions are filled by volunteers. They are incredibly

dedicated to their job and upholding the motto "so that others may live".

For the most current SAR information, please "like" our "Snohomish County Volunteer Search & Rescue" Facebook page and our "snohomish\_county\_sar" Instagram page. You can also find stories at [www.scvsar.org/blog](http://www.scvsar.org/blog).



## Where the Rope Ends (formerly known as Be Like Water) Film Update

Nichole Doane was rappelling down the 265-foot waterfall at Wallace Falls when she unexpectedly lost control, free-falling 60 feet. It was then up to SCVSAR's ground teams and Helicopter Rescue Team (HRT) to safely extract her off a dangerous ledge, while providing

medical care with limited resources.

The in-progress film, *Where the Rope Ends*, (formerly known as *Be Like Water*) is a feature-length documentary about Nichole's accident and recovery, with an element highlighting SCVSAR's amazing rescue mission. The goal of

the film is to grow the search and rescue "fan base" and increase funding for SAR organizations. The film got started after Nichole and Director Baylee Sinner met in yoga teacher training in 2017 in Seattle, Washington, when Nichole was still in a wheelchair, recovering from her extensive injuries. For the past five years, over 50+ professional filmmakers have donated their time and resources to help bring this documentary to life.

Prior to rolling out the red carpet for opening night, a heavy focus has been placed on growing the film's fan base, gaining sponsors, and attaining resources for an impactful launch. A new website ([www.wheretheropeends.com](http://www.wheretheropeends.com)) has been developed, where fans and partners can learn more about the film and potential partnership opportunities. Social Media pages have started to actively engage with the film's growing audience on a regular basis. Find and follow these pages on Facebook and Instagram @wheretheropeends.

More to come on the upcoming 2023 film release and movie night fundraising event being planned to benefit SCVSAR!

## 2022 Terry Tibke Award Recipients

Mike Loney, SCVSAR Vice President

SNOHOMISH COUNTY, Wash. – On Saturday, August 13, Snohomish County Volunteer Search and Rescue (SCVSAR) announced the annual Terry Tibke Award recipient. This year's recipients are Nicole Donohue and K9 Zane, who received this award for their dedication to Search and Rescue missions. Of the over 400 Search and Rescue team members, in the past year Nicole and Zane are by far our most frequent mission responders within SCVSAR. Nicole and Zane also spent untold hours in training, helping to mentor other members, and doing the not-so-glamorous work of maintaining our rescue equipment.

On Saturday, SCVSAR members, families, guests, alongside Snohomish County Sheriff's Office deputies and

staff gathered for our annual picnic to honor the Terry Tibke Award recipient. Guests enjoyed BBQ hamburgers, hotdogs, and a potluck buffet, along with a bouncy house, water play area, and the Kids Copter for the children.

The award was created in honor of Terry Tibke, a dedicated SCVSAR volunteer in the 1960s and 70s, who set the bar very high, and much like Nicole does now, was just always there for every mission and all the training, mentoring, and equipment upkeep. While in his prime of life and SAR volunteering, Terry, tragically, was stricken with cancer and passed away. At that time, SCVSAR created this award in his honor and memory for our volunteers to recognize one or more team member(s) each year



whom we honor for their outstanding contribution to SCVSAR.

Since 1977, SCVSAR has recognized and honored our Terry Tibke Award recipients within our organization. This year, we are sharing this with our community to honor our recipients and volunteers for their lifesaving work that they provide for Snohomish County and our residents each year.





Snohomish County Volunteer  
Search & Rescue  
5506 Old Machias Rd.  
Snohomish, WA 98290

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Fall 2022

## SAR Academy Training

*Mike Loney, SCVSAR Vice President*

**O**n August 27-28, Snohomish County Volunteer Search and Rescue held its semi-annual SAR Academy. It's a weekend full of training for new and returning SAR members to learn and practice the myriad of skills they will need. We cover grid searching, splinting, litter packaging and handling, compass navigation, radio comms, GPS, SARGAR safety, and overnight survival skills among others.

Please be prepared for your outdoor adventures. Don't forget to bring the 10 essentials and always leave a trip plan at



home with someone reliable and trusted. Rest assured, whether you're prepared or not, we will be...

## Use AmazonSmile to Support SCVSAR

AmazonSmile ([smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com)) is a simple and automatic way for you to support Snohomish County Volunteer Search and Rescue every time you shop, at no cost to you. You'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to your SCVSAR.

On your first visit to AmazonSmile, you need to select Snohomish County Volunteer Search and Rescue to receive donations from eligible purchases before you begin shopping. Amazon will remember your selection, and then every eligible purchase you make at [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) will result in a donation.

## Support SCVSAR

**JOIN:** Become a search and rescue volunteer. You can find out more information on our website at [scvsar.org/volunteer](https://scvsar.org/volunteer).

**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. Donate online at [scvsar.org/donate](https://scvsar.org/donate).

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