

ISSUE FEATURES



# SAR SCENE

The Canadian Search and Rescue Magazine Online

Summer/Fall 2005 Vol. 15, #1

Canada and  
Russia strengthen  
Arctic SAR

Yukon's new  
marine distress  
system

SAR Network  
Operations  
Control Centre

Junior Forest  
Wardens  
participate in  
mock search

A large photograph of a rescue team in a white-water river. One person in a yellow helmet and orange life vest is in the foreground, while another person in a dark suit is in the water with one arm raised. The water is turbulent and white with foam.

Nelson SAR's swiftwater team  
**To the rescue**

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## SARSCENE online

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Facts and opinions in SARSCENE are those of the individual contributors and do not necessarily reflect the position or policies of the Secretariat.

Cover photos courtesy of Monica Spencer, Nelson SAR and Jeff Stokoe

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Volunteers from BC PEP and PEP Air honoured for dedication to search and rescue

Outstanding volunteers throughout the province are honoured at an annual awards night held in conjunction with Emergency Preparedness Week. This year's awards night banquet was held on April 30, 2005 and Chuck Elliot of Revelstoke SAR and Keith Bennett of Abbotsford/Salmon Arm region of PEP air were honoured.

Second Annual Report shows gradual downward trend of marine and air SAR incidents

The second Annual Report of the National Search and Rescue (SAR) Program in Canada is now available online.

Produced by the National Search and Rescue Secretariat, the report includes information about the organization of the National SAR Program, activities during the past year, and the issues and trends that are being addressed, such as response to major air and marine incidents, multi-jurisdictional exercises, interoperability and the growth in high-risk recreational activities.

Included in the report are statistics about ground, marine and air SAR incidents:

- Over the past five years, there has been a gradual downward trend in the number of marine SAR incidents
- In 2004 the SAR system responded to 693 aeronautical incidents, down slightly from 2003 but not far from the five-year average of 708
- Humanitarian cases represent approximately 8 per cent of federal SAR cases annually.

For the full report, visit the Secretariat website.

New Ground SAR Association formed in PEI

On June 27, 2005, the first general meeting of the Prince Edward Island Volunteer Ground SAR Association (PEIVGSARA) was held. The following executives were nominated: Kris Gaudet, Chairperson; Claude Martel, Vice-chair; Philip Whittaker, Secretary; and Mike Desroches, National SAR Board representative and ex-officio member.

According to its mandate, PEIVGSARA represents all volunteer ground search and rescue teams on Prince Edward Island and acts as the liaison with the provincial government, the national association and the federal government.

Fundraising in the voluntary sector

Volunteering in Canada is no small venture. Statistics Canada analyzed trends in the voluntary sector and found that if the sector were measured by the value of productive activity it generates, it would account for almost seven per cent of Canada's total economy, and that equals \$57.5 billion.

If your SAR group is looking for innovative ways to raise money, there is a tool kit of ideas to improve your volunteer group's fundraising on the Canadian Heritage site at

[www.pch.gc.ca/progs/pc-cp/pubs/e/fr4gras1.htm](http://www.pch.gc.ca/progs/pc-cp/pubs/e/fr4gras1.htm)

To learn more about the Voluntary Sector, visit [www.vsf-fsbc.ca/eng/resources\\_tools/press/apr05c1.cfm](http://www.vsf-fsbc.ca/eng/resources_tools/press/apr05c1.cfm)

442 wins commendation

Members of the 442 Squadron Buffalo crew received a

Commendation from the United States Coast Guard for their role in an October 2004 incident involving a vessel in the waters off Washington State. The incident was previously reported in the Vol 14, #3 issue of *SARSCENE* Magazine online, the crew responded to the call to locate and support rescue operations after the U.S. Coast Guard Marine Rescue Coordination Center received notification of a signal from the emergency beacon of a 55-foot vessel, *Kamaa*.

With the Buffalo crew acting as a communications platform and on-scene commander of air resources, the joint American and Canadian search effort saved the lives of two men.

The Commendation notes, "The team's coordinated efforts were instrumental in the successful rescue of two lives that would certainly have otherwise been lost. The dedication, pride and professionalism displayed by this International Joint Service Search and Rescue Team reflect great credit upon themselves, their units, Canadian Forces, the United States Navy, and the United States Coast Guard."

#### CCGA member receives Operational Merit Medal

While boating on the St. Lawrence River in September 2004, Serge Massé heard a distress call over the Canadian Coast Guard's radio frequency.

As a member of the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary (CCGA), Mr. Massé came to the rescue of nine people whose boat had capsized near Barques Island, Quebec, near Sorel.

Mr. Massé was awarded the CCGA Operational Merit Medal for Exceptional Services at the CCGA-Quebec Annual General Meeting in March 2005.

#### Urban SAR multi-agency training centre opens in Calgary

With funding from Emergency Management Alberta and the City of Calgary, the city's urban search and

rescue (USAR) team will be better able to provide assistance to communities. The multi-agency training centre was officially opened during National Emergency Preparedness Week. The centre gives Calgary's USAR team expanded capabilities for both operations and training.

The Government of Canada contributed nearly \$1 million through the Joint Emergency Preparedness Program, with another \$700,000 that will be used for interior equipment and training aids. Currently, Toronto, Halifax, Vancouver, Montreal and Manitoba either have or are developing national USAR capabilities.

For more details, visit

[www.psepc.gc.ca/publications/news/2005/20050506\\_e.asp](http://www.psepc.gc.ca/publications/news/2005/20050506_e.asp)

#### Use of defibrillators in SAR

An Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) can be beneficial to the search and rescue community, especially in rural areas or marine environments where emergency response time can be as long as 90 minutes.

AEDs are small, lightweight devices that look at a person's heart rhythm (through special pads placed on the torso) and can recognize ventricular fibrillation, also known as sudden cardiac arrest. AEDs are designed to be used by first responders and can be used anywhere. They do not, however, take the place of Cardiac Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR). AEDs are a tool that can be used in conjunction with CPR.

The unit automatically activates when opened and if the signs of sudden cardiac arrest are present, the AED will advise the first responder and talk him or her through steps to defibrillate.

The equipment performs automatic self-diagnostics daily, weekly and monthly to check placement and readiness of pads and electronics. If a system error is detected, an alarm sounds. Batteries can last up to four or five years.

To learn more about AEDs, visit

[www.redcross.org/services/hss/courses/aed.html](http://www.redcross.org/services/hss/courses/aed.html)

#### Canada Post announces a search and rescue stamp

A new 50-cent stamp was unveiled on June 13, 2005 in Victoria to honour search and rescue in Canada.

The stamp panel is surrounded by images of the COSPAS-SARSAT satellite system, whose international headquarters will be moving from London, England to Montreal this fall. The stamps are available for sale at Canada Post outlets until June 2006. The stamp was initially proposed by the National Search and Rescue Secretariat and developed with the help of SAR organizations across the country.



To help celebrate the unveiling, the Joint Rescue Co-ordination Centre, Victoria organized a demonstration involving Canadian Coast Guard (CCG) vessels and Canadian Forces Cormorant and Buffalo crews.

The demonstration began with a CCG 47-foot lifeboat releasing smoke flares to signal distress. A Buffalo aircraft arrived on scene and the SAR Techs parachuted to the lifeboat. After stabilizing the casualty, the CCG hovercraft arrived and transferred the casualty onboard and proceeded to the nearby jetty.

After the unveiling and demonstration, guests toured the hovercraft, Cormorant and lifeboat.

Canada Post's recognition of search and rescue is a significant tribute to the efforts of agencies and volunteers across the country. ■

## PEOPLE

## Ground

On June 26, 2005, **Allan Lang**, past President of the Search and Rescue Volunteer Association of Canada (SARVAC) and member of Sault Ste. Marie SAR, passed away. He is remembered as a true statesman for search and rescue and an advocate for volunteers.

**Grant Statham**, a Parks Canada Public Avalanche Safety Specialist, has won a 2005 Public Service Award of Excellence in the Citizen-focused Service Delivery category. Mr. Statham joined the public service in 2003 to implement the recommendations from the Backcountry Avalanche Risk Review, which followed a particularly deadly season in the mountains.

## Marine

**John L. Adams**, former Commissioner of the Canadian Coast Guard and Associate Deputy Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, was appointed Associate Deputy Minister of National Defence, as Chief of the Communications Security Establishment.

**Helmut Lanziner** has won Transport Canada's Marine Safety Award for 2005. The award recognizes outstanding contributions to Canadian maritime safety.

## Air

**Vice-Admiral J.Y. Forcier**, formerly Search and Rescue Region Commander, Pacific, is the first commander of Canada Command.

Canada Command is the cornerstone of Canadian Forces transition and is the unified and integrated chain of command at the national and regional levels. It will have the immediate authority to deploy maritime, land and air assets in their regional areas of responsibility in support of domestic operations.

**Major Pat McSorley**, former Officer in Charge of the Joint Rescue Co-ordination Centre, Victoria, and recently Senior Analyst at the National Search and Rescue Secretariat (NSS), replaces **Maj. Kevin Grieve** as the Senior Staff Officer for Search and Rescue at National Defence Headquarters and ICSAR Co-ordination sub-committee representative. **Maj. Graham Newbold** has replaced Maj. McSorley as Senior Analyst with the NSS.

**Major Roger Smith** has retired as the Officer in Charge of the Joint Rescue Co-ordination Centre (JRCC), Trenton, and as the Officer in Charge of the Canadian Mission Control Centre (CMCC). **Maj. Colin Duncan** is the new Officer in Charge at the JRCC, while **Maj. Alain Tanguay** has taken over as the Officer in Charge of the CMCC.

**John Davidson** has been re-elected as the President of the Civil Air SAR Association (CASARA) National for another term. ■

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Canadian Safe Boating Council Symposium**  
September 22-25, 2005

**International Water Rescue Conference 2005**  
September 28 to October 1  
Hartford, Connecticut

**International SAR Competition 2005**  
September 29 to October 1, 2005  
Halifax, Nova Scotia

**APCO Canada 2005**  
October 2-5, 2005  
Vancouver, British Columbia

**SARSCENE 2005**  
October 5-8, 2005  
Charlottetown, PEI  
Toll free: 1-800-727-9414

**Fire Rescue Conference and Expo**  
November 11-13, 2005  
Las Vegas, Nevada

**2006 International Boating and Water Safety Summit**  
April 30-May 3, 2006  
Palm Harbor, Florida

**Washington State SAR Conference 2006**  
May 19-21, 2006  
Enumclaw, Washington

For a complete list, visit [www.nss.gc.ca](http://www.nss.gc.ca) and click on **Events**.



Congratulations to the Canadian Coast Guard College on its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Sign up for alerts and never miss an issue of SARSCENE Magazine Online. Subscribers receive an email alert when the latest issue of the magazine is available online. Visit [www.nss.gc.ca](http://www.nss.gc.ca) to sign up today!

# Nelson SAR improves its marine response capabilities with trained swiftwater rescue team

by Monica Spencer

"Can you swim?" That's the question Nelson Search and Rescue's (NSAR) Chris Armstrong asked all the members last year, every chance he got. And that is how NSAR's river rescue team got its start: by compiling a list of local SAR paddlers and anyone else who could be convinced to get into a raft and be converted into a whitewater enthusiast. Armstrong was on a mission.

In many areas of B.C., SAR groups lack highly trained swiftwater personnel. Most are lucky to have the odd collection of paddlers who will take a lead role if a swiftwater incident occurs. Many groups provide Swiftwater Rescue Technician (SRT) training to one or two members; and this training gives them the skills to respond to a moving water call. However, unless they are active paddlers and have a strong background and experience base, or unless they have the opportunity to spend time practicing, they are usually not skilled enough to do much more than attempt a shore based rescue in low class water (see *Swiftwater Classification*).



Photo courtesy of Monica Spencer, Nelson SAR

## Risky rescues

In recent years, NSAR has responded to a couple of white-water calls that involved recoveries in class 5+ water. The latest rescue lasted several days and put numerous rescuers at risk, due to the highly technical terrain in and around the river. Because of this, the membership recognized it needed to put together a skilled swiftwater team. Armstrong had been involved in commercial raft guiding and swiftwater work since 1994 and he wanted to do much more than just get together to toss throw bags on a practice night. In addition to SRT training, he wanted NSAR's new rescue team to gain river skills in rafts and other rescue platforms at the equivalent of a commercial guide. A team with those skill sets can

actively search with a high probability of detection while running higher class rivers, as well as perform water and shore based rescues in difficult terrain.

## Advanced level operations

And so it all came together. Last year, the river rescue team ran eight different rivers, putting in 43 full days of intensive training and participating in two multi-day expeditions. This spring, they started the training year with nine certified swiftwater rescue technicians who are able to operate boats in higher-class rivers. The team is now operating consistently at an advanced level. The team is bringing on a few new members, including people from other SAR groups in the area, and has trips planned on several local

Photo courtesy of Monica Spencer, Nelson SAR



*Al MacDonald, Aaron Armstrong, Al Craft, Al Krause and Chris Armstrong participate in a mock recovery practice involving a flooded creek at Cottonwood Falls in Nelson, British Columbia. Chris demonstrates how the use of a stick or a paddle (note the paddle in his left hand) to push down can steady you in current that would otherwise sweep you off your feet. The safety rope is attached to a breakaway system on Chris's PFD so that he can detach himself from it at any time if necessary (a rope can sometimes hold you under the water in current and drown you if your shore crew is unable to move you to shore or into an eddy).*

ivers and a 224 km, 12-day expedition on Alaska's Tatshenshini River.

In addition to the members' own personal rafts and kayaks, NSAR and its partners in the Beasley Rescue Society have a river raft; two cataracts; an inflatable zodiac; top of the line river rescue equipment including a line gun; a rope rescue kit for high lines, crossings and boat lowers; river boards; several sets of fins and several sets of the best personal protective equipment (rescue-style personal flotation devices) on the market.

Armstrong, now working as an SRT instructor for Rescue Canada, and the NSAR team, plan to

increase their level of training to that of Specialist. Currently members are able to respond with a least six members and the equipment required to conduct just about any type of river work needed in their region or even beyond if need be.

Anyone working on a swiftwater team who would like information on equipment or training ideas is welcome to contact Chris Armstrong at [rescue14@shaw.ca](mailto:rescue14@shaw.ca). ■

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*Monica Spencer is a volunteer firefighter and medical first responder instructor with Beasley Fire Rescue and a member of Nelson Search and Rescue.*

## Swiftwater Classification

**Class 1:** Flat moving water

**Class 2:** Moving water with small obstructions that are easily avoided by skilled paddlers

**Class 3:** Will swamp an open canoe, difficult maneuvers in fast current, intermediate paddling skill required

**Class 4:** Intense and powerful, but predictable rapids. Advanced paddling skill required

**Class 5:** Violent, long and complex rapids that expose paddlers to above average dangers with few options. Expert paddlers with pre-set safety plans

**Class 6:** Extremely dangerous and often fatal. Uncontrollable hydraulics with undetermined outcomes

## The *Lady Duck* Incident

# Improving safety and response on the Ottawa River

After four people died on the Ottawa River in 2002 while on board the amphibious vehicle, the *Lady Duck*, the Transportation Safety Board's report contained recommendations to increase safety on the Ottawa River.

One of the recommendations determined the National Search and Rescue Secretariat, in collaboration with local authorities and organizations, should promote the establishment of a system to monitor distress calls and to effectively coordinate SAR responses to vessel emergency situations on the Ottawa River between Ottawa and Carillon.



*Lady Duck* amphibious vehicle. Photo courtesy of the Transportation Safety Board.

The Secretariat established a working group to address the recommendation, resulting in an agreement to establish a

permanent committee to further consider ways to improve safety and response to incidents on the river. The working group concluded the area in question is not in the Canadian Coast Guard's jurisdiction and there is no authority responsible for monitoring marine VHF channel 16, the international VHF distress frequency.

The solution was to publicize the fact there is no full-time shore-based service and those in distress should use VHF channel 16 to summon assistance from a nearby craft and call 9-1-1, if possible, to summon the authorities. Further, warning posters and notices have been placed at lock stations on the Rideau Canal and at Carillon, where boaters can gain access to the river, and existing Parks Canada pamphlets have been modified to carry a similar warning.

A new committee, named the National Capital Region Water Safety Committee, includes local police, marina operators, Canadian Power and Sail Squadrons, boat clubs, commercial tour operators, Parks Canada, Transport Canada and the Canadian Coast Guard. The committee will meet twice a year — before and after each boating season. ■

## New marine distress system available in the Yukon

by Pierre Labelle

A recent announcement by the Yukon government will significantly improve boating safety. Boaters in distress on the Yukon's southern lakes will now be able to radio for assistance through the new VHF Marine Distress System, which will greatly improve SAR response time.

The Yukon system is a Canadian first because the Canadian Coast Guard will not monitor the radio traffic, as it does on coastal waters as well as inland waters such as the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Seaway. Rather, the Yukon system is 'self-managed,' where boaters will be responsible for using radios according to the Marine Radio Operators Guide. The system operates from a series of repeaters

strategically located on mountaintops close to popular boating areas. International standard (VHF) marine radios operate on the system and may be purchased at local retail outlets.

This service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, from late May to early October. On receiving a call for assistance, Action Answering, a volunteer dispatch service located in Whitehorse, will immediately notify the RCMP. Once SAR officials are deployed, the system can be accessed directly from SAR radios to converse with the distressed boater and other responders.

This system was made possible through the tenacity of the Yukon Amateur Radio Association with support from numerous partners, including:  
Industry Canada  
Yukon Government  
Yukon Electrical Company Ltd

Department of Fisheries and Oceans\*  
National SAR Secretariat  
Yukon Power Squadron Society  
Yukon Energy  
RCMP, and  
Daniels Electronics of Victoria.

\* In 2001, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans was provided approximately \$83,000 in SAR New Initiatives Fund money to finance the capital costs required for the initial construction of the system.

*Pierre Labelle is a Senior Policy Analyst for the National Search and Rescue Secretariat working in the Yukon.*



# Canada and Russia strengthen Arctic SAR

by Major Pat McSorley

**F**our Canadian Air Force Officers representing Canada's aeronautical Search and Rescue (SAR) system visited their Russian counterparts last July under the auspices of the Military Training Assistance Programme (MTAP). The exchange took place in Moscow and in the immediate vicinity of the Russian capital. This was a return visit, as a Russian SAR delegation visited Canada in May 2004.

The four SAR Officers making up the delegation represented both the operational 1 Canadian Air

Division headquarters in Winnipeg (LCol Colin Goodman and Maj Mike Atkins) and the Chief of the Air Staff in Ottawa (LCol Colin Murray and Maj Pat McSorley).

The Russian Air Force hosts familiarized the Canadians with the organization of the aeronautical SAR system in Russia and how response to distress incidents is coordinated. In Russia, aeronautical SAR also includes spacecraft recovery, as twice a year Soyuz spacecraft return from the international space station. The group visited the Russian space centre (named after Yuri Gagarin — the first man in space), a SAR base near Moscow, where Russian fixed wing and helicopter aircraft were displayed along with the related equipment and techniques, and the primary Russian Rescue Coordination Centre in Moscow.

They discussed the increasing activity of SAR operations in the Arctic regions, created by the growth of both international air carrier over-flight traffic and domestic tourism and economic development in the North.

The delegation made a short visit to the Canadian embassy in Moscow, and met briefly with the Ambassador and Defence Attaché staff.

Such exchanges help strengthen cooperation between the two countries' search and rescue systems. ■



Photo courtesy of Major Pat McSorley

The Canadian delegation (L-R: Maj. Atkins, LCol. Murray, Maj. McSorley and LCol. Goodman) meet with Russian Air Force SAR officials in the Russian Rescue Coordination Centre.

Major Pat McSorley is the Senior Staff Officer for Search and Rescue at National Defence Headquarters.

## Behind the scenes of SMMS: the SAR Network Operations Control Centre

Located at the Joint Rescue Co-ordination Centre (JRCC) in Trenton, Ontario, the SAR Network Operations Control Centre (SARNOCC) is one of the four major components used to effectively and efficiently run the SAR Mission Management System (SMMS).

SARNOCC provides 24 hour a day, 7 days a week support to the national search and rescue ground segment, and is the result of the rationalization of support to the Joint Rescue Co-ordination Centres (JRCC), Marine Rescue Sub Centres (MRSC) and Canadian Mission

Control Centre (CMCC). In the fall of 2001, CMCC had one regular force Communications Officer supporting CMCC, assisted by a contractor. These two individuals were on-call 24/7, 365 days a year. On the other hand, the JRCCs and MRSCs had no support structure in place and





Photo courtesy of Capt. Bernie Leclair

SARNOCC's Second Lieutenant Eugene Conrad fields trouble calls.

were operating the SMMS system independently.

Captain Marty Rafuse, A3 SAR2, and Captain Bernie Leclair, CMCC Systems Officer, found the plans developed at Aerospace Telecommunications Engineering Support Squadron (ATESS) in 1996 for a national SAR network and Accompanying Support Centre. The result was the development and implementation of SARnet, a national network dedicated to SAR and SARNOCC, a support centre dedicated solely to supporting SAR. The original SARNOCC was staffed solely by Capt. Leclair, and

three months later he was joined by Sgt. Skip Johnson and Sgt. Mike Hambley, both Class B reservists.

"The initial days were extremely busy, but now that the system has stabilized the workload has become manageable," said Sgt. Johnson. Additional personnel are being posted in this summer, bringing the strength up to nine. A cost-sharing plan between the Canadian Coast Guard and Department of National Defence has resulted in a part-time technician in Victoria.

As the national SAR support centre, SARNOCC leverages technology to the maximum to project a

larger support posture. Using remote access software, SARNOCC technicians can fix problems with the software or PC anywhere in the country from Trenton. Cpl. Gary Graham, a SARNOCC technician said, "An operator calls the Help Desk and we are able to reach out and touch his PC and rectify the problem right away. This gives the user a high level of confidence in the system."

As the SMMS system matures, it becomes critical that Centres receive support. Second Lieutenant Gene Conrad, part of the SARNOCC team said "SARNOCC has assumed the role of a Wing Telecom Unit for SAR. Because Centres are manned by shift workers, we handle the IT requirements and liaise with local Telecom sections to ensure the Centres receive timely service."

SARNOCC has played an instrumental role in developing, engineering and supporting the Centres' backup sites, which allows the Centres to focus on their primary SAR role. The roll-out to the SAR Squadrons and the development of Deployed Search Headquarters is ongoing. ■

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*Capt. Bernie Leclair is the Deputy Officer in Charge of the Search and Rescue Network Operations Command Centre (SARNOCC) and the Systems Officer for Canadian Mission Control Centre (CMCC).*

## SARSCENE 2005

The annual national event for  
**SEARCH AND RESCUE**  
October 5-8, Charlottetown, PEI

- SARSCENE Games—teams compete in six skill-testing events
- Training in canine care, HUSAR, incident command and more
- Canadian and international presentations by police, volunteers, Canadian Forces, Canadian Coast Guard, researchers, avalanche experts, water and vessel safety specialists and others
- Trade show including a hands-on marine simulator and the latest tools and technology
- Air and marine SAR demonstrations organized by the Joint Rescue Coordination Centre Halifax
- Search and rescue awards banquet honouring dedication and commitment

*Co-hosted with the Prince Edward Island Emergency Management Organization*

# New programs, techniques for the search

The following projects are supported by the Search and Rescue New Initiatives Fund.

## National simulation exercise program for GSAR

After having conducted 18 table-top exercises with more than 400 participants from various organizations (under NIF project **PC 2/02**), the Parks Canada organizers noticed the lack of an important concept in these multi-jurisdictional simulation exercises: a unified command structure based on the Incident Command System (ICS) structure in each province and territory.

Funded by the Search and Rescue New Initiatives Fund (SAR NIF) and sponsored by Parks Canada, the table-top exercise was the first opportunity for many participants to be involved in such an exercise and it was the first face-to-face meeting with other players in the community. The participants were glad to have an avenue to demonstrate and analyze emergency plans for their communities and noted these table-top exercises are a perfect lead-up to simulated exercises.

Drawing on knowledge from the RCMP and its ICS structure, Parks Canada will form a working group with representatives from organizations such as the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary, the RCMP, Parks Canada, the Ontario Provincial Police, la Sûreté du

Québec and the National SAR Secretariat, to develop a system that will be useable by ground SAR groups across the country.

When finished, a series of simulation exercises will be conducted in each province and territory to demonstrate use of the integrated command system.

**PC 2004050** ■

## Online Path Monitoring System

Few boaters, hunters, snowmobilers, hikers and others fill out a trip planning form before going on a trip, but a new project is determined to change this pattern.

The Online Path Monitoring System project, sponsored by la Sûreté du Québec and funded by the Search and Rescue New Initiatives Fund (SAR NIF), encourages people in Montreal and the surrounding areas to fill out the form with its automated online system.

Before going on a trip, the user fills out the form and includes information about the route planned, number of people in the party, equipment carried, destination, vehicle information, emergency contacts and date of return.

Each trip receives its own excursion number and on the specified contact date(s) listed on the form, the user calls the automated service. With this excursion number, the person can use the voice menus to report a trip status. For example:

- the trip is complete

- the trip is delayed and there is a new contact date
- the trip is cancelled.

If a contact date passes and the user does not call into the system, emergency contacts are informed and asked to verify if a rescue is needed. If so, the system will inform the authorities, providing all the information included on the form, to initiate the search.

For an annual fee the system can be used for any and all trips throughout the year.

**QC 2004007** ■

## Video-based Automatic Station Keeping

With the retirement of the Labrador helicopter and the transition to the Cormorant for search and rescue missions, an important design difference between the two aircraft was apparent. The hoist position of the Cormorant is further back than that of the Labrador, making it more difficult for the Cormorant pilot to accurately see what is happening. This means the pilot has to rely on crew members to relay relative position information.

The solution is the Automatic Station Keeping (ASK) project, sponsored by the Department of National Defence, which uses video to track a user-selected reference point. Funded by the Search and Rescue New Initiatives Fund (SAR NIF), the ASK system enables the pilot to maintain position over the

# planning and technologies and rescue community

intended target without having to rely on information from others. This will improve the efficiency of SAR hoist operations, which would reduce time and risks associated with these operations.

Being able to view and hover over a specific target is especially important when hoisting a person over featureless terrain, such as sand, water or snow, and in conditions of low visibility.

Expected to be completed in 2005-2006, the ASK system will increase the operational effectiveness and reduce the time required to execute the rescue, which also reduces the crew's exposure to the hazardous part of the mission.

**DND 1/03 ■**

## Cruise ship activity and risk analysis for improved SAR response planning

There are more cruise ships entering Canadian waters with more passengers, traveling more often into remote locations. These factors increase the potential for a major marine disaster.

As a result of this, and other industry trends, the Canadian Coast Guard (Department of Fisheries and Oceans) sponsored a project to clearly identify these trends and produce a risk analysis. This project is intended to improve prevention measures and the allocation of search and rescue resources.

Funded by the Search and Rescue

New Initiatives Fund (SAR NIF), the project team, the Maritime Activity and Risk Investigation Network (MARIN) group from Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, is reviewing all relevant studies to determine current and best practices to reduce risk and is researching national cruise ship activity, patterns and trends.

A major marine disaster involving a large passenger ship will also affect the Department of National Defence, who would be called upon for air support and co-ordination, provincial Emergency Measures Organizations for shore-based logistical support, Transport Canada, RCMP, Canada Border Services Agency and other stakeholders.

*Dr. Ron Pelot will be giving a presentation on this topic at SARSCENE 2005, October 5-8 in Charlottetown, PEI.*

**DFO 9/03 ■**

## News from the Search and Rescue New Initiatives Fund

The SAR New Initiatives Fund (SAR NIF) is currently in transition, as it undergoes Treasury Board approval of revised terms and conditions, in addition to adopting new financial procedures.

Until the Treasury Board of Canada has approved the renewed terms and conditions, and the accompanying guides and management tools are published, both ongoing projects and new starts could be affected to some degree. To understand the potential impact on and courses of action for your project(s), please contact the organization that manages your project, or go to the SAR NIF section of the website.

The National Search and Rescue Secretariat looks forward to unveiling the renewed program as soon as possible in 2005. There will be briefings on NIF renewal at SARSCENE 2005 in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, October 5-8, 2005.

# Junior Forest Wardens participate in Red Deer's SAR Day and mock search

**THE CAR OF A 20-YEAR OLD FEMALE HAS BEEN FOUND, BUT SHE HAS NOT RETURNED FROM BIRD WATCHING. ALTHOUGH SHE TIED FLAGGING TO TREES TO FIND HER WAY OUT, IT APPEARS SHE HAS SPENT THE NIGHT IN THE WOODS.**

After learning about safety in the woods and the Hug-a-Tree program, the Junior Forest Wardens, aged four to 17, some of their parents and group leaders, set off on a mock search for the missing 20-year old woman.

Split into teams of four children plus parents and an RDSAR mentor, each team was given a briefing and assigned a search area by the Jr. Warden overhead team. The RDSAR mentor gave each team an overview of clue identification, critical spacing (the distance one can see an object between two searchers) and radio training.

Approximately two and a half hours later when teams had found all but one clue, they heard a return whistle blast from the missing woman. A "live find" was made.

The Junior Forest Warden program is designed to develop awareness, appreciation and responsible use of the environment. With the safety program and mock search in which they

participated, the Junior Forest Wardens are well on their way to obtaining their Woods Travel and Leadership badges.

This was the second such event and both the Junior Forest Wardens of Central Alberta and the Red Deer SAR team hope to continue with this presentation-style event that promotes safety in a fun and educational environment.

Led by instructor Pat Irwin and co-instructors Ian Hunter and Jim Hunter, more than 60 Junior Forest Wardens from Central Alberta joined members of the Red Deer Search and Rescue (RDSAR) team to participate in a Hug-a-Tree/Lost in the Woods program and a mock search for a missing person on May 1, 2005.

An instructor of the Hug-a-Tree/Lost in the Woods program for more than eight years, and a ground searcher for ten years, Ms. Irwin says it is a very worthwhile and viable program.

"The Junior Wardens told me it was 'fun,' 'fantastic' and wanted to know when they could do it again," she said. "And many of them said

they skills they learned from Hug-a-Tree could be used in other activities."

Ms. Irwin, along with Ian and Jim, has taught this program to just under 900 grade three children in Central Alberta schools. Ian and Jim have been enthusiastically assisting her with the program in Red Deer for several years, with each of them taking a portion of the program to present.

"We all feel that it is an important safety program that can be used by any child not only in the woods but in the town/city as well," said Ms. Irwin.

Each child in the program receives a survival pack that includes an orange garbage bag, a granola bar, a whistle, a list of safety points and a homework sheet for the parents. ■



*Ian and Jim Hunter explain tin foil footprints and track identification to the participants.*