

**Eastern Pennsylvania Region
Meeting Minutes
November 14, 2021**



Call To Order

Region Director Sharon Friedel called to order the regular meeting of the National Ski Patrol Eastern Pennsylvania Region at 9:40 AM on November 14, 2021 at Blue Mountain Resort.

Moment Of Silence

Sharon Friedel called for a motion of silence in memory of the following patrollers:

- Cindy Bruno - Spring Mountain (past PD)
- Bob Karz - Camelback (1970's)
- Patricia Brown - Mast Hope (1980's)
- Howie Wyandt - Elk (past PD)
- Gordie Bell - Roundtop (Certified # 73)
- Fran Polliard - Roundtop (over 40 years)
- Merit Heist - Bear Creek (past PD)

Motion by Bobby Morgan and seconded by Chris Hoxha for the EPA region to make a \$300 donation to the Eastern Division Scholarship Fund in memory of Howie Wyandt; motion carried.

Motion by Sue Ballek and seconded by Jay Thompson for the EPA region to make a \$300 donation to the Eastern Division Scholarship Fund in memory of Gordie Bell; motion carried.

Reading of Minutes

Motion made by Bobby Morgan and seconded by Mark Miller to approve the Minutes of the April 10, 2021 meeting; motion carried.

Introductions/Staff Changes

- Zach McCormack, Patrol Director, Saw Creek
- Kurt Adam is Assistant Region Director

Section Chief Reports

Southwest - Jay Thompson

- All 3 resorts are owned by Vail; vaccination mandate, if not vaccinated by 11/15, cannot patrol. Patrol is down by about 20% due to that and other COVID concerns. 100% turnover of Whitetail lift attendants, expect staffing challenges.
- New Petzl lift evac equipment and procedures, went to full body harness system.

- NSP Mountain Host Program is uncertain; only Whitetail had them (40 members), Vail has removed them from the mountain, will be in the base area only; unsure if they will continue.
- Reduced interest in OEC instructors, existing instructors not meeting their commitment; reduced interest in SOEC TE.

Central - Leigh Linder

- Bear Creek had a busy summer, the Slide The Slope event got media coverage. New groomer was purchased; started a bike patrol. Will have COVID restrictions to start the season, but may evolve. On the Hill with new lift evac equipment. RFID ticketing being installed. OEC started with 9 candidates, down to 7. Will have OET class in January.
- Blue Mountain - KSL now owns resort, opening a new trail; voting for trail name on website; black diamond with lights and snowmaking. Extended tubing to 46 lanes, largest in the country. COVID was the largest obstacle, but patrollers are returning. 12 OEC candidates.
- Spring has a new outdoor ice skating rink and snowmaking upgrades. Minimal turnover of patrollers. Will have COVID protocols. Small OEC class with 5 candidates
- Eagle Rock - Continuing with 5-year infrastructure plan, largest obstacle is the lack of a beginner area. No ski school due to COVID. Will have COVID protocols in place.
- Valley Forge - quiet summer, hoping for natural snow.

Pocono - Sue Ballek for Tony Alber

- OEC refreshers: some instructors felt the region staff took lead at OEC refreshers and kept instructors in the background; asking OEC Advisor to have region staff mentor the local instructors.
- Big Boulder/Jack Frost - Same Vail concerns as reported by Southwest region. Jack Frost has 5 OEC candidates, will be doing OET. Big Boulder has 1. Experiencing a large dropout rate at both areas. Getting used to Vail protocols. Jack Frost's hours adjusted to 9am-4pm all week. Big Boulder will be closing at 9pm nightly.
- Shawnee - hosted avalanche instructor clinic this summer. Slope security's name changed to mountain hosts, not related to NSP program. Mountain manager was interviewed on podcast and got media coverage.
- Saw Creek - Patrol leader is also mountain manager, snowmaker, groomer, etc. \$1 million invested in past year, plans to invest another \$500 thousand. Private community, but AirBNB are primary customers. All patrollers welcome as secondary.
- Camelback - entering 3rd year of KSL ownership, no major changes. RFID being installed, YAP program continues. Considering ramping up the YAP program to encourage younger patrollers.

Northern - Bobby Morgan

- Elk - 4 OEC candidates. Widened select trails, purchased new groomer. Making plans for future expansion. Will be installing a kiosk. No Patroller School this year. 2 new SOEC TEs. Visiting patroller policy is being reviewed.
- Hideout - New snow guns bring the total count up to 8. Major lift maintenance in the off season. New rental gear. Magic carpet issue was resolved. The skate rink is being transitioned to a warming hut. Lost 8 patrollers; gained 8 candidates..
- Montage - 4 OEC candidates this season. A RFID ticketing system is being installed. The mountain has invested in communication and power upgrades on various lifts.
- Big Bear - 12 OEC candidates this season, the class will be finishing in early December.
- Upper Delaware Nordic - Patrol continues with 4 members. Last year had lots of snow, COVID protocols less strict than other areas.
- General: most areas continuing with last year's COVID protocols and reviewing visiting patroller policy. Northern Section refreshers were very well managed and got good feedback.

Motion made by Cathy Long and seconded by Rich Messina to approve the Section Chief Reports; motion carried.

Program/Advisor Updates

Ken Reese - Treasurer

- Discussed challenges with the online bill pay system.
- Discussed issues with the 990s. EPA was last region to submit to division. Plans to streamline the process and make clear who is reporting, patrol name, year end date. 990s should be submitted as a spreadsheet, not a PDF. Reach out for assistance completing the forms. Year end is June 30th; 990 due date is July 15th.
- Nothing to report on finances as last year was not normal with minimal expenses; surplus of \$15 thousand, investment fund is earning 20% gains. Year ending 2020 had a deficit of \$6 thousand. Program advisors to determine best way to have programs break even. Have ~\$80 thousand in investment account.
- Financial reports can only be sent to PDs, who will need to share with local patrol staff as needed.
- New simplified expense report system will be emailed and posted on Region website; expense reports are due within 30 days of expense outlay.
- Discussion on dues increase to offset expenses tabled until spring meeting.

Secretary – Nancy Mayberry

- Introduced Mike Woodruff, Secretary in Training

Alumni – Jim Cahill

- There are 6,000 alumni nationwide. 20 Alumni Advisors in the division meet via Zoom on a regular basis.
- Discussion about re-doing bylaws to clarify what alumni can do at a mountain.
- Working on an in-person meeting in Lake Placid in March 2022.
- If planning to become an alumni, talk with your PD; form found on NSP website, \$35 fee.

Safety - National Program Director Rick Shandler

- Program is evolving to add a focus on patroller safety, especially stress management. EPA and Eastern Division websites have information about patroller stress management. Resources must be established at the patrol level, not national. Should have resources in place before needed. Stress management materials were sent to each PD; reach out if not received. Recommend a Safety Captain for each patrol.
- Safety kits are available; underwritten, so inexpensive. Designed both as giveaways, but also to allow engagement with guests.
- A new outdoor risk management program is being developed.
- New EPA Region Safety Advisor is Jennifer Rinker from Blue Mountain. Her contact info is on the EPA web site.

Avalanche – Rich Hartman

- No course setup for this year yet. There were some changes to the national program.
- This will be Rich's final year leading the program... Bob Vocke stepping in for next year.
- Course tentatively scheduled for February 9th and 10th.

MTR – Rich Hartman for Lou Marchi

- MTR program at Roundtop being held next weekend.

Elections – Sharon Friedel for Inese Jardine

- Election closed yesterday, Sharon Friedel ran unopposed; elected for another term.
- Next spring Delegate At Large and Pocono and Central Section Chiefs are up for election
- Inese is moving to Maine, looking for new election advisor.

Instructor Development – Brent Watts

- Trying to have a fall in-person course, but not yet finalized. May happen during the season.
- Held a Zoom ID class, successful. Plan to have a spring Zoom class on 4/9/22.
- Let Brent know of instructor candidates to help plan classes
- Patrols can start mentoring candidates prior to ID; start with online national course

Legal – Tim Kelly

- Discussed several court cases currently in progress.
- Discussed PA "assumption of risk" which primarily only remains intact for skiing; inherent danger not only covers skiing, but also covers in base area, boarding/exiting lift.

- Most cases are fact-specific and judge-specific, distinction between guest to guest collision, guest to equipment collision, and tubing related injuries.
- Most cases get thrown out via the Skiers Safety act; others go to settlement, very few go to litigation to be able to see the actual outcome.

Medical - Adam Ray

- Eastern Division Medical advisors have been meeting on Zoom.
- Reach out with any questions about how other mountains are handling particular incidents or situations.

Website - Wolfgang Boernert

- Advisors should update their program pages with current information
- News section is available for announcements
- Last Run section has been updated.
- Email blasts - many patrollers have chosen to unsubscribe. PD's will need to encourage patrollers to re-subscribe manually.
- OEC rosters will be sent to all patrol directors - yellow highlights reflect registration but not attended.

OEC – Dennis Zercher

- Fall refresher season ended yesterday. Dennis thanked the resorts who hosted a refresher this year. 1199 members participated. 978 patrollers, 189 instructors, and 32 instructor trainers
- Next year's schedule is in the works, will be posted on website once finalized. Will start the weekend after Labor Day starting with ITs, then instructors, then patrollers.
- Positive feedback about EPA refreshers from patrollers visiting from other regions

PA License Plate Program – Howard Rosenthal

- Howard is looking to train someone to eventually take over the program.
- The state approved motorcycle plates; requires new application process; would like assistance

Risk Management - Mark Miller for Ed Kupillas

- Practiced “unseated passengers” on chairs; recommend having protocols in place to catch these guests.

SOET – Ron Helm

- Patroller School at Elk cancelled; clinics are getting scheduled one on the calendar for Montage, looking for other areas to volunteer to host
- Will be doing SOET TE recerts
- SOET test at Elk
- Killington OET staff meeting December 10th - 12th

SOEC – Sharon Friedel for Mark Leukus

- Clinic and exam dates are posted on website. Clinics on 1/9/2022 and 1/29/2022. Evaluations on 2/12/2022 and 3/5/2022. Fee is \$30 per participant.
- Will be transitioning the program to Chris Whitpan for the 2022-2023 season.

YAP – Megan Eckhart

- Unsure if there will be a division event at Smugglers Notch this year.
- PDs should make sure Megan has all their YAPs contact info.
- Vail Resorts continues to exclude YAPs, but most other mountains are able to accept.
- Youth Protection Training must be completed by at least one instructor at an event where YAPs are participating; YAP mentors also need to complete the training. Youth protection training completed elsewhere can meet the NSP requirement.

Awards – David Marks

- No award nominations made since June, reach out with any potential award-worthy names of patrollers or events
- 11 awards in the region; 2 national appointments, 5 merit stars, 2 division outstanding awards, 1 national outstanding award, and 1 Patriot Star award.
- Reach out for any veteran patrollers who have not yet gotten a patriot star award.

Other Programs

No updates from Certified, Communications, Nordic/Backcountry, Patroller School, Pro Program, Women's.

Award Presentations

Sharon Friedel presented the following awards:

National Appointment

- Vince Bulzoni from Montage
- Elizabeth Carroll from Ski Liberty

Merit Stars

- Lisa Smith from Ski Liberty – purple merit star
- David Bourdon from Ski Liberty – blue merit star
- Chris Fraser from Ski Liberty – yellow merit star
- Nick Agostino from Ski Liberty – yellow merit star
- David Marks from Spring Mountain – yellow merit star

Region Awards

- Megan Eckhart from Spring Mountain - Region Director's Award
- Wolfgang Boernert from Pocono Ranchlands - Outstanding Administrative Patroller

Division Outstanding Awards

- Edmund Conaway from Spring Mountain – Outstanding Alumni
- Jeff Detwiler from Jack Frost – Outstanding OEC Instructor
- David Olsen from Jack Frost – Outstanding Paid Patroller

National Outstanding Awards

- David Olsen from Jack Frost – Outstanding Paid Patroller

50 Year Service Awards

- Russ Scaramastra from Bear Creek
- Roger Appleton from Camelback

Patriot Star Awards

- Richard Patterson from Bear Creek

National Updates - Bob Bernatos

- National office has been facing a turnover rate of about 85%; reach out to Bob directly if necessary.
- New cloud-based online learning management system in development which will address most of the issues with the existing system. Testing will begin in the winter, planned go-live date in June 2022.
- New cloud-based member management system being developed. No release date, but expect it could be 2-3 years away from rollout.
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Outside vendor was brought on to help move this forward. A survey was distributed to members, results of which are being reviewed. NSAA and other groups also going through a similar process.
- Election season is open with 4 open NBOD seats. There is also a ballot question about whether Mountain Hosts should have the right to vote in elections.
- New NSP CEO, Chris Castillian, is trying to make the BOD more high-level and less hands-on.
- Powderfall 2022 OET classes are sold out.
- Saturday December 5th will be a celebration of Gordie Bell at Roundtop. There may also be a Zoom call for any patrollers unable to attend.

Region Updates - Sharon Friedel

- Division website is <https://nspeast.org> with current information
- COVID guidelines will continue until further notice, masks are required at all region and division events.
- 990s are due July 15th.

Open Discussion

No new topics presented.

Adjournment

Motion made by Bobby Morgan and seconded by Mark Miller to adjourn the meeting at 11:30AM; motion carried.

Minutes Submitted by Michael Woodruff

Next Meeting

EPA Spring Officers' Meeting
April 23rd, 2022
Blue Mountain Resort