

Eastern Pennsylvania Region Meeting Minutes November 13, 2022



Call To Order

Region Director Sharon Friedel called to order the regular meeting of the National Ski Patrol Eastern Pennsylvania Region at 9:23 AM on November 13, 2022 at Blue Mountain Resort.

Moment Of Silence

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

- William Haley, Jack Frost
- Brian Kozera, Spring Mountain
- Slayton Altenburg, Blue Mountain
- Warren Hausman, Blue Mountain
- Colin Hannings, Jack Frost
- Zoey McClain, Shawnee
- Dave Christianson, Elk
- Keith Kazoc, Elk
- Julia Brenna Laird, Elk
- Joan Evans Ferry

Reading of Minutes

Motion made by Mark Miller and seconded by Bill Andrews for the EPA region to waive the reading of the minutes from the April 2022 meeting and accept as presented; motion carried.

Introductions/Staff Changes

- Mike Cannilla, Saw Creek Patrol Representative
- Tom Newpher, Bear Creek Patrol Representative
- Chrissy Ludka, SOET (Senior Outdoor Emergency Transport) Advisor
- Phil Barker, ORM (Outdoor Risk Management) Advisor
- Joe Hall, Camelback Patrol Representative
- Chuck Wallace, Camelback Paid Patrol Director

Section Chief Reports

Northern - Bobby Morgan

- Bobby's term as section chief is ending, Jerry Washo is a potential candidate to hold the role next.
- Elk: Patroller School is returning with 50 spaces, dates are posted on the EPA region calendar. This season there are 2 candidates and night skiing has been added on Thursdays.
- Montage - This season introduces updated lighting, tents available for rental at the top of the mountain, and a hotel is being built for 2023. There are 7 candidates.
- Hideout - No update.
- Big Bear/Mast Hope - The patrol room has been remodeled, currently 55 patrollers.
- Upper Delaware Valley Nordic - Patrol room capacity has been maxed out.

Southwest - Jay Thompson

- Whitetail - The patrol is 80% volunteer, highest percentage amongst Vail Resorts in PA. A new general manager is in place, transferred from Liberty.
- Liberty - A new general manager is in place. Both general manager changes may be to address concerns of volunteers. Questions remain on insurance coverage of volunteer patrollers; Liberty got email confirmation their volunteers will be covered; unclear on the other two Vail resorts.
- Vail continues to require a waiver for any patrollers to take part in any training on the mountain in addition to the standard NSP waiver.
- All COVID restrictions have been lifted for all Vail Resorts for the upcoming season.
- OEC (Outdoor Emergency Care) - A combined class between Liberty and Whitetail started with 23 candidates; less than 10 remain in the program liberty/whitetail.

Pocono - Bill Andrews

- Big Boulder - Opening day scheduled for December 16th. This season introduces two new quad lifts, 2-4 new trails and one terrain park. The patrol currently has 45 patrollers and 5 candidates. A new radio system is planned for next year.
- Jack Frost - Opening day scheduled for December 3rd. The patrol has a new radio system and has transitioned to mostly paid patrollers with 3 volunteers remaining. The resort is installing 3 new lifts for this season and will be operating one terrain park. There are concerns over water availability due to the drought.
- Shawnee - This season introduces expanded automated snowmaking and night skiing. The patrol has 76 volunteers, 10-12 paid patrollers, and 8 candidates.
- Camelback - Joe Hall is the new new patrol representative; Chuck Wallace is the new paid patrol director. Automated snowmaking has been expanded, the terrain park moved, and a new 6-pack lift has been installed. The patrol has 112 patrollers, 15 of which are paid. There has also been a 50% increase in paid EMT coverage to primarily cover non-skiing incidents.
- Saw Creek - Mike Cannilla is the new patrol rep. Looking for visiting patrollers to help out, contact Mike for information. The patrol allows EMT to challenge the OEC course.
- Pocono Ranchlands - Will not be opening this season due to chairlift maintenance issues; however, not planned to be a permanent closure.

Central - Leigh Linder

- General discussion of how to recruit volunteers when the industry is moving more towards paid patrollers
- Bear Creek - Tom Newpher is the new patrol representative. The patrol has 6 OEC candidates and 15 OET candidates, with OET training scheduled for Monday nights. Actively recruiting at job fairs and while riding lifts with guests.
- Blue Mountain - This season introduces a new 6-pack lift, the "Main Street Express" and new snowmaking. The patrol uses safety and recruitment tents to interact with guests. There are 6 candidates this season.
- Spring Mountain - The resort has installed a new snowmaking system capable of making snow up to outdoor temps of 77 degrees and expanded the number of snow guns. There are 8 candidates and 8 new mountain hosts.
- Eagle Rock - This season brings new snowguns and a new groomer. Various trails in the beginner area have widened. There are 2 new patrollers.
- Valley Forge Nordic - A bike patrol was active during warmer seasons.

Motion made by Mike Cannilla and seconded by Joe Hall to approve the Section Chief Reports; motion carried.

National Updates

Bob Bernatos, National Board Member

- Stephanie Cox has been hired as executive director, has a non-profit background. Office staff turnover has been a challenge, with many personnel leaving for career opportunities in the for-profit sector.
- LMS (Learning Management System) - The contract with the previous vendor expired, timing was a challenge to transition. Multiple iterations of the OEC course were developed to improve experience based on patroller feedback. The vendor was very responsive to resolve problems, even during the weekend. The course is now on version 4 and practically zero reports of problems. The LMS will be expanding to other programs, initially with ORM.
- Elections - Voting is open; 3 incumbent board members are running for re-election. Candidate calls have been recorded and are posted online.
- A question was asked from the floor about how active the board is with office staff; many positions/processes aren't documented, working to improve. IT remains an issue, a dedicated IT person in the future may be in the cards, but not immediately.
- Followup question from the floor as to whether NSP has the finances to increase staffing; costs continue to go up; dues increased this year; may have regular increases moving forward to keep up with costs. Multiple sponsors have re-signed and are a source of non-dues income.
- Question from the floor about the shape of the national building; Bob discussed upgrades being deferred due to budget crunch; discussion about hiring a facility maintenance company.
- Question from the floor about national staff being in office vs remote. There was mixed success with this model; they are working to find the right balance.

Bob Scarlett, National Board Member

- Voting - 25% of membership have voted so far in this year's election. EPA is 6th largest voting region in NSP.
- Spoke to the job Paul Kelly has done to control finances, especially during COVID.
- Vail - discussion about pros/cons of the company's policies; continues to be an evolving issue as the company learns how to work with patrols. Cited Liberty covering volunteers with legal coverage; also company-wide bringing back family benefits. Concern about some of the labor laws as it pertains to volunteers.
- Discussed article published in the Colorado Sun that was critical of the NSP; highlights perception of the industry. Bob Bernatos weighed in that employee confidentiality limits the ability to respond and is working to create a social media policy.
- Question from the floor to Bob Bernatos about diversity/inclusion training from the perspective of younger members of the patrol in the context of "checking the box" vs creating change.
- JSOU (Joint Statement of Understanding) has not been renewed by the NSAA (National Ski Area Association).
- Mountain Host Program - Referendum to allow those members to vote was defeated, largely driven by Eastern Division votes.

Paul Kelly - National Board Member

- Discussed his background as a 30 year patroller; worked for the US Treasury, lives in Massachusetts and has 2 other family members that patrol
- Discussed the importance of getting people to vote; last time he ran, only ~20% of the membership voted
- Discussed the learning curve of being a board member and the need for consistency and continuity and urged members to consider other candidates that are running for re-election
- Discussed the budget and his role on the finance committee, national dues have increased this year to partially offset a projected \$700,000 deficit. It's believed that the organization can operate for the next 2-3 years without additional increases; fundraising activities may make this more stable, though the macro economy is a challenge.
- Discussed the baseline diversion and inclusion that was covered in annual OEC refresher - expects training to continue, especially as there is an expectation of this amongst our sponsors
- Discussed Mountain Hosts - Vote was defeated. Paul had offered a proposal that after 3 years of membership, hosts would be eligible to vote, but it was not adopted by the board.

Program/Advisor Updates

SOET – Ron Helm & Chrissy Ludka

- This season will be Ron's last as the advisor, Chrissy will be taking over.
- Evaluation approach changed last season, using more in-house personnel due to COVID restrictions. Small groups; 2 TEs (Trainer/Evaluators) with each group throughout the whole day; well received by candidates and participants. 19 attempts and 18 full passes. Expect this model to continue.
- There are currently 44 TEs.
- Kurt Adam has been visiting mountains to assist with their training programs, implementing TE & instructor development program to boost ranks.
- Acknowledged and thanked the leadership staff, especially Kurt Adam, Ron Dallago, Leigh Linder, Steve Lorsch, and Ron Helm - each acknowledged with a Yellow Merit Star.
- Chrissy Introduced herself and has 2 goals: Continue high level of training, develop new TEs and instructors.
- 10 members of region going to division meeting at Killington
- There will be a TE staff meeting on December 20th via Zoom
- Elk patrollers school is scheduled for January 28 & 29; details at patrollerschool.org
- SOET evaluation is scheduled for March 5th at a to be determined location.
- There is discussion of coordinating instruction with the Women's and YAP programs.
- Kurt discussed plan to visit additional mountains this upcoming season
- A modest fee may be charged for some SOET events this year to cover trainers' travel expenses

Treasurer - Sharon Friedel for Ken Reese

- Total Income \$20,143.08 – mostly from registration dues, license plate program and SOEC.
- Total Expenses \$19,511.54 – mostly from Division Officers' Meeting, OET, Awards, License Plate, OEC Refreshers (bulk of expenses), YAP, Web Site Fees
- Net Income \$631.54
- Bank Account Balance \$10,816.52
- Edward Jones Account: 1 year ago \$77,070.75, currently \$74,025.61.

Secretary – Nancy Mayberry

- Nothing to report

Alumni – Jim Cahill

- There are 5,900 alumni across the country, including 1,100 in the Eastern Division and 456 in the region.
- There are 28 alumni advisors in Eastern Division. More alumni advisors needed due to the number of alumni members; seeking assistance from patrol directors to identify prospects.
- An alumni day planned for mid-January 2023, to be organized by alumni advisors
- A May 2023 event is also planned
- Vail Resorts is offering a \$42 season pass to qualifying alumni for eastern-US resorts

Awards – David Marks

- 13 Yellow Merit Stars have been awarded, with one additional award in progress.
- A half dozen outstanding awards from the region were awarded in April; some were sent on to division. 4 of these received awards at the division level.
- There have been 2 national appointments.
- There has been 1 leadership commendation appointment
- A hall of Fame nomination in progress
- The region is encouraged to submit more award nominations; it is how volunteer patrollers are recognized

Elections – Sharon Friedel for Inese Jardine

- The Northern Section Chief, Bobby Morgan, will be terming out. Southern Section Chief, Jay Thompson, will be up for re-election next year.
- Region Director, Sharon Friedel, will be terming out. Kurt Adam introduced himself as a candidate for the position and stated his credentials. Sharon invited others to nominate themselves.

Instructor Development – Brent Watts

- A Fall Instructor Development class is being considered if there is sufficient interest

Legal – Tim Kelly

- Discussed the state of liability with ski areas. Pennsylvania is a partial liability state and passed a law a few years back that clarified the voluntary assumption of risks; it's been watered down by the courts over the past 20 years.
- Snow tubing is a notable exception to the assumption of risk, many resorts use a release
- Encouraged documentation of incidents as a way to protect yourself and the mountain

Medical - Sharon Friedel for Adam Ray

- Discussion about mechanical CPR devices; published literature doesn't show a higher rate of survival, but makes it easier for ambulance personnel when moving. Proposed it could be helpful on the hill, but cost prohibitive. If short transport time is possible, it may not be beneficial. Infrequent use may make money better spent elsewhere.
- Cervical collars discussed, there has been evidence they're causing harm. No immediate changes, just discussion at this point. PA protocol continues to require use of a collar if a patient is on a backboard for spinal motion restriction.

MIST - Wolfgang Boernert

- The region has a new Microsoft email server; call with any problems accessing email.

MTR – Sharon Friedel for Lou Marchi

- A course is in progress at Roundtop today.

OEC – Dennis Zercher

- This fall there were 13 refreshers, 1,115 patrollers refreshed including instructors.
- Limit of 120 per refresher, early refreshers were lightly attended. Concern about late refreshers being over capacity, but not realized. Plan to continue the capacity limit for next year as well. Encourage patrollers to sign up for their preferred refresher as soon as they open. Patrollers can un-enroll if their plans change.
- Acknowledged and thanked the instructor staff, especially Steve Sobolewski, Rich Messina, Christina Hoxha, Sharon Friedel, Jay Thompson, Wolfgang Boernert, and Bill Sachs - each acknowledged with a Yellow Merit Star.
- Next year's refresher dates have been set; 2 mountains have not yet confirmed facility availability; the schedule will be posted on the website once confirmed.
- The working calendar is planned through 2024.
- Patroller registration for all future OEC events will be through NSP LMS system

PA License Plate Program – Sharon Friedel for Howard Rosenthal

- Looking to restructure the program; offering twice a year rather than on a continual basis. Sharon asked feedback from the floor to make it a December and March offering; no objections raised.

Safety - Jennifer Rinker

- Safety is not the same as risk management; it's "know the code", events at mountains to highlight safety, and promoting patroller safety, especially on the red/yellow/green stress levels
- Many times patrollers arrive for their shift stressed by external factors; a significant incident can amplify this
- Posters and QR codes have been distributed to each patrol to post
- A calendar has been established for use of the safety tent. Swag can be purchased on NSP store.
- School groups - highlighted importance to go over the skiers responsibility code on the bus before students get off
- Discussed "bars for bars" using candy bars as an incentive for using safety bars

SOEC (Senior Outdoor Emergency Care) – Chris Whitpan

- There were 86 TEs on roster as of the beginning of last season, 23 did not attend the triennial refresher. With 9 new TEs, there's now 63.
- Want to increase the visibility of the TE program to get more in the pipeline as it's a 2-year process. OEC instructor and SOEC are prerequisites.
- Dates for 2022-2023 are set pending resolution of a conflict with Patrollers School. Clinics will be held at Montage and Blue, evaluations will be at Spring and Roundtop.
- Looking to educate potential candidates on the program experience through testimonials from former participants.
- \$20 to be charged for clinics; no extra fee for testing. Fees used for moulage and staff travel reimbursements
- Process is currently very paper-intensive, looking for ways to streamline
- Kits containing posters and stickers available for mountains to use as a recruitment tool.

YAP (Young Adult Program) – Megan Eckhart

- Asked for mountains interested in hosting young adults, even if they don't have an active program, to reach out. Vail resorts do not allow YAPs, consider referring them to the regional website rather than declining.
- Region programs invite potential/future YAPs aged 13 and up to participate
- Mountain hosts between 16-18 years old are considered YAPs.
- YAP events for the upcoming season have not yet been finalized.
- Division event will be at Smugglers Notch March 10-13, pricing remains \$375 but is likely to go up next year. Registration will be online; looking for OEC instructors and chaperones.
- At least one instructor at each course at the mountain with young adults must have youth protection training.

Women's – Leigh Linder

- The event was held at Bear Creek last season, 9 patrollers participated.
- Dates for 2023 are not yet set.

Other Advisors

- No update from the Avalanche, Certified, Communications, Nordic/Backcountry, ORM, Patroller School, and Pro Program advisors.

Motion made by Bobby and seconded by Mark Miller to approve the Program Advisor Reports; motion carried.

Region Updates - Sharon Friedel

- There are 115 mountain hosts in the region
- Working to re-work senior OEC program evaluation
- National is looking at primary patrol clarifications
- Tax exempt status available for purchase with Amazon
- Radio licenses - many are expiring, they are working through the list; contact Dick Wolf with questions
- EPA membership: 1834 members; 437 alumni, 115 mountain hosts, 70 candidates, 5 physician partners. 80 haven't paid for the 2021-2022 season. In total, there are 1,200 active members.

Open Discussion

- No new business was raised.

Award Presentations

Sharon Friedel presented the following awards:

Yellow Merit Star

- Steve Sobolewski
- Christina Hoxha
- Rich Messina
- John Thompson
- Wolfgang Boernert
- Kurt Adam
- Ron Dallago
- Leigh Linder
- Steve Lorisch
- Ron Helm
- Steve Lekus
- Bill Sachs
- Richard Hopkins
- Charles "Rick" Gabrel
- Gene McDonough
- 1 Yellow Merit Star is being processed

Outstanding Awards, Eastern Division

- Phil Barker- Paid Patrol Director
- Kristina Hoxha - Paid Patroller
- Alison Hudak- Volunteer Mountain Host
- Mason Rinker - Young Adult Patroller
- Mark Leukus, SOEC Administrator

National Appointment

- Leigh Linder
- Russ Saramastra

Leadership Commendation Appointment

- Carol Erno

Hall of Fame

- One in progress

Certificate of Appreciation

- Eric Snyder

50 Year Service Awards

- Nancy Heller
- James Policelli

Adjournment

Motion made by Mitch Wise and seconded by Joe Hall to adjourn the meeting at 12:45pm; motion carried.

Minutes Submitted by Mike Woodruff

Next Meeting

EPA Spring Officers' Meeting
Saturday, April 23rd, 2023
Blue Mountain Resort