

Eastern Pennsylvania Region Meeting Minutes April 22, 2023



Call To Order

Region Director Sharon Friedel called to order the regular meeting of the National Ski Patrol Eastern Pennsylvania Region at 9:29 AM on April 22, 2023 at Blue Mountain Resort.

Moment Of Silence

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

- Alfred Miller, Montage Mountain
- Elmer Taylor, Spruce Run
- John Ketcha, Elk Mountain
- Dave Hayes, Ski Roundtop
- Julie Mancus, Montage Mountain
- Randy Fritz, Ski Big Bear
- Ellie Jessum, Spring Mountain

Motion made by Brent Watts and seconded by Bobby Morgan to make a donation of \$300 to the Eastern Division Memorial Fund in memory of Ellie Jessum; motion carried.

Introductions/Staff Changes

- Ski Liberty PD (Patrol Director) – Chuck Montrie
- The Hideout PD – David Oswell
- Upper Delaware Nordic – Joshua Tucky
- Ski Big Bear PD – Adrian Feldhusen
- EMS Advisor – Eric Snyder
- Elections Advisor – John Levkolic

Reading of Minutes

Motion made by Greg Mohr and seconded by Mark Miller for the EPA region to waive the reading of the minutes from the November 2022 meeting; motion carried.

Section Chief Reports

Southwest - Jay Thompson

- Across all 3 areas, it was one of the shortest seasons on record; each opened just before Christmas, Whitetail closed in February; many trails didn't open. The shorter season impacted OET (Outdoor Emergency Transportation) training.
- Halfway through the season budgets were reduced; including patrol, relaxing the minimum 15 hour workweek requirement.
- Whitetail is still 81% volunteer, the most of any Vail resort in PA (Roundtop at 77%, Liberty at 55%)
- Had patroller staffing losses during pandemic and during new ownership takeover, but has since stabilized

- Whitetail had a lift evacuation; discussion about the memory retention from only doing a single lift evac training in the fall
- Successful OEC (Outdoor Emergency Care) class with 100% pass rate
- Discussed the distinction of responsibility between paid and volunteer patrollers

Pocono - Bill Andrews

- Pocono Ranchlands did not open this year due to repairs to a bridge to bring a crane to fix the lift
- Saw Creek has 4 patrollers. Successful OEC class. Hosted a winter fest race and added a sledding area. Water pipe replacement project continues, trails to be named.
- Shawnee has 78 patrollers, including 2 YAPs (Young Adult Patroller Program). 10 candidates, 7 of which completed training. Ran a toboggan training workshop in January.
- Camelback has 100 patrollers, including 1 YAP. 6 candidates, all passed OEC, 1 passed OET. Hosted a Geisinger doctor residency program. Continuing snowmaking automation project.
- Jack Frost has 74 patrollers. 3 candidates, all female, successfully passed OEC and OET. 4 patrollers became full seniors. Discussed the trouble with instructor and senior profiles. Jack Frost just celebrated its 50th anniversary.
- Big Boulder has 41 patrollers; 8 new candidates that passed OEC, 6 of whom passed OET. Big Boulder just celebrated its 75th anniversary. - celebrated 75th anniversary.
- Discussed how to dispose of hazardous waste- many mountains give it to the ambulance companies
- Discussed concerns about recruitment and visiting patroller perks
- OEC to EMT - there is a path to become an EMT; discussion of whether the inverse should be available through a course challenge

Central - Leigh Linder

- Bear Creek - Lack of natural snow was a challenge. 4 new patrollers, 10 new OET candidates. 2 patrollers passed SOET (Senior Outdoor Emergency Transportation), one became a full Senior. EMT bridge course is underway.
- Blue Mountain - Good season, new 6-pack chair was a success. 10 new candidates became patrollers. Snowmaking improvement projects. Recruitment is a challenge. Target is 20+ new patrollers each year. Success with safety tents during 4 weekends; helpful for recruiting.
- Spring Mountain - Had a short season, but very busy. 12 new candidates, 2 new full seniors. Discussed a recruitment officer and the best way to find new candidates. Possible solar panel and snowmaking upgrades discussed.
- Eagle Rock continues on a 5 year infrastructure plan. No new OET candidates, recruiting is a challenge, may use a resort newsletter as a tool. Two transfers
- Valley Forge Nordic - Did not offer skiing this year due to lack of snow.

Northern - Bobby Morgan

- Jerry Washo has been elected as incoming Section Chief
- Elk Mountain has 3 new seniors; and a growing YAP program. One patroller completed the certified program in one weekend and was the first female to do so.
- Montage added more non-skiing elements to the property and had heavy guest traffic. 6 candidates became patrollers; hosted region SOEC (Senior Outdoor Emergency Care) and SOET events. Expecting a good candidate class for the next season.

- Upper Delaware Nordic - Limited snow, but members can patrol either on skis, snowshoe, or hike - offering different ways to meet attendance requirements.
- Big Bear - New patrol director, Adrian Feldhusen. 561 volunteer hours were logged, a new record. Renovated patrol room creating distinct aid and family rooms. Raised \$1,500 in a fundraiser during President's week. Summer OEC class with 15 candidates.
- Hideout - new patrol director, Dave Oswell. Small resort but large number of skiers and looking to expand terrain with a new trail for upcoming season. 7 patrollers, one paid.

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

Program/Advisor Updates

Treasurer - Sharon Friedel for Ken Reese

- Total Income \$19,843 – mostly from registration dues, and programs.
- Total Expenses \$15,971 – mostly from programs. Several outstanding expenses for OEC and division meeting
- Net Income \$3,872.37, expected to be \$695 after outstanding expenses.
- Bank Account Balance \$16,587.
- Edward Jones Account: 3 years ago was \$39,319, currently \$77,269.

Motion made by Bobby Morgan and seconded by Greg Mohr to approve the Treasurer's Report; motion carried.

Secretary – Nancy Mayberry

- Nothing to report

Alumni – Sharon Friedel for Jim Cahill

- Spring has an active alumni program, 3 alums actively participate in OET training on weekday evenings. Two have been patrolling for 50+ years.
- Each patrol should have an alumni advisor, countless opportunities to help with OEC, YAPs, etc.

Awards – David Marks

- Only a few patrols are submitting awards, other patrols are encouraged to submit nominations.
- Several merit star worthy incidents including an OEC incident at Jack Frost and 2 at Camelback. An additional submission is in the works.
- Merit stars, an outstanding award, a Patriot Star, and various achievement awards to be presented later in the meeting
- 5 patrollers from the region are up for division awards
- One National Appointment is in the works

Certified - Sharon Friedel for Brant Maley

- Event at Killington in March was well attended with patrollers from various divisions. 3 new certified patrollers.

- Next year will likely be at Sugarbush, tentatively the third weekend in March

Communications - Greg Mohr

- National provides help licensing for radio communications, both patrols and mountains, at no cost other than the license itself.
- AT&T FirstNet program remains available for patrollers
- Bob Bernatos discussed a national system outage that Greg was able to help resolve and thanked him.

Elections – Sharon Friedel for Inese Jardine & John Levkulic

- Section Chief elections have been completed
- Region Director position election is during the fall OEC season, voting to be conducted online. Currently one candidate; the new Region Director will start in Spring 2024.

Instructor Development – Brian DeFluri for Brent Watts

- Brian will be taking over the program in the future
- Class scheduled for May 20th via Zoom, no on-site requirement for Instructor Development moving forward.
- Aiming for classes to be in the late spring so that instructors are ready to go for the upcoming season

Legal – Tim Kelly

- Discussed an incident at Blue Mountain in 2018 that resulted in a lawsuit. Discussed the resort's filing for a summary judgment and various witness statements, deposition statements by resort personnel and disclaimers in the context of perceivable risk. Discussed the importance of marking on-trail hazards vs obstacles. The case continues.
- Discussed difference between negligence and gross negligence

Medical - Adam Ray

- Eastern Division Medical Advisors have been meeting regularly via Zoom
- Patrol Directors can reach out to Adam with any medical questions, he'll either answer or share with other Medical Advisors in the region
- Resources on the division website to help with patroller stress injury

MIST - Wolfgang Boernert

- Calendar has been updated, including the OEC schedule for Fall 2023
- Call or email if there's an event not listed
- Contact info - advisors/program directors to verify the addresses listed are correct
- Working to improve recruitment page on the website
- Email uses Constant Contact; some patrollers have unsubscribed from these emails. Once unsubscribed, they cannot be resubscribed from the center, encouraged PDs to ask patrollers to go to the website and subscribe on the calendar page.
- Last Run section has been added to the website as a memorial page; if anyone is missing, reach out to Wolfgang
- Sharon asked program advisors to provide updated information for the website

OEC – Dennis Zercher

- The Fall 2023 refresher schedule, including locations, are on the website
- Program Directors asked to confirm dates
- Online learning will likely be available in a similar timeframe to last year. The online course is a prerequisite for signing up for an in-person refresher.
- Discussed challenge with patrollers signing up for more than one in-person refresher.
- Flo Rutherford discussed OEC instructor/IT procedures; discourage new instructors from running a course on their own. If someone's coming from a different region, they are not to run a course on their own. Also discussed paperwork for instructors, make sure they are current forms' get sent by the IT (Instructor Trainer) to Dennis and Flo.

PA License Plate Program – Howard Rosenthal

- Co-administrator is now David Ehrlich
- Investigating getting a motorcycle plate, but will take some time
- Plate registrations come in sporadically; will be offered year round but only submitted 3x/year - April, August, and December.
- Program was temporarily paused, but has resumed as of now.
- Issue with plates delamination; the state hasn't been helpful up to this point but PA will offer replacement plates for specialty orgs at no charge, but will be a different plate number (unless you pay for a custom plate)

Pro Program – Terry Ownes

- Discussed the difference between a paid patroller and a pro patroller.
- Discussion of whether mostly paid patrols should remain in EPA or switch to pro division

Safety - Jennifer Rinker

- Division is working on safety team job descriptions to be distributed to patrol directors
- Working on missing person search and rescue procedures
- Establishing safety captains or safety advisors for the region
- "Safety inside and out" - know the code; Outside focuses on helmets; Inside is mental health, which is currently the focus. Info on EPA website that links to division.
- Posters and wallet cards available for patrols upon request
- Safety tents - used by Spring, Camelback, and Blue this past season. The tent can be used for recruitment as well.

SOEC – Sharon Friedel for Chris Whitpan

- Evaluation has a new format that was used for 2 candidates.
- Clinics and evals being planned for next season.

SOET – Chrissy Ludka

- New program information presented at division meeting at Killington, all added to patrollerschool.org.
- Steer all patrollers interested in OET training to Chrissy or patrollerschool.org

- Killington event was successful, however weather and ticketing were a challenge. Looking to move towards smaller events.
- Discussed the Elk patroller school which is a division event and staffing comes from across the division. 38 new patrollers participated, with 12 staff, due to the cap of 50 tickets. To be repeated next year.
- TE recertification has a new process, now on a 3 year cycle and no longer happens at patrollers school.
- SOET eval has new evaluation criteria that no longer uses numbers. The new criteria is online at patrollerschool.org.
- 6 new TEs (Trainer/Evaluators); 3 from Montage, 1 at Big Boulder, and 2 from Elk; 4 of which participated in the Montage evaluation in March.
- 14/16 candidates passed the SOET evaluation.
- Discussion about the number of TEs vs available slots for an event; looking for other opportunities for TEs to participate, even if not at the eval.
- Working on doing mini patroller schools replicating events last season at Blue and Camelback.
- Working on mentorship program for TEs
- Looking for mountains that have PSIA level 3 instructors to host clinics, potentially on weekdays
- New OET information will be communicated via email to the membership; also monthly open Zoom calls
- TE help is available for mountains that do not have enough local instructor staff.

YAP – Megan Eckhart

- Event at Blue in February had 9 yaps participate; 14 adults chaperoning/helping
- Region event is expected to be February 24th and 25th next year, to be a free event. Prospective YAPs are welcome as well, need to register for a free NSP number (don't have to be attached to a mountain)
- Patrol directors encouraged to amplify YAP events sent via email
- Division event not yet scheduled for next season, pending location
- 6 YAPs participated at the division event. Corbin from Camelback placed 5th overall; Vanessa from Spring placed 14th overall. Three were patrollers, the others on a "clinicing" track with 2 since becoming candidates.
- Vail allowed young adults to audit OET events this past season upon approval, even though YAPs cannot patrol.
- Encouraged parental guidance for resort talent screening interviews
- 93% stay rate for patrollers that join as YAPs, 80% remain at the same mountain

Women's – Leigh Linder

- Event held at Blue on March 4th with 8 participants; mostly limited by number of instructors
- Event planned for next year, looking for potential host mountains.

Other Advisors

No reports available from Avalanche, MTR (Mountain Traverse Rescue), Nordic/Backcountry, and ORM (Outdoor Risk Management).

Motion made by Greg Mohr and seconded by Bobby Morgan to approve the Program Advisor Reports; motion carried.

National Updates

Bob Bernatos, National Board Member

- IT systems: MMS (Member Management System) update scheduled to go live at end of May after internal completes testing
- LMS (Learning Management System) updates continue after feedback from members last OEC season. The 2023 OEC refresher is nearly complete and reflects feedback. Cross-browser compatibility is an issue, contact the national office with any problems.
- Education records: known bug that is causing some patrollers to be on the delinquency report; individual records should be correct. If any issues are seen after the new MMS launches, report it.
- New website planned that will replace separate member and public sites. Encourages all patrollers to check personal records once the new site launches.
- Online ticketing system for member services is being created to replace calls/voicemails/emails.
- Subaru has changed their marketing focus and did not renew the NSP sponsorship, not a reflection on the relationship. NSP is exploring other automotive sponsors.
- New partnership manager in the national office, several new sponsors signed.
- Warehouse sale continues on store.nsp.org
- Board is having the first face to face meeting since Powerfall 2022 in June.
- National election coming up this year has 5 open seats
- Office ranks are fully staffed; many new team members; focus on staff documenting their jobs.
- JSOU (Joint Statement of Understanding) - currently there is none in place. Working with NSAA and Vail to come up with language that works for all parties.
- Avalanche program: AAA Avalanche is the de facto owner of the program in the US; discussed the risk of NSP's programs no longer being recognized, instructors may need to join AAA.
- Risk management module being developed for LMS, all patrollers encouraged to take it.
- Pro Patroller definition: member of the Pro Division, not a paid patroller in any other geographic division (those are considered paid volunteers)
- Answered a question about the system for managing awards, mentioned that it could be a future project once current projects complete

Bob Scarlett, National Board Member

- Discussed the power that the Eastern PA region has with voting; only region to have 2 national board members
- Discussed the divide between the western and the eastern divisions
- Discussed the relationship with Vail: things have improved, especially on the east coast where there aren't sufficient paid patrollers. Improvements with coverage, benefits, and patrol equipment and facilities. Discussed Vail potentially creating its own patrol system with volunteers only doing OEC and the concerns Vail may have with volunteer patrollers.
- NSP Chairman and Executive Officer have been working to improve the relationship with the NSAA.
- Powderfall 2024 will be held at Vail.

- Discussed the financial impact of sponsorships
- Discussed the power balance between senior leadership, committees and the board and the adherence to policies.
- Discussed several proposed bylaws changes that may be up for a vote by membership.

Other Region Updates

Sharon Friedel discussed the following topics:

- Voting turnout from the region in last year's election
- Discussed the relationship with the EMS system with Kurt Adam highlighting the OEC/EMS bridge course and how to further integrate between the two certifications; including use of the Wilderness EMT program.

Award Presentations

Sharon Friedel presented the following awards:

Purple Merit Star

- One in progress
- Joseph Hall
- David Smith
- Terry Ownes
- David Magagna
- Renata Jankowska
- Thomas Davis

Blue Merit Star

- Seven in progress
- Chad Culbertson
- Julie Hall
- Rodrigo Risopatron
- Thomas Csongradi

Yellow Merit Star

- Two in progress
- James Policelli
- Neil Colquhoun
- Thomas Kneiss
- Susan Ballek
- Russ Czjaka
- Robert Miller
- Inese Jardine

Meritorious Service Award

- Bobby Morgan

Distinguished Service Award

- Dennis Zercher

Patroller Achievement Award

- James Foley
- Mark Sarno
- Jeff Feather
- David Tomazic

Outstanding Awards

- Big Boulder – Large Alpine Patrol
- Eagle Rock – Small Alpine Patrol
- Joe Budney – Alpine Patroller
- Rick Volinsky – Alumni
- Ron Helm – Non-OEC Instructor
- Rick Shandler – Nordic Patroller
- Mark Azeff – OEC Instructor
- Mitch Wise – Paid Patrol Director/Representative
- Flo Rutherford – Paid Patroller
- Stephanie Synnott – Volunteer Patrol Director/Representative

National Appointment

- One in progress

Patriot Star Award

- Ian Dodson

Ed Hirschman Award for Service

- Nancy Mayberry

Irv Naylor Partners in Industry

- Charles Jefferson

Region Director's Award

- Wolfgang Boernert

Open Discussion

No new business presented.

Adjournment

Motion made by Terry Ownes and seconded by Greg Mohr to adjourn the meeting at 1:15pm; motion carried.

Minutes Submitted by Mike Woodruff

Next Meeting

EPA Fall Officers' Meeting
Sunday, November 12, 2023
Blue Mountain Resort