

Eastern Pennsylvania Region Meeting Minutes November 10, 2024



Call To Order

Region Director Kurt Adam called to order the regular meeting of the National Ski Patrol Eastern Pennsylvania Region at 9:25AM on November 10, 2024 at Jack Frost Mountain.

Kurt discussed hosting regional meetings at different mountains throughout the area, potentially at Eagle Rock in spring 2025; and fall 2025 at Roundtop. The plan is to continue scheduling the spring meeting in April and the fall meeting after the last region OEC refresher. Spring Mountain was offered by Brent Watts as a potential venue.

Moment Of Silence

Kurt Adam called for a motion of silence in memory of the following patrollers:

- Stan Wierzbicki (Elk Mountain)
- Robert Frey
- Norman Eilers
- John (Jack) Bernard Sikorski (Big Boulder)
- Robert Joshua Shaffer Barette (Jack Frost)
- Jerry Golibart Blair Sr. (Liberty Mountain)

Reading of Minutes

Motion made by Brent Watts, seconded Mike Dodge to waive the reading of the minutes from the April 2024 meeting and approve as presented; motion carried.

Introductions/Staff Changes

Kurt Adam introduced the following new faces to the meeting

- John Wolf - Liberty Mountain Patrol Representative
- Emily Robertson - Montage Mountain Assistant Patrol Representative
- Adrian Feldhusen - Big Bear/Mast Hope Patrol Representative

Donations

Kurt Adam announced the following donations to the region:

- Eastern Pennsylvania Ski Council: \$500
- East Allen Township Fire and Rescue: \$43,900 (to be used for OEC activities)

Section Chief Reports

Pocono - Dina Manoway

- Jack Frost reported a full patrol roster; they have not had a candidate class in a few years and have 15 prospects on a wait list. They will be doing a ski-off in February. There are 4 SOEC candidates and 4 candidates for SOET. The mountain will continue to do advanced ski clinics.
- Shawnee - This year's OEC class utilized the new hybrid course; several questions were raised about the test bank. Discussion about the increased fees for the OEC course - the patrol is considering partial reimbursement upon successful completion of the course. The mountain continues to automate snowmaking with approximately 8% automated for this season.
- Camelback - The patrol participated in a local halloween parade for recruitment and has 5 OEC candidates this fall. The mountain is implementing a non-NSP host program to have people in the base area to help guide guests. A brush fire at the state park at the top of the mountain was contained by the joint efforts of resort personnel and local forest responders.
- Big Boulder - 2 OEC candidates offset 2 departing patrollers. The patrol is using Easy EMS Education as their CPR provider and has 12 in-house instructors. New Helly Hanson patrol uniforms are set to debut this season. Two patrollers became full senior last season and 3-4 more are considering for the upcoming season. The mountain has upgraded 2 trails with new LED lighting and has installed 7 new snowguns in the beginner area with permanent padding.
- Saw Creek - The patrol welcomes secondary patrollers and is happy to host regional events. There are several candidate prospects for the upcoming season. Ski patrollers also serve as snowmakers at the mountain.

Northern - Jerry Washo

- Hideout - The patrol's 5 members successfully handled 12 incidents last season. Discussion about challenges with local EMS intercepts.
- Big Bear - The patrol is working to develop additional policies and procedures looking at other mountains as a reference. Last season, the patrol responded to 280 incidents. This season there are 5 candidates and 34 active patrollers; an OEC class may be held this season. The mountain has upgraded radios and the snowmaking system for the upcoming season.
- Montage - 5 or 6 candidates will be joining this season and one former patroller is returning to the patrol that currently boasts 90 members. Last season there were between 400 and 500 incidents. This season, the patrol will be hosting the SOET annual meeting and focusing on lift evacuation training with the local fire department. The mountain offers reciprocal visiting patroller benefits to match the policy offered at the patroller's home mountain
- Upper Delaware Nordic - The patrol covers 60 miles of trails and operates on a minimal budget.
- Elk - The mountain in the process of being sold to an individual investor/developer, but no changes are expected this year. The patrol lost several long-time patrollers within the past year. One candidate this season who completed OEC at Montage. The patrol continues to emphasize the senior program and has set the expectation that all patrollers should participate. Discussion about the benefits of the YAP program. Last season, there were a smaller number of accidents than normal, between 200 and 300.

Southwest - Jay Thompson

- All Three Mountains - Staffing challenges persist across all 3 resorts in the section. Each mountain has a different mix of paid vs volunteer staff. Liberty is an even split while Roundtop is 60% volunteer and 40% paid, and Whitetail is 80% volunteer and 20% paid. The mountains are putting more emphasis on volunteers. Whitetail is struggling with recruitment; lost half of their OEC class and only 20 prospects participated in ski off last season. Liberty and Roundtop both had successful recruiting. New Helly Hanson uniforms to debut this season; Vail to purchase and wash at the end of the season
- Whitetail's high speed quad is up for replacement. The mountain removed a double lift on the terrain park and sold the chairs; the park is served by the main chair. The patrol has had several successful fundraising events including a fall festival and a ski swap. The relationship with management continues to approve.
- Roundtop is working on a proposal for a YAP program despite Vail's general policy that does not currently allow YAPs
- Liberty's Ed Riggs is the new Instructor Development supervisor for the division. The Resort is celebrating its 50th anniversary.

Central - Leigh Linder

- Spring: - Four new candidates for this season and 6 senior aid room candidates. The patrol hosted the MTR and Avalanche refresher this fall - and also hosted the New Jersey Region lift evacuation symposium.
- Blue: This season there are 17 candidates; the roster is currently at 75 patrollers.
- Bear Creek - There are 6 new patrollers this season and 12 candidates in a gender-balanced class. The mountain hosted a banquet in May that raised money for the Leigh Valley 5k classic run and the National USA Cycling championship this summer.
- Eagle Rock - The mountain has a quiet off-season, but is working on various infrastructure improvements.
- Valley Forge Nordic - no report filed.

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

Program/Advisor Updates

Avalanche Program - Rick Shandler in for Bob Vocke

- Looking for an opportunity to host a Level 1 Mod 1 avalanche class within the region. The online component of the course has been well received. The online course takes about 6 hours; followed by a 4 hour skills class.
- Kurt spoke to how patrollers can benefit from the course.

Awards – David Marks

- There were a smaller number of awards this year; just 20 submitted since the spring. Patrols are encouraged to nominate patrollers for noteworthy incidents.
- Discussion and encouragement to nominate long-term seniors for National Appointment.
- Various awards to be presented later in the meeting
- Discussion about the requirements to be awarded a Yellow Merit Star; Kurt clarified that anyone can be nominated for this.

Instructor Development - Brent Watts for Brian DeFluri

- Three online courses were held this summer; all were very successful.
- Planning is underway for 2025 courses.

EMS – Eric Snyder

- Several new initiatives are in development
- A patroller workshop was launched last month; to be free for all patrollers (paid for by EMS); 40 registered for and 35 attended the virtual sessions. 2 more sessions are planned; to be announced on the website and through MIST communications.
- There is a plan to do another EMT bridge course next spring; it'll be a hybrid of online and in person. Registration expected to open in December

Legal - Tim Kelly

- Discussion about the nuances of Pennsylvania Skiers Responsibility Act and how it's not a standalone act; more of an "immunity act". Review of the types of incidents that are and aren't covered by the act. The act has been enhanced over the years through court rulings. It generally does not apply to snowtubing.
- Discussion about release forms that some employees are asked to sign by mountains that waive mountain liability for them and their family.

Medical - Kurt for Adam Ray and Bill Jordan

- The national office has started a national wellness taskforce that currently has 34 participants; plan to meet quarterly. Will have a short article in TrailSweep from all the medical advisors. An "Ask the Doc" column is also set to debut in TrailSweep.

MIST - Wolfgang Boernert

- The website continues to be updated, focusing on the various programs. Program advisors are asked to review the information on their page and email updates.
- OEC communications worked well; there was small issue with patrollers signing up for multiple events... this was solved by over-inviting to a few events to solve for no shows
- Last Run is the memorial page on the website; any additional detail beyond the late patroller's name is very helpful
- A new design for the region calendar is being developed to work better on mobile devices.
- OEC completion lists are posted for the past 3 years; due to a NSP change, the patrol name is not included. Patrollers who refreshed outside the region will not be on the region list; they can verify on the national site.
- Kurt Adam reiterated the importance of providing content for the region website

MTR - Lou Marchi

- A class will be held at Roundtop this year the weekend before Thanksgiving; 11 of the 30 slots are full. The more participants, the smoother the class runs.

Nordic - Tom Kneiss

- There are two nordic patrols in the region; Valley Forge and Upper Delaware. The former has no candidates but several prospects; the latter has no candidates. One alpine patroller is considering signing on as a secondary.
- The hug a tree program has been a successful education program
- Discussion about lack of snow; encourages other patrols to allow visiting patrollers so they can get on the snow. Much of the day to day patrol work focuses on keeping trails clear

OEC - Dennis Zercher

- This off season 13 refreshers refreshed 216 instructors and 931 patrollers. There were several staffing gaps; patroller no-shows have become an issue. No plans to run a makeup refresher.
- Reminder that the online course must be done before the in-person refresher; sets the foundation for the hands-on skills.
- The delinquent list to be issued on January 1st; it can be difficult to get off the list.
- Patrol Representatives are asked to share their on the hill dates to minimize instructor conflicts
- Next year's refreshers are being scheduled; will be posted on the OEC page of the website once finalized.
- There was positive feedback from this year's refresher cycle; especially the Jams & Pretzels stations.

License Plate - David Ehrlich

- Since the spring meeting; there were 5 sequential and 5 custom plates ordered. The program is generating positive cash flow.
- This fall, the plates were featured at several refreshers; one plate was sold at Spring Mountain. Planning to offer at more refreshers next fall.
- Discussion about the new license plate design that Pennsylvania is rolling out; David to inquire about how the NSP plates will change.
- Discussion about de-laminated plates, there is a procedure to replace; there is a cost for the first replacement but after that they're at no charge.

Treasurer - David Ehrlich

Since spring meeting:

- Total Income \$64,183.42
- Total Expenses \$29,450.17
- Net Income \$34,733.25
 - \$43,900 was from the East Allen donation; to be put in the Edward Jones account
- Bank Account Balance \$52,651.57 (up from \$16,313.01)
- Edward Jones Account: \$92,490.99 (up from \$88,773.78)
- Tax reporting season was a success; all 990s were submitted within 2 days of being able to submit; best showing from the region ever and the first region to submit this year. David thanked Nancy Mayberry for the system that was implemented by the division.
- Reimbursements are primarily electronic now, via Zelle.
- Available to answer any budget questions; feel free to reach out; can also share historical expenses and income.

Safety - Jenn Rinker and Rick Schandler

- Patroller stress safety is a big focus.
- A patroller was lost in the division last year because he wore a backpack on the lift that was purchased from NSP. Some mountains have banned backpacks on lifts; encourages conversation between patrol and mountain management about backpack policies
- Showed a video produced by the safety team [\[link\]](#).
- Asked all meeting attendees to complete survey that will be emailed out [\[link\]](#)
- Discussion about patroller mental health; there is a wealth of resources available online
- Encourage focusing on both guest AND patroller safety; both proactively and, where necessary, reactively
- Discussion about modeling behavior; kids won't take off the backpack if a patroller in front of them has one. Helmet acceptance was largely driven by patroller adoption.
- Safety calls are not recorded so that personal accounts are not kept on record
- Safety tent is available for use; stored in Whitehall; reach out to Jenn to use

Senior OET – Chrissy Ludka

- Thanked the staff for being amazing; encouraged patrol reps to utilize the staff and reach out to Chrissy with questions
- Monthly zoom calls that started 2 years ago will continue. They're held the first Tuesday of each month.
- There are 50 TEs in the region; which is more than the rest of the Eastern Division combined
- An in-person staff meeting and training session with PSIA is scheduled for December 15th at Montage
- A division staff meeting is scheduled for the first weekend of December at Killington
- An updated version of the TE handbook available on [patrollerschool.org](#)
- Discussion about the Toboggan Fundamental program in the book that national will be adopting
- Chrissy thanked Matt Nubbs, Sid Hamburger, Leigh Linder, Kurt Adam, and Ron Helm for their contributions to the program
- 19 candidates took the SOET evaluation last season, with a 100% pass rate
- [Ppatrollerschool.org](#) is updated with upcoming season's SOET events
- SOET evaluation is scheduled for Sunday March 9th; will be on the website shortly

YAP – Mason Rinker for Meghan Eckhart

- A YAP free ski day being planned for December 30th at Blue Mountain
- A region YAP event planned at blue feb 8/9; this is earlier than last year; and is open to anyone 13 and up
- The Eastern Division YAP Summit is scheduled for March 7th to March 9th at Smugglers Notch

Women's Program – Leigh Linder

- A clinic is planned for January 24th at Elk Mountain.
- Planning on several mini clinics depending on staff availability

Other Programs

- No updates available from Alumni Program, Certified, Elections, Historian, Outdoor Risk Management, Pro Program, and Senior OEC Programs.

Motion made by Dina Manoway and seconded by Sharon Friedel to approve the Program Advisor Reports; motion carried.

National Updates

Bob Scarlett, National Board Member provided the following updates:

- Spoke about the importance of the Eastern Division and EPA region; largest region in the entire patrol; it's the 6th largest voting unit in NSP
- Discussion about national elections
- Discussion about the national chair and their focus on moving the organization forward
- Bob is now serving as the assistant national chair
- Discussed the relevance of NSP and the need to evolve to match the ski industry, recommends voting for hosts to be members to remain more relevant
- Spoke about the dues increase; he voted for it; primarily due to the exit of Subaru to focus on their national park sponsorships; Patagonia has dramatically scaled back their giving. Sponsors contribute 50% of the budget so there was a void to fill.
- Discussed quality improvement within NSP in the past 10-15 years
- Question about backfill of sponsorships; NSP CEO Cox actively pursuing sponsorships; several new smaller deals in place
- Discussion about EMT Associate patrols; some midwest mountains are not able to find enough patrollers and have started using EMTs as associate patrollers who don't need to take OEC.
- Discussed the relationship between Vail and the NSAA and the improvements to the relationship between patrollers and Vail in recent years. Vail has been having trouble finding enough patrollers and EMTs can help fill the void.
- Discussed the benefits of the Women's and YAP programs and how EPA has some of the best offerings nationally
- Comment about how many patrollers in the region choose to remain here as opposed to moving to the pro division
- Discussion about patroller classifications; how to track each patroller's status in the national system

Other Updates

Kurt Adam provided the following updates:

- Kurt discussed the importance of voting in the national elections
- Discussed the cost change for new patrollers enrolling in the OEC course. For this year's candidates only, there's an idea to reimburse candidates \$25 or \$50 upon completion of the course.

Motion by Rick Schandler, seconded by Dina Manoway to reimburse \$50 to each candidate who paid the new \$150 rate upon completion of the course for this year only to be paid from the region general fund, motion carried.

Award Presentations

Yellow Merit Star

- *One in progress*
- Larry Jones (Blue Mountain)

Purple Merit Star

- *Four in progress*

Blue Merit Stars

- *Four in progress*

Outstanding Awards

The following won an outstanding award at the division level and received a Yellow Merit Star:

- Elk Mountain – Outstanding Large Alpine Patrol
- Nancy Mayberry (Camelback) – Outstanding Administrative Patroller
- Christine Ludka (Elk) – Non-OEC Instructor
- William Bock (Camelback) – Outstanding Paid Patroller

National Appointment

- Gary Johnson (Spring Mountain) – *Already presented*

Patrollers Cross

- Alexander Kalista (Jack Frost)

Fifty Year Awards

- Paul Solomon (Elk Mountain)
- Robert Scarlett (Ski Liberty)
- Bill Graham (Spring Mountain) – *Already presented*

Open Discussion

No new topics raised.

Adjournment

Motion made by Jay Thompson and seconded by Joe Hall to adjourn the meeting at 12:16pm; motion carried.

Minutes Submitted by Mike Woodruff

Next Meeting: EPA Spring Officers Meeting, date and location TBD