

Eastern Pennsylvania Region Meeting Minutes November 12, 2023



Call To Order

Region Director Sharon Friedel called to order the regular meeting of the National Ski Patrol Eastern Pennsylvania Region at 9:05AM on November 12, 2023 at Blue Mountain Resort.

Moment Of Silence

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

- Robert Barrette, Jack Frost
- Scott Spohn, JFBB & Camelback
- Alan Johnston, Jack Frost
- Jim Cahill, Spring Mountain
- Phil Matte, Ski Roundtop
- Robert Carhart, Sr, Camelback
- David Hassler, Camelback
- William "Buzz" Radicon, Shawnee

Reading of Minutes

Motion made by Brent Watts and seconded by Mike Dodge for the EPA region to waive the reading of the minutes from the April 2023 meeting; motion carried.

Introductions/Staff Changes

Sharon Friedel introduced the following staff changes:

- David Ehrlich as Treasurer
- David Ehrlich as License Plate Advisor
- Ed Conaway as Alumni Advisor

Section Chief Reports

Central - Leigh Linder

- Blue Mountain has had multiple capital improvements, primarily focusing on automated snowmaking which is now 75% automated. There are 14 candidates.
- Spring Mountain has new Petzl lift evacuation gear. There are 9 candidates.
- Eagle Rock has had a quiet off season, but is upgrading infrastructure including a new magic carpet for tubing. No OEC class this year but they are recruiting.
- Valley Forge will be hosting a joint EPA/New Jersey ski lift rescue symposium; additional information is on the region website and was distributed to meeting participants.
- Bear Creek's capital improvements include a snowmaking piping replacement, a new groomer, 8 new snow guns, and improved lighting. The resort was nominated as one of the top 10 resorts to visit in the country. The patrol has been using Petzel lift evac gar and a 2nd belay line. There are 13 OEC candidates.

Southwest - Jay Thompson

- Across all 3 resorts, it was a relatively quiet summer after a short season. Behind the scenes improvements in progress include such as water lines, compressors, and pumps.
- Whitetail is slated for major snowmaking automation improvements as part of Vail initiatives
- Whitetail has largest volunteer patrol of all vail resorts in PA; local management suggesting that it will remain primarily volunteer-based
- Paid staff must maintain 15 hours per week to remain on staff; some resorts don't have enough hours and there was discussion of whether patrollers could be asked to assist in other departments to meet the hour requirement

Pocono - Bill Andrews

- Jack Frost is not currently not taking any new patrollers due to a hiring freeze. There is a high level of interest in senior training, but concern that limited events might prevent everyone from getting in. Questions were posed about using a backboard, discussion is encouraged.
- Shawnee ran an OEC clinic with 6 participants and 4 passes.
- Camelback is debuting an automated cafeteria and has \$5.5 million planned for snowmaking improvements in the next few years. A local senior clinic and Senior OEC training is planned. There are 8 candidates.
- Pocono Ranchlands is remaining closed this season. Uncertain whether it will open in the future.
- Big Boulder successfully completed a night time lift evacuation training exercise.

Northern - Jerry Washo

- Montage Mountain is replacing snowmaking pipes and the lift evacuation team is working to understand OSHA requirements. An OEC clinic is planned for the end of February.
- Hideout has a new beginner slope that is scheduled to debut this season
- Elk Mountain is focusing on general repairs after successfully completing 2 lift evacuations last year and being observed by the state. The patrol is developing a YAP "bible" and has 4 candidates, and 5 SOEC candidates.

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

Program/Advisor Updates

Treasurer - David Ehrlich

Since spring meeting:

- Total Income \$1,034.32
- Total Expenses \$5,727.01
- Net Income -\$4,692.69
- Bank Account Balance \$11,883.61
- Edward Jones Account: \$75,526.96

The region has been transitioned from QuickBooks to Quicken which saves \$350 year; the subscription cost is to be split with Roundtop. Reimbursements will continue to use expense reports that are on the website; a single PDF is preferred containing the report and supporting documents. Expense reports must be approved by Program Advisor and Region Director before submitting to the Treasurer. Looking to transition from paper checks to Zelle for reimbursement.

Motion made by Brent Watts and seconded by Rick Shandler to amend the By-Laws of the region to reflect the fiscal year as running from July 1 through June 30th; motion carried.

Secretary – Nancy Mayberry & Mike Woodruff

- Mike Woodruff is the incoming Secretary and will formally take over duties once the new Region Director's term starts.

Medical Advisor – Adam Ray

- The Eastern Division medical advisors meet monthly on Zoom, happy to bring questions to the division; reach out via email.
- Mountains wanting to develop protocols beyond OEC can do so, happy to discuss how.
- A Yellow Merit Star presented to Adam by Sharon.

Women's – Leigh Linder

- Hoping to hold a clinic for 12 patrollers at Montage, details to follow.
- Chrissy Ludka asked for female patrollers that sign up for an event to indicate if they do NOT want to specifically be paired up with a primarily women's team.

YAP – Sharon for Megan Eckhart & Mason Rinker

- Aged 14-17 can reach out to Megan through the website if interested in learning more
- The region is planning an event at Blue Mountain on February 24th and 25th. It'll be a free event, but participants must sign up. OEC and OET instructors are being sought to help with the event.
- The Eastern Division YAP event at Smugglers Notch from March 8-11.

SOET – Chrissy Ludka

- Getting familiar with new changes made at the division level, including new T/E recertification requirements; it's a 3 year process.
- Last season's evaluation at Montage saw 16 participants; 14 fully passed, 2 were a partial pass. 6 different mountains provided evaluators.
- Emphasis moving forward will be on running regional clinics
- The next SOET evaluation is tentatively scheduled for March 3rd with a backup date of March 9th. Location to be confirmed.
- T/Es continue to meet monthly; patrol directors welcome to join
- All info on patrollerschool.org

- Eastern Division will be hosting Patrollers School at Elk Mountain January 20-21. Registration at patrollerschool.org
- Camelback is planning to host a regional Patroller School on January 28th; details to follow.

SOEC – Sharon Friedel for Chris Whitpan

- The upcoming season will have 2 clinics and 1 evaluation scheduled. A 2nd evaluation is not being scheduled to limited interest; however if demand warrants, it could be added. The evaluation is scheduled to be March 2nd at Spring Mountain.

Safety – Jennifer Rinker & Rick Shandler

- A region tent available for events. Please reach out if doing any events to collaborate on ideas.
- Rick Schandler has been focusing on encouraging every patrol to have at least one person focused on safety.
- “Safety” is more than public safety; specifically patroller inner safety... stress related symptoms which can make it harder to patrol. Have resources and support in place for patrollers before they are needed. Some patrols partner with local EMS and fire houses for support. National has a library of patroller wellness material.
- A Lift Evacuation Symposium will be held December 10th at Spring Mountain, underwritten by Petzl and several other companies that will focus on PA requirements. All patrols are encouraged to send a rep.

Pro Program – Sharon Friedel for Terry Ownes

- Discussed the distinction between paid and pro patrollers... Pro patrollers are a separate division and you can register as that... but recommend staying with the EPA region for the benefits and support/training programs..
- Discussion of budgets at Vail resorts.

PA License Plate Program – David Ehrlich and Howard Rosenthal

- David Ehrlich has taken over the program
- Discussion about the issues with plates becoming delaminated, working with the state to resolve
- Motorcycles - looking to start the program but waiting on approval from the NSP executive director.
- A batch of plate orders was just processed; expect in 4-6 weeks
- Discussion about reaching out to the Western Appalachian Region to make sure they're aware that the program is available to Pennsylvania residents.

ORM – Sharon Friedel for Phil Barker

- Outdoor Risk Management is a relatively new program; more information to come.

OEC – Dennis Zercher

- Thanked ski areas and patrol directors for hosting refreshers, also to IT and instructor staff. Thanked Wolfgang and Sharon for their support.
- Working on getting next year's schedule finalized; approximately half the refreshers are confirmed; once all are confirmed will be posted on the regional calendar.
- 13 refreshers running July thru November were completed, including 1 IT refresher, 3 instructor refreshers, and 9 patroller refreshers. A total of 1,139 patrollers were refreshed.
- Discussion about patroller & instructor attire at refreshers.

Mountain Travel Rescue – Lou Marchi

- A program was hosted at Roundtop last year with 18 participants.
- Planning another event for this year. Participation in the program counts as an elective for Senior patroller status.

MIST – Wolfgang Boernert

- There was an issue where the national website registration system crashed but a small number of registrations for refreshers were lost.
- Spoke about the high volume of traffic the national website gets in the Fall and sometimes it's more than the system can handle
- Spoke about potential navigation improvements to the national website
- Spoke about challenges with reporting
- Encouraged all patrollers to save their profile to PDF in the event national loses data.
- Asked program advisors to provide update their programs for posting on the website

Instructor Development – Brent Watts

- There was no fall class due to lack of interest due to other patroller activities. May 11, 2024 will be the next class.
- The class has transitioned to be primarily online; participants must complete the national online program before doing the regional in-person component.
- This is Brent's last season as ID advisor, Brian DeFluri will be taking over at the end of this season.

EMS – Sharon Friedel for Eric Snyder

- A representative from the Pennsylvania EMS council observed the Spring Mountain refresher on November 11th and provided positive feedback.
- 7 patrollers completed the EMT bridge course and are currently studying for their written exam
- Several patrollers have seen their certification lapse; if this has happened, Eric or Wolfgang can provide assistance.

- Various Con-Ed events are being explored for the region; reach out to Eric if your patrol is interested in hosting

Elections – Sharon Friedel for John Levkulic

- The Central and Pocono Section Chiefs are up for re-election.
- The Region Delegate at Large position is up for re-election.
- Kurt Adam won the Region Director election and his term will start at the conclusion of this ski season.
- National election voting is open; 5 positions are up for election. The Eastern Division has reviewed candidates and has made suggestions.

Certified – Sharon Friedel for Brant Maley

- The Certified event is planned for March 14-17, 2024 at Sugarbush.

Awards – David Marks

- 64 awards have been completed since the beginning of 2023.
- Since April, 1 Purple Merit Star, 2 Blue Merit Stars, 18 Yellow Merit Stars, and 2 national appointments have been awarded, with one additional national appointment in progress.
- A national certification of appreciation, one outstanding Patrol Director at the division level, and one Patroller's Cross has been awarded.
- Most award nominations have come from Jack Frost and Camelback, other patrols are encouraged to submit.

Other Programs

No updates available from Alumni, Avalanche, Legal, or Nordic/Back Country.

Motion made by Brent Watts and seconded by Rick Schandler to approve the Program Advisor Reports; motion carried.

National Updates

Sharon Friedel provided the following updates on behalf of Bob Bernatos and Bob Scarlett from the national board:

- Bob Bernatos will be presenting a Purple Merit Star
- Bob Scarlett has been working to refine the relationships both between the national chair and the division directors - and between the national director and the office staff. Bob also reported improvements in the relationship between Vail Resorts and the NSP.

Other Region Updates

Sharon Friedel discussed the following topics:

- This is her last meeting as region director, she thanked the membership for their support
- Kurt Adam was introduced as the incoming Region Director.
 - Kurt discussed his experience at Bear Creek and Blue Mountain and his credentials, both with Ski Patrol and professionally.
 - Looking to maintain the existing EPA processes and keep moving forward.
 - Kurt thanked Dennis for his work on the OEC program.
 - Plans are being made to visit as most/all patrols this season.
- Reminder to Program Advisors about the need to submit a budget. The goal is to break even.
- Discussion about 50 year service awards: recipients have no further national/division/region dues.
- The Eastern Division Newsletter, Trail Sweep is looking to build a website
- Patrollerschool.org has program information including stress awareness
- National website - recommendation to share feedback with her instead of reaching out to national.
- Youth protection dates are now available on NSP member profiles
- NSP is coming out with revised patrollers manual; it's currently being edited and will be presented to the national board by the end of the year
- Discussed positive refresher feedback, both at the region and national level.

Open Discussion

No new business presented.

Award Presentations

Sharon Friedel presented the following awards:

Purple Merit Star (1)

- Rich Miller – Camelback

Blue Merit Star (2)

- James Carruthers – Camelback
- Howard Rosenthal – Jack Frost

Yellow Merit Star (18)

- Susan Wiley – Camelback
- Bill Meeks – Camelback
- Leigh Linder – Bear Creek
- Brant Maley – Roundtop
- Kenneth Reese – Camelback
- P. Timothy Kelly – Elk Mountain
- Adam Ray – Camelback

- Tom Kneiss – Upper Delaware
- Louis Marchi, Jr. – Roundtop
- Terry Ownes – Jack Frost
- Greg Mohr – Pocono Ranch Lands
- Megan Eckhart – Spring Mountain
- Wolfgang Boernert – Pocono Ranch Lands
- Nancy Mayberry – Camelback
- Jennifer Rinker – Blue Mountain
- Paul Spear – Elk Mountain
- Tom Davis – Jack Frost
- Stephanie Synott - Whitetail
- Brent Watts, Spring Mountain

National Appointment (2)

- Joe Budney - Montage
- One in progress

National Certificate of Appreciation (1)

- Eric Erickson – Shawnee

Outstanding Division Volunteer Patrol Director (1)

- Stephanie Synott - Whitetail

Patroller's Cross (1)

- Edward Csongradi – Jack Frost

Adjournment

Motion made by Bobby Morgan and seconded by Paul Spear to adjourn the meeting at 11:00am; motion carried.

Minutes Submitted by Mike Woodruff

Next Meeting

EPA Spring Officers' Meeting
 Saturday, April 14, 2024
 Blue Mountain Resort