

SAR Responder

Summer 2012

Volume 2, Issue 5

An all-volunteer, non-profit 501 (c) (3), formed so that others may live.

Special Event Coming:

- SAR Wild Run

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SAR Recap

4/22/12 – San Joaquin River: It was an unusually hot day when a young man became separated from his family while swimming. He attempted to cross the river when he was pulled into the deceptive currents.

Dive teams from several agencies responded, along with swiftwater teams (including our own), in addition to helicopters, and dog teams (including our own). Working in swift, cold, dangerous conditions, the teams searched for several days, finally locating the body of the young man on April 26th.

Every year, dozens of people mistake deceptive waterways as calm and inviting, leading to tragic outcomes. We encourage the public to recreate safely and are raising public awareness about water dangers.

5/12/12 – Twin Lakes: We received a call to search for four missing hikers in the Twin Lakes region in the evening. The hikers lost the snow-covered trail due to snowmelt that erased their tracks. They used a cell phone to call for help. Teams deployed immediately after completing a long day of

training and were faced with thigh-high snow drifts in some areas. By 3 am, the team found the missing hikers and escorted them to safety.

5/13/12 – Twin Lakes: Not even 24 hours after our last Twin Lakes callout, we received another call for an overdue hiker in the same area. Teams found the missing hiker in a matter of hours, in good condition, just turned around by the snow-covered trails. The hiker was escorted to safety.

Donor Spotlight

A big thank you to the anonymous donor who donated \$100 through our website, www.fresnosar.org.

We appreciate your support! Donations, big or small, play a critical role in helping our team not only save lives through actual searches and rescues, but through education and community outreach.

Wild Run

Looking for a fun challenge this summer or something fun to do with the family? How about visiting our beautiful local forest! Sign up for the SAR Wild Run on August 5th! Starting at Shaver Lake's Fishing Club, participants will experience the beautiful Sierra scenery of Shaver Lake, breathtaking meadows, forests and

cool streams - all for a good cause. Base elevation is about 5400 feet. All events are chip timed! Participants can choose from the

- 5K Wild Run
- 10K Trail Run
- 16K Mountain Bike Ride
- 2M Family Hike

Space is limited, so register soon! For more details and to register, visit www.SARwildrun.com

Training Recap

Swiftwater Awareness

April training prepared us for the upcoming busy summer season and the potential for water rescues. April's training was swiftwater awareness led by Sgt. Kathy Curtice, one of our local experts and swiftwater instructors. We spent the day learning to read the water, understanding its classification and hidden dangers. We discussed the rescue techniques unique to the swiftwater environment along with the equipment used.

Helicopter Safety

May training gave us a chance to review the safety procedures involved in working with helicopters. The use of helicopters can be useful in search and rescue. Both Fresno County Sheriff's Office and CHP gave us an opportunity to work with their helicopters on this training day. We reviewed the different components and locations of safety features on both helicopters while pointing out the differences between the two.

Next we practiced loading into the helicopters with full packs, often a difficult task due to limited space.

Several videos depicted both successful and tragic rescues in a range of swiftwater environments - a sobering reminder of how dangerous the water can be. It gave us all a healthy respect for the water and a strengthened desire to educate the people who frequent our local waterways on the dangers that lurk within. Much thanks to Sgt. Kathy Curtice for giving us an informative training day and we look forward to expanding our swiftwater team soon!

We were also given an opportunity to work with the hoist, the Bauman bag and a host of other tools used in situations where the helicopter cannot land. Overall, it was a very informative day and we are thankful to the agencies that were able to make the event possible.



Swiftwater Technician Training

At the end of May, a few of our mountaineers were privileged to become certified swiftwater technicians with the Sheriff's Department. Over the course of three full, grueling days, they learned the different rope setups used in swiftwater rescue, the equipment used, how to read the water, how to survive in the water and how to save a person in the water. Day one was filled with classroom instruction, day two was in a local canal, and the final day was in the Kings River, another powerful waterway that has claimed countless lives. The participants emerged with a much deeper respect for the water and are ready for the busy summer season that lies ahead.



SAR Academy

Day One

The SAR academy started with an introduction to the Incident Command System (ICS) and its procedures. Every disaster service worker is required to become certified in this system. The day also included basic search techniques commonly used in training and in searches, including hasty searches, grid searches and more. The new recruits received extensive map and compass training, vital in off-trail searching. The day ended with an actual grid search highlighting the probability of detection (POD) with actual clues planted for pretend training victims. The day covered a wealth of information and we will continue to work with our new recruits answering questions and building on the learning process.

Day Two

Training began with knot tying and reviewing the equipment used in low angle rope rescues. Anchoring systems and setups were examined and practiced. Hauling mock patients up a grassy hillside and other harnessed participants descending the hill concluded the day.

Day Three

On the final day, participants learned how to interview reporting parties and witnesses, reviewed radio communications, crime scene management, evidence protection and collection, and track awareness. Upon completing the academy, participants have the basic knowledge necessary to respond to missions and will expand their knowledge at team trainings during their probationary year. Congratulations to our graduates and welcome to the team!

NASAR/MRA Conference



Some members attended the NASAR/MRA Conference held in Lake Tahoe in June. They obtained a mountain of useful information to share with the team and worked with several teams in training scenarios. Members learned skills such as avalanche rescue strategies and technology, common errors made in avalanche rescue and error avoidance, using parallel rope systems in rope rescues, rope selection for rescues, low angle rescue, high altitude emergencies, urban search management and much more. Our team was also honored to receive our acceptance into the prestigious Mountain Rescue Association (MRA). We look forward to working with our sponsor team as we become full members. Thank you to the members who attended this wonderful conference and to NASAR and MRA for putting on a wonderful event!



Board of Directors Elections

Voting for the new Board of Directors for Fresno County Search and Rescue Mountaineering Team was held during the May meeting. Russ Richardson was elected to another term as team leader, Dan Loewen was elected to another term as training officer, Karen Nemeth

was elected to another term as team treasurer, Martin Wendels was elected to another term as team secretary, and Rich Barnes was elected to replace Nick Kohli as member-at-large. For more information on team leadership, please visit our website at www.fresnosar.org

Community Events

March of Dimes

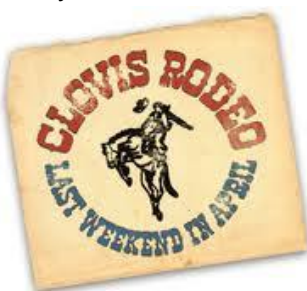
On April 13th and 14th we helped set up and conduct the annual March for Babies at Woodward Park. They were long, busy days, but well worth it with an awesome public turnout.

Central Valley Hiking Group Wilderness Safety

On April 18th, team leader Russ Richardson met with the Central Valley Hiking Group to discuss wilderness safety. With over 60 attendees, it earned rave reviews. We are looking forward to scheduling another talk about advanced wilderness safety.

Clovis Rodeo Parade:

On April 28th, the team walked through the streets of "Old Town Clovis" in the annual Clovis Rodeo Parade to the cheers of more than 40,000 parade fans lining the route. These events raise awareness of our role in public safety.



BLM Frontier Days

In honor of the 200 year anniversary of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the 150 year anniversary of the Homestead Act, the BLM hosted Frontier Day at Foothill Middle School in Prather. BLM staff, teachers, parents, and members of our team dressed in frontier era attire and guided the 60+ 5th graders through workshops. From washing clothes to using mules, the curious students made their way around the course and experienced what it was like to live in those times. Led by Pacific Man Tracking guru and legendary mountaineer Art Sallee, the Fresno SAR team hosted the man tracking workshop. Members of the team took several groups of 15 students through a man tracking exercise showing them how to set up tracking sticks, cutting for sign, camping/hiking safety and actually tracking a "Carlson Rabbit". The workshop ended with Art sharing the Hug-a-Tree program and issuing sheriff stars.

California Classic

On May 17th the SAR Wild Run officially launched at the California Classic Weekend Fitness Expo. Team members hosted the Wild Run booth, handed out fliers and answered questions about the upcoming event. Hundreds of people walked through the expo and were thrilled to find out that a trail run is coming to Fresno County. "I've wanted to try one but couldn't find a run close enough" or "That sounds awesome!" were common responses heard at the event.

Kingsburg Parade:

On May 19th, members of the team participated in the 100th Kingsburg Parade. We walked behind the Sheriff, in uniform and carrying our packs. Much thanks to Kingsburg for allowing us to be a part of their special celebration.



Fresno/Madera County Logistic Show and Tell

On June 12th the team joined other nonprofit emergency groups in an event spearheaded by The American Red Cross. Several groups brought support equipment and shared their story in what they do, how they do it and how they can support others in the event of a disaster or emergency. Several attendees even shared how they obtained the funding to acquire their equipment. Needless to say, team members walked away with new relationships with other teams, a greater understanding of mutual support in Fresno and Madera counties and a great sense of pride having shared our team mission and capabilities. All were impressed with our communications trailer and the pieces of gear displayed. Thanks again to The American Red Cross, Madera Response Unit, Fresno CERT, Clovis CERT, ARES/RACES, Fresno PD Chaplain, Salvation Army, CCADT (Central California Animal Disaster Team) and the Fresno Fire Department.

**Fresno County SAR
Mountaineering Team**

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We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.fresnosar.org

Find us on Facebook!

Upcoming Events

July 11th – at the Farm
Bureau
Board meeting, 6 pm
General meeting, 7 pm

July 21st – monthly
team training, location
TBA

Aug 1st - at the Farm
Bureau
Board meeting, 6 pm
General meeting, 7 pm

Aug 5th – Wild Run,
Shaver Lake details at
www.sarwildrun.com

Aug 18th – monthly
team training, location
TBA

Sept 5th - at the Farm
Bureau
Board meeting, 6 pm
General meeting, 7 pm

Sept. 15th - monthly
team training, location
TBA

About Our Organization...

The Fresno County Sheriff's Search and Rescue Mountaineering Team was formed as an auxiliary unit of the Fresno County Sheriff's Office in 1982. We are a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization of diversified volunteers, formed to augment the Fresno County Sheriff's Office during search and rescue operations in Fresno County and throughout the state of California.

Our team members are trained in various search and rescue disciplines including: orienteering, tracking, wilderness / winter survival, first aid / CPR, swift water and high angle rescue, helicopter safety, search techniques and search management. These skills facilitate our ability to respond to a variety of urban and wilderness emergencies. During 2011, SAR team members donated

thousands of hours in search and rescue operations in Fresno, Madera, Tulare and San Luis Obispo Counties, and in Yosemite, Kings Canyon and Sequoia National Parks. In addition to SAR missions and monthly training, members also donated hundreds hours to other non-profit organizations and sponsored events to promote safety in the outdoors.

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