

**2023 SENATE STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

**SCR 4007**

# 2023 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

State and Local Government Committee  
Room JW216, State Capitol

SCR 4007  
2/10/2023

|   |
|---|
| Directing the Legislative Management to consider studying the formation of a search and rescue volunteer association. |
|---|

9:35 AM Chair Roers opened the hearing. Present: Chair Roers, Vice Chair Barta, Sen Cleary, Sen Estenson, Sen J Lee, and Sen Braunberger.

**Discussion Topics:**

- Entire state coverage
- Official organization

Travis Bateman, Director Badlands Search/Rescue, testified in support #20223, #20221, #20222.

Darin Hanson, Homeland Security testified neutral with no written testimony.

Kaylin Sparks, testified in support with no written testimony.

Sen Estenson moved a DO PASS.

Sen Barta seconded the motion.

| Senators                 | Vote |
|--------------------------|------|
| Senator Kristin Roers    | Y    |
| Senator Jeff Barta       | Y    |
| Senator Ryan Braunberger | Y    |
| Senator Sean Cleary      | Y    |
| Senator Judy Estenson    | Y    |
| Senator Judy Lee         | AB   |

VOTE: YES – 5    NO – 0    Absent – 1    Motion PASSED

Sen Estenson will carry the bill.

**Additional written testimony:**

August Nelson, Watford City, ND in support #20208  
John Fulwider, Arnegard, ND in support #20050  
Natalie Bullion, Portland, OR in support #19957  
Christopher Boyer, Woodland, TX in support #19852  
Angela Mastrovito, Henrico, VA in support #19840  
Margaret Renbarger, Watford City, ND in support #19408  
Amy Hunt-Seagren, Bismarck, ND in support #19403

Senate State and Local Government Committee

SCR 4007

02/10/23

Page 2

William Socwell, Reeder, ND in support #19159, #19313

Tina Guthmiller, West Fargo, ND in support #19297

Nicholas Ybarra, Watford City, ND in support #20440

Karly Brennan, Bismarck, ND in support #20436

Matthew Earl, Watford City, ND in support #20435

Jake McCoy, 1watford City, ND in support #20420

Sarah Duttonhefner, Dodge, ND in support #20391

Travis Johnson, Minot, ND in support #20390

Matthew Jameson, Bismarck, ND in support #20359

10:05 AM Chair Roers closed the hearing.

*Pam Dever, Committee Clerk*

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE**

**SCR 4007: State and Local Government Committee (Sen. K. Roers, Chairman)** recommends **DO PASS** (5 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 1 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). SCR 4007 was placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar. This resolution does not affect workforce development.

**2023 HOUSE POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS**

**SCR 4007**

# 2023 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

## Political Subdivisions Committee Room JW327B, State Capitol

SCR 4007  
3/9/2023

Directing the Legislative Management to consider studying the formation of a search and rescue volunteer association.

9:00 AM Chairman Longmuir opened the hearing. Members present: Chairman Longmuir, Vice Chairman Fegley, Rep. Hatlestad, Rep. Heilman, Rep. Holle, Rep. Jonas, Rep. Klemin, Rep. Motschenbacher, Rep. Ostlie, Rep. Rios, Rep. Toman, Rep. Warrey, Rep. Davis, and Rep. Hager.

### Discussion Topics:

- Readiness response time.
- Coordination with agencies.

Travis Batemen, SARS: Reference Testimony #23299

Darin Hanson, NDDDES. No written testimony

The hearing closed at 9:20 AM.

Rep. Klemin moved a Do Not Pass;  
Seconded by Rep. Rios

| Representatives                    | Vote |
|------------------------------------|------|
| Representative Donald W. Longmuir  | Y    |
| Representative Clayton Fegley      | N    |
| Representative Jayme Davis         | N    |
| Representative LaurieBeth Hager    | N    |
| Representative Patrick Hatlestad   | Y    |
| Representative Matt Heilman        | Y    |
| Representative Dawson Holle        | Y    |
| Representative Jim Jonas           | N    |
| Representative Lawrence R. Klemin  | Y    |
| Representative Mike Motschenbacher | Y    |
| Representative Mitch Ostlie        | Y    |
| Representative Nico Rios           | Y    |
| Representative Nathan Toman        | Y    |
| Representative Jonathan Warrey     | Y    |

Roll call vote: 10 Yes 4 No 0 Absent Motion carried.

Carrier: Rep. Klemin

House Political Subdivisions Committee

SCR 4007

March 9, 2023

Page 2

**Additional written testimony:**

Matthew Johansen, Sheriff, McKenzie County. Testimony # 23208

Dean Wyckoff, Sheriff, Medora, ND. Testimony #23267

The meeting closed at 9:30 AM.

Delores Shimek, Committee Clerk

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE**

**SCR 4007: Political Subdivisions Committee (Rep. Longmuir, Chairman)** recommends **DO NOT PASS** (10 YEAS, 4 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). SCR 4007 was placed on the Fourteenth order on the calendar.



**TESTIMONY**

**SCR 4007**

**There is a lot of discussion about this in the emergency response circles of ND. The cold hard truth is that almost all of ND completely lacks responders knowledgeable and skilled in the science and art of lost person search.**

Yes, we have Sheriffs EMS and Fire Depts. with off road capabilities. When we find someone in the field who needs help, we can treat and transport them.

**But first we have to find them and very few parts  
of ND have people trained to do that.**

**Manitoba and Minnesota both are light years ahead of ND. They are examples of how it could be done, without impeding upon the authority and responsibility of the County Sheriff who is by law legally responsible for SAR in ND.**

**We should encourage our elected representatives and our Sheriffs to address this lack of resource and create ways to support them as they do that.**

**As a past member of the ND SAR Advisory Committee, EMS squad leader, LEO and Emergency Management exercise designer, I would strongly urge the legislature to act favorable on this proposal.**

TO: North Dakota Senate- State and Local Government Committee  
DATE: 2/6/2023  
RE: SCR 4007

Senator Roers and committee members,

Hello, my name is Tina Guthmiller and I have been active in Search and Rescue with my nationally certified cadaver K9 for about 6 years. I grew up in Burke County and have a love for the western part of our state. I am writing in support of SCR 4007. I believe it is much needed in this state. I have found that many agencies do not realize that there are local people to the state that study, train and execute search and rescue procedures. The only area that has anything of the sort is the eastern side of the state and as I have found, this is just not enough for our state of North Dakota as it can take 6 hours to get across the state. Also, there is usually some red tape that has to be crossed before any deployment can take place. This also is not a search and rescue team, it is a dive team with one or two K9s.

I have conducted searches with my cadaver K9 on the Missouri River and Lake Metigoshe in our state. I was asked each time by the family and went on my own accord. I was also a day or more out from when the events actually took place. My K9 did have some success, without going into detail, but it is so pertinent to be able to have search and rescue with their trained knowledge and certified K9s to be on scene immediately. I have been able to be on scene in the eastern part of the state immediately with positive results. The family is the utmost importance in these situations and the faster we can rescue or recover a beloved family member the best it is for everyone involved.

I have deep respect for the MHA Nation and their K9 capabilities as a couple relate to what my cadaver K9 does too. I also have a positive association with Badlands Search and Rescue and I totally support the work they are doing as a team and in working with the state supporting this bill. I think it is important for all of North Dakota to come together and be able to work as a team when needed. I know jurisdictions apply, but allowing Search and Rescue teams to operate in the state will make the tough jobs of finding people just a bit easier. I was disappointed when I saw MN teams called in to our state when we have the same capabilities as they do but just aren't widely known in North Dakota. I have done searches with these teams and trainings, etc. We have the talented people right here in North Dakota and we all have the same goals. We also love the people in our great state of North Dakota!

Tina Guthmiller  
814 7<sup>th</sup> Ave East  
West Fargo, ND 58078  
701-630-9365

To: North Dakota Senate  
State and Local Government Committee  
Date: 2/6/2023  
Re: SCR 4007

Senator Roers and committee members,

I submit this written testimony IN FAVOR of SCR 4007 and as a supplement to the written testimony that I have already provided.

There is a lot of discussion about this in the emergency response circles of ND. The cold hard truth is that almost all of North Dakota completely lacks responders knowledgeable and skilled in the science and art of lost person search.

Yes, we have Sheriffs, EMS, and Fire Departments with off-road capabilities. When we find someone in the field who needs help, we can treat and transport them.

**But first we must find them and very few parts of North Dakota have people trained to do that.**

Manitoba and Minnesota both are light years ahead of ND. They are examples of how it could be done, without impeding upon the authority and responsibility of the County Sheriff who is by law legally responsible for SAR in ND.

We should encourage our elected representatives and our Sheriffs to address this lack of resources and create ways to support them as they do that.

Thank you,

William G. Socwell  
Reeder, ND



February 6, 2023

Amy Jo Seagren-Hunt  
10008 Pond Place  
Bismarck, ND 58504

Re: SCR 4007

To Whom it May Concern:

I am the sister of Joby Seagren. Joby passed away on June 5, 2022, after an apparent kayaking accident on the Missouri River. Joby's body was ultimately found by a fisherman nine days after he was last seen on the Missouri River, and after we were told by law enforcement they would no longer make an extensive search on the river but would fly a plane twice a day. Local law enforcement will only search for 48 hours. Local law enforcement concentrated on the site where Joby supposedly entered the river. However, searches from the point of entry and witness accounts of his appearance on the river were not searched. Joby was found 15 miles from the reported site of entry. We waited for our loved one to "bloat and float for nine long days!"

Emergency services and law enforcement arrived on scene as soon as the accident was reported. However, getting a search underway and getting information from witnesses and those who were kayaking with him proved quickly to be a joke!

Badlands Search and Rescue was contacted by a family member and finally granted clearance to begin a search. This search included family, friends, and community members.

I write today and beg you to pass this bill because of the pure hell we went through as a family trying to locate our loved one. A combined effort was not put forth between the local law enforcement and Badlands Search and Rescue. And in the end, evidence provided by Badlands Search and Rescue appeared unimportant to local law enforcement.

Having a search and rescue team available is paramount. There also needs to be a coordinated effort between local law enforcement and that rescue team. I believe that if a search and rescue team had been available to our family immediately, our Joby would've been found sooner. Or perhaps the situation would've had a different outcome.

Please think of the families of the future. While our situation can't be changed, it could make a huge difference for someone looking for their loved one. Please do the right thing and pass bill SCR 4007.

Sincerely,

Amy Jo Seagren-Hunt

To: North Dakota Senate State and Local Government Committee  
Date: February 6, 2023  
RE: Senate Resolution #4007

Senator Roers and committee members,

Hello, my name is Margaret Renbarger and I have been actively supportive of the Badlands Search and Rescue team since they started. I don't do the search and rescue but support it monetarily as a donor.

I have lived in western North Dakota most of my life. I feel that SAR is an excellent and vital program. The rugged country that we have here—the Badlands, the canyons and coulees along Lake Sakakawea, and the many rivers and lakes throughout our state. Someone could easily become lost or injured and would need support from search and rescue if injured or lost as most of the emergency services we have don't have any specialty training or equipment for SAR.

We also have many miles of shoreline along Lake Sakakawea. There have been drownings that Badlands SAR has assisted with in the recovery of the victim.

All of North Dakota, Minnesota, Montana and South Dakota and parts of Canada need to all work together.

I am writing in support of SRC 4007. This is a much-needed study in the state. We need to get rid of the red tape that needs to be crossed before deployment due to politics and lack of knowledge as to SAR operations. Missing persons and people in distress in our great outdoors are time sensitive for so many reasons. We need the fully support our SAR and Dive teams and support this study and the Search And Rescue Volunteer Association of North Dakota and Badlands Search and Rescue, along with any other teams that fit this category!

The good people of North Dakota need this program. We have dedicated people here in the state that can provide these services, but more must be done to support them and identify the issues and needs at hand. Thank you very much! Please vote with a DO PASS for SCR 4007.

Thank you,

**Margaret Renbarger**  
**204 North Main Street**  
**PMB # 369**  
**Watford City, North Dakota**  
**58854**  
**701-580-4968**

8 February 2023

Rebekah's Legacy  
Angela Mastrovito  
2770 Beowulf Court  
Henrico, VA 23231

To Whom It May Concern,

I am the mother of Rebekah Grace Rose Barsotti, Missing Person July 20, 2021 in Mineral County, Montana. Although this event did not occur in the state of North Dakota, I would like to publicly support Bill SRC 4007. It is my understanding that this bill will ultimately support SAR training, education, response and communication between the Law Enforcement and SAR teams.

My daughter went missing along the Clark Fork River, which is a river in the U.S, travelling through Montana and Idaho, approximately 310 miles (500 km) long. The largest river by volume in Montana. It also has a major interstate (I-90) and railroad tracks that runs adjacent. Just as the terrain in North Dakota is vast, rugged, difficult to maneuver and cover in a SAR effort so is Montana.

Canada, Idaho, North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, and Montana all would benefit from participating in a cohesive program regarding SAR efforts. It is my hope your state will be the beacon of light that promotes this.

In my daughter's event, Mineral County Sheriff Office isolated the search to the "assumed" point of entry. I place "assumed" in quotation marks because NO ONE saw my daughter or her beloved dog at this site. They only found some of her personal items there. Two Bear Air was called in the next day. Flathead County SAR was called in days later as well as 10 days later Missoula SAR was implemented. 10 days. Mineral County Sheriff Office didn't even inform their own Mineral County SAR Organization that there was a missing person till days later. Mike Johnson, of Montana River Guides and his staff were on the water searching for my daughter, my son flew in from Pennsylvania to assist in the water search efforts. I had been informed one week out on July 28<sup>th</sup> that Mineral County Sheriff Department had "other things to do" and that it was "too hot" to continue search efforts for my daughter. I literally went to KPAX studio and pounded on the doors till someone responded and I exercised my right as a citizen of these United States to request help from the community. Mind you, I am distraught that my daughter IS MISSING. I have NO SAR experience. I have no one that I know personally in Montana to call on. I also posted on Social Media for the need of assistance. We met with the Sheriff and asked about Civil Air Patrol, Montana SAR and he stated they would be of no use to us and would not be invited. They both require notification within 48 hours of the event, which we were not aware of at the time. I hope and pray that the Sheriffs in your Counties possess and portray more professionalism than what we experienced in Mineral County, Montana.

On August 9, 2021, Ross Butterfield, Deputy Chief with Northstar K9 Search and Rescue out of Golden Valley Minnesota reached out to me personally. Within hours, Captain Bill Burt from Missoula County Sheriff Department "Invited" their SAR team to participate. Missoula County SAR also participated but their equipment was antiquated and limited. Wings of Hope from Madison, WI also participated in the search. We had state of the art drones, sonar, cadaver dogs (that were

certified every 2 years) and divers. They arrived a full 3 weeks after my daughter went missing. Wings of Hope located a Sonar image of what could have been my daughter. A private citizen with sonar capabilities also located a sonar image. The County insisted on using their own divers and came up with nothing. Because of a power struggle and other complications with politics and laws regarding the waterways, the rescue mission was aborted.

Similar to the experience reported by Amy Jo Seagren-Hunt in regard to Missing Person Joby Seagren, in the end evidence provided to from community volunteers and Northstar K9SAR/Wings of Hope to Law Enforcement seemed to have no value. In the process critical time was wasted.

In March 2022, we personally hired Wings of Hope and Northstar K9 SAR to come back for one more search in the river. They had been in Montana two separate times before March 2022. Once in August 2021 for my daughter and once in October 2021 for Taylor Simonson. They were familiar with the terrain and the Clark Fork River. After searching the river for 30 days in March 2022, over 87 miles from a few miles upstream to point of entry to Thompson Falls, they came up empty handed. At one point, Brad Smith, Chief Officer of Wings of Hope informed me that Rebekah would most likely be found in pieces. In May 2022 a fisherman found a body on the riverbank, completely intact, yet she apparently travelled the Clark Fork River for 30+ miles. This is important because the dive teams could not maintain the integrity of their gloves and suits because of the sharp rocks in the Clark Fork River. It is important because 6 days after my daughter went missing her beloved dog was found 10 miles downstream, lacerated from the river rocks. The State Crime Lab informed us the DNA was not amplifiable, dental records were used to identify my daughter.

From communication I have seen, the Montana SAR Organization was appalled that a team from out of state came into the beloved state of Montana to search the Clark Fork River. Because of politics, Montana SAR was either unable or unwilling to come forward. Time is lost with politics and red tape. I only share this so, the State of North Dakota can learn and apply such lessons.

I narrate my story to hopefully give you insight to the anguish, the despair that as a Mom I felt while I had to initiate search teams for my daughter. Thank God an individual from the community had some experience and assisted in coordinating efforts. Unfortunately, the SAR team from the community was informed they could only search in the water. They were not allowed on dry ground. That caused major concerns regarding the limited scope of the investigation and eventually the citizens from the community became disheartened because they swept over the same spots time and time again without results.

This very same story could take place in the State of North Dakota. I implore you from a Mother's heart.....there are grants, there are volunteers, there are people in your state and surrounding states that are physically able and willing to participate in SAR efforts as Volunteers. Give them the opportunity to receive the training and guidance they need to be successful. Provide the structure to bypass politics and red tape. When a life is on the line, red tape takes up too much time. My husband was in the military and he was appalled at the red tape in the Civilian world regarding our search for our daughter. He said when they were looking for a fellow soldier, there was no red tape. You took every precaution, but you searched.

I urge each and every representative of the State of North Dakota to vote YES for SCR 4007. Be the Light that guides the surrounding States to implement similar legislation.

I leave you with this.....a mother's empty arms can be filled with other things, her mind can be filled with memories, her heart cannot. Please vote "Yes" to save the next life.

With all my love and compassion,

Angela Mastrovito  
Rebekah's Mom Forever  
Rebekah's Legacy  
[www.findrebekahbarsotti.com](http://www.findrebekahbarsotti.com)  
[www.rebekahslegacy.com](http://www.rebekahslegacy.com)  
540-834-6131



February 6, 2023

Honorable Representatives of the State of North Dakota and All Concerned,

NASAR is the leading Search and Rescue (SAR) education, certification, publishing and advocacy non-profit in the US.

The National Association For Search And Rescue (NASAR) originated when the Search and Rescue Coordinators in a few western states met in 1970 where they determined the state level need for:

- Legislated Authority and Responsibility for SAR Response
- Legislated Standard of Care for SAR Response
- Volunteer SAR Responder Protections
- Formal Mutual Aid System
- State SAR Coordinator Position

These five inter-related topics, when properly implemented will provide the residents and visitors of North Dakota and the Tribal Territories the safety, security and protection they deserve and expect.

SAR response is a life-saving service that is 99% volunteer based. It enhances the law enforcement agency response to a missing person event, the fire agency response to a personal in peril requiring rescue and it extends the pre-hospital EMS care system into austere and primitive environments where extended travel requirements are life threatening. Yet, there is little or no legislation supporting, directing, defining, or providing budgetary support to this life saving service and its necessary volunteer citizen cadre.

The North Dakota Century Code Chapter 12-68-05 addresses the responsibility of acceptance of missing person reports, the definition of a high-risk missing person, and directs the Office of the Attorney General to develop and missing persons procedure manual.

The Century Code does not define who is responsible for search and rescue of the missing person, what training or certification is required of the SAR responder, how an overwhelmed agency asks for SAR assistance, who coordinates state level SAR coordination, or what support is provided to a volunteer's family if the volunteer is injured or killed while on a humanitarian SAR mission.

The North Dakota Bureau of Criminal Investigation Policy and Procedure for Missing Persons does not recognize the existence of SAR resources, does not mention the notification or application of SAR resources to a missing person incident.



# SAR ACADEMY

In November of 2022, the North Dakota Attorney General, Drew Wrigley launched a new statewide missing persons database. The implementation of an effective SAR program will help minimize the addition of new missing person cases and the resolution of cold cases.

Attached to this testimony is the NASAR publication *Successful State SAR Program Design*. It was written with decades of experience and research into best practices from states, provinces, and territories throughout North America.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Boyer', is centered on the page.

Christopher Boyer  
Executive Director  
925-586-3357  
chrisb@nasar.org





# SAR ACADEMY

## SUCCESSFUL STATE SAR PROGRAM DESIGN





# SAR ACADEMY

## Successful State SAR Program Design

### Introduction

In each state, every resident and visitor deserve the same and equal response to any emergency situation, especially a missing person event. This equality of emergency response is typically legislated regarding law enforcement, fire, EMS, disaster response, and judicial services. However, missing person Search And Rescue (SAR) response is rarely legislated and results in varied level of response from a deliberate professional response to no response at all.

NASAR considers Search And Rescue a critical life safety service for every community. Part of NASAR's mission is to advocate for all SAR responders, missing persons and the families of the responders and missing persons.

SAR is more complex than one initially might think. It typically involves at least three (3) emergency response disciplines, and may include overlapping jurisdictions, multiple government levels, and result in civil or criminal prosecution. Searches can last from hours to years, with a handful of trained responders to hundreds of convergent, untrained volunteers. There is no way to predict the complexity, resource demands, or time required to resolve a missing person incident.

In general, the first report of a missing person goes to the local 911 Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP). This is where the first of many complexities can occur. Where does the 911 call come from? Is it from a municipal location, unincorporated location out of state location, location on federal or tribal land, location on state park or national park land, or a location of a military base, or a combination of any of the above? Already you can see how difficult SAR response starts out.

Does the PSAP dispatcher have clear and unconflicted direction on where missing person calls are routed to? Initially it should be a law enforcement agency so that the missing person can be placed into the National Criminal Information Center (NCIC) Missing Persons File. The responsible jurisdiction must also be careful to adhere to 42 USC 5779 and 42 USC 5780 which codify the 1990 National Child Search Assistance Act.

Once the call is dispatched to the municipal police department, county sheriff, state police, fire department, EMS/ambulance, state park rangers, National Park Service rangers, tribal police, Bureau of Indian Affairs Police, or FBI as the Agency Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) the initial report gets taken. The AHJ may not have SAR resources and must contact the local SAR response organization(s).

The local SAR response could be a single, or multiple SAR teams, SAR teams may be cooperative or competitive, law enforcement managed uniformed volunteers, volunteer firefighters, volunteer EMS responders, well-meaning convergent volunteers, or even advocacy groups that are not law enforcement or government friendly.



# SAR ACADEMY

Once the missing person is found, they may require technical rescue, which some SAR teams are capable of, but in many cases the local fire department responds to perform the technical part of the rescue or a different SAR team like a Mountain Rescue Association (MRA) team does the rescue. Once the missing person is accessed, they are stabilized and handed off to the pre-hospital care system (EMS/Ambulance) for assessment and transport if required. The alternative is the missing person is found dead, and the location becomes a crime scene for the local law enforcement jurisdiction, and then the missing persons body is turned over to the local coroner or medical examiners office. Or, the missing person isn't found and the case becomes a long-term investigation by law enforcement. In SAR we refer to this as LAST – Locate Access Stabilize Transport.

All this assumes that someone is in charge from the AHJ. That there is an incident commander that takes responsibility appropriately and is experienced in dealing with missing person searches, has access to trained and certified SAR resources, and that all the other agencies and organizations responding respect the Incident Commanders authority and cooperate.

It is easy to see how complex a missing person case is and how many jurisdictions, agencies, and organizations may get involved in the search, investigation, rescue or recovery.

## **Core Areas For Success**

NASAR believes there are five (5) core areas that a State (or large government agency) should address to build and support a successful SAR response system. These core areas are interconnected, interdependent, and it is difficult to have a successful program without all of them working together.

### **Legislated Authority And Responsibility For SAR Response**

Every state or territory level of government should have in place legislation naming the primary response agency/organization for missing person searches/wilderness SAR. Due to the complexity of SAR response, this legislation may also include Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) or Agreement (MOA) between agencies regarding individual responsibilities and jurisdictions to minimize confusion during response. This is not the same as ESF#9 responsibility in NIMS or state level Urban SAR (USAR) response plans.

### **Legislated Standard Of Care For SAR Response**

Every state level of government should have in place a legislated standard of care for SAR. Any standard should be respectful of the authority granted to the local jurisdiction for response. It is more efficient for an agency to adopt standards from current standards organizations than to develop standards on their own.

### **Volunteer SAR Responder Protections**



# SAR ACADEMY

NASAR believes that all appropriate volunteer SAR responders should be provided the same level of basic protections when participating in approved training or response. The protections provided should include:

- Workers Compensation
- Short Term Disability
- Long Term Disability
- Death Disability

These protections should also be provided to adolescent volunteer responders such as Explorer Scouts, Civil Air Patrol Cadets, government agency youth programs, and other community and faith-based organizations that have been authorized to participate in the system and provide responders.

The protections are best provided at the state level, where the state has a financial economy of scale that smaller agencies would not have access to. Many if not all states are self-insured, and this structure would provide appropriate and equal oversight to claims.

A good example of this type of protection program is the California Disaster Service Worker Volunteer Program (CA DSWVP). More information on the CA DSWVP program can be found at the CA Office of Emergency Services website.

## **Formal Mutual Aid System**

Mutual aid should be coordinated at the state level, providing for the prioritized coordination of the limited SAR resources within the state. Mutual aid should be provided between jurisdictions on a voluntary basis and without charge. Resources requested through mutual aid should be based on the state standard of care and resources provided should meet the state standard of care.

Mutual aid ensures that every missing person gets the same level of response without penalizing any one jurisdiction.

A formal mutual aid system enables better resource integration into EMACS and interstate MOA or MOUs.

## **State SAR Coordinator**

Somebody needs to be in charge and be the champion of SAR within government and the budget process. The State SAR Coordinator becomes the owner of the state level standard approval process, formal mutual aid coordination and dispatching, and pre-approval of volunteer protection claims on their way to state risk management.



# SAR ACADEMY

The five core elements work like this. The State will not want to provide volunteer protections to unorganized groups that do not follow standards or comply with AHJ policies. To solve this, the state needs to enact legislated authority and responsibility for SAR and adopt legislated standards for SAR response. This ensures the volunteer protections protect qualified and responsible individuals and only qualified individuals are responding to agency requests. A formal mutual aid system and the legislated authority eliminate competitiveness and reward collaboration between agencies and organizations. The State SAR Coordinator position is the champion, gatekeeper, and coordinates the mutual aid system. Without formal mutual aid or legislated authority, you get competition. Without a standard of care, you fail at mutual aid and suffer from a lack of volunteer protections. Without volunteer protections, you have a hard time enforcing the standard of care.

## Standards For SAR

There are numerous standard setting bodies/organizations that develop standards for SAR. NASAR is *not* one of them. NASAR develops education and certification to meet the standards developed by third parties. NASAR *does not* develop SAR standards. SAR standards come from ASTM, NFPA, CSA, ISO, ANSI, DHS/FEMA, NSARC and other similar organizations. ASTM has the F32 committee that focuses on SAR, and the F38 committee that focuses on unmanned aerial systems aka drones. The F32 committee currently has 96 standards that relate to SAR (see Appendix A), including F3069-13 which is the “*Standard Guide for Requirements for Bodies that Operate Certification Program in the Field of Search and Rescue*”. This guide should be of interest to any agency or organization that is considering providing a certification or accreditation in SAR knowledge, skills, or abilities. F3069-14 is what your program will be measured against in court regarding the structure of your program.

Any agency or organization considering developing a SAR program, should research all the standards to ensure they are not negligent in their efforts, or setting their responders up for failure. NASAR utilizes standards from ASTM, NFPA, CSA, ISO, ANSI, and DHS/FEMA, NSARC to develop their programs. Some standards bodies reference NASAR programs as requirements, prerequisites or as meeting their standard.

NASAR develops a crosswalk for each certification against the applicable standards. The crosswalk records each standard requirement, where it is covered in the curriculum, textbook page number, slide number, written testing and practical testing. The crosswalk is reviewed by the entire board for accuracy and is provided to the instructors and lead evaluators for their convenience.

## Certification for SAR

Once a standard has been selected, then a certification rubric needs to be developed. A written and practical testing and scoring paradigm supports the successful satisfaction of the standard.

## Recertification



# SAR ACADEMY

SAR based knowledge, skills, and abilities are perishable, have a limited shelf life, or need to be reviewed regularly to ensure continued compliance. All certification programs need a recertification process that adequately addresses knowledge, skills, and ability maintenance and capability. This process can be built around performance testing, additional education, experience, or knowledge testing.

You will need a policy around recertification, a process to track responders who are due to recertify, and provide updated certificates.

Agencies and organizations will also have to develop a policy and program for remediation of responders that have failed recertification, or whose certification has expired.

## **Grandfathering Current Responders**

If the agency is implementing a new standard, they will need to determine how long a current responder has to comply, what credit the responder will get for their previous education and certifications, and what documentation will be required to qualify for the credit.

## **Education for SAR**

Your education program should use a broad mix of the five methods of learning:

- Direct – lecture, demonstration
- Experiential – role play, simulation
- Independent Study – read ahead, tutorial, research
- Indirect – case study, concept mapping, inquiry
- Interactive – discussion, panel, debate, brainstorming

NASAR seeks to provide all five methods where possible in its education programs. There are many books on adult learning concepts and best methods for student interaction and use of tools like Boole's.

## **Record Keeping**

The ASTM F3069 standard describes record keeping requirements. Agencies or organizations considering providing education and certification will need to review their agency/organization policy on record keeping and personal data privacy. If the organization is a federal non-profit education organization, they will need to review Department of Education requirements they need to comply with as well.

## **Record Retention Policy**

Organizations providing SAR education or certification will need a Record retention policy that satisfies their existing organizations needs. If the existing policy is not relevant because it has not considered this type of record keeping, then a new record retention





# SAR ACADEMY

policy must be approved and implemented. NASAR keeps its educational and certification records for 20 years in most cases.

### Personal Data Privacy / Security

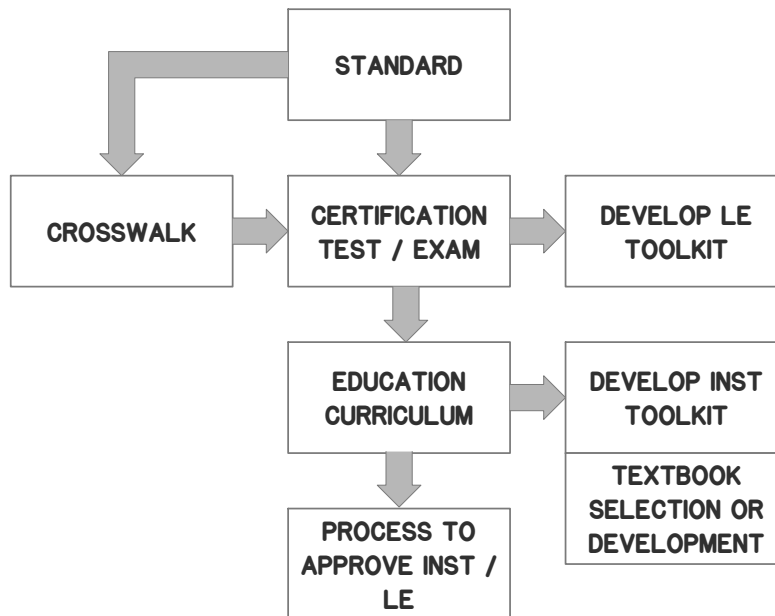
Organizations providing SAR education or certification will need a Personal Data Privacy policy, which satisfies their existing organizations needs. NASAR does not share student data with outside organizations. Student data is protected by multi-layer security software and encryption.

### Records Requests Policy / Subpoenas / Approval

Organizations providing SAR education or certification will also need policies around records requests through FOIA, subpoenas or other court orders. In some cases, there is case law protecting responder training records, but that needs to be researched locally. NASAR refers all official records request to its attorney for review and approval, unless the student has signed a records release.

### Education/Certification Development

NASAR has an adopted process for the development of education and certification materials from a third-party standard. This flowchart shows the process at a high level.



The first step is to determine the standard(s) that apply to the job description / position you want to staff (Wilderness SAR Responder, SAR Canine Handler, etc.) The next step is to crosswalk the standard(s) to determine any overlap or conflicting requirements. The second step is to develop the certification (i.e. written and practical test materials) that meet the standard, and the toolkit that would assist the evaluator to conduct and properly assess the examination.



# SAR ACADEMY

The third step is to develop the education curriculum (i.e. handouts, slide shows, demonstrations, etc.) that prepares the student to take the certification test. The fourth step is to develop the instructor toolkit that assists the instructor in presenting the materials appropriately. Part of the fourth step includes the selection or development of a textbook to support the educational materials. The fifth step is to develop a process to determine who is capable of teaching and evaluating with the materials and get them trained on the materials. Then rollout of the program can begin (which is a whole other set of planning and communication).

## **Textbooks**

Development of a textbook from scratch is the most expensive part of the curriculum process, and it takes the longest amount of time. Authors typically struggle to get over 500 words a day on paper. There are copyedit costs, photo and illustration licensing costs to consider, as well choice of color printing or grayscale. When printing, many government agencies now require books to be printed on 30% recycled paper with environmentally friendly ink. NASAR has a long history of contract and self-publication, and in our experience it can take two years or more to produce a quality textbook like our *Fundamentals of Search and Rescue* text.

## **Instructor Materials**

Instructor materials are essential to build new instructors and support current instructors. The quality of the instructor materials will directly affect the quality of instruction and the consistency of the education. Quality control of instruction starts here.

## **Presentation Materials**

Lecture based presentation materials are typically thought of as PowerPoint. But there are other programs like Prezi, Digideck, Visme, Haiku Deck, Canva, Google Slides and Keynote. These are all meant to support the speaker and provide high level graphics, illustrations, photos and videos for the audience. They are not meant to just be a script for the instructor to read. In some instances, students may benefit from copies of the presentation as a handout to take notes on or refer to later.

Developing lecture materials is not as easy as copying the materials in a textbook onto a slide. Textbook items are typically copyrighted and require permission to use. There are numerous texts, guides and courses on how to best develop presentations and slide decks, no need to go into that here. The rule of thumb for slide development is 1 hour per slide. Sounds like a lot of time to just put 5 sentences on a slide, but this includes the time it takes to learn the slide program, research and understand the material you are trying to convey, format the slide, choose a font and color, add your logo, add the instructional material, develop the instructor script, check for typos, review the entire deck and script when it is done to make sure it flows and conveys the material as required.





# SAR ACADEMY

Ideally, your instructors will know the education material so well they could teach it without the slide deck if required (this is a good way to test instructor knowledge of a topic). NASAR strives to minimize lecture where possible and create hands on experiential training.

Experiential based materials include ropes/cordage for knot tying, first aid supplies for care practice, maps and compass for navigation training, stokes for packaging, etc.

## **Student Materials**

Student materials are items that support the students learning and encourage their curiosity and interest. For a lecture, you might want to provide a printed copy of the presentation to assist students in note taking. You might also want to provide relevant articles or reports that support the instruction, but you don't have time to cover during the lecture.

For experiential education you will need to look at the items required to demonstrate/practice the skills being taught and practiced. If we are teaching ropes and knots, each student should be provided appropriate quantities and lengths of cordage, webbing, rope, and hardware to perform the skills. Each skill should be assessed for student practice needs as the education materials are being prepared. Anytime you can get students practicing a skill instead of just watching or listening is a better education experience.

## **Written Testing**

Written testing primarily tests knowledge. Your written test should crosswalk back to the material you taught, the textbook, and student handouts. You will need to develop the test itself, a student answer sheet and an answer key. You will also need to determine what a passing grade is, how long the test is good for, and a policy for retesting failures.

## **Practical Testing**

Practical testing is designed to test capabilities and skills. Typically, practical skills are tested in-person using operational testing. Since the testing of skills is somewhat subjective, you will need to develop a set of testing criteria, how long the skills test is valid for and a policy for retesting failures.

## **Experiential Review**

Experiential review is designed to determine what and how much of a candidate's experience qualifies as knowledge, skill, or ability that is required. In some cases, the use of a continuing education (CE) credit system is used. This is a very subjective



# SAR ACADEMY

area and will need a great deal of discussion and development. Once adopted, you will need a process for receiving, validating, and crediting the responder with the experience.

## **Train The Trainer Program**

Your agency will need to find, develop, and deploy instructors and evaluators for your program in enough numbers and with enough availability to build an adequate number of SAR responders. Your trainers will need the time to study the materials, arrange course details, and prepare for each class as well as teach and report the students' progress. You will also need to develop a feedback system to ensure the quality of your instructors and their instruction.

### **Finding Educators and Evaluators**

In many cases SAR subject matter experts (SME's) step up to be instructors or evaluators. In other cases, power and influence motivate individuals to seek out instructor or evaluator positions. When SAR members mature and age they also tend to minimize their field experience and become instructors. Some agency members will gravitate towards instruction because it typically means more overtime and financially benefits them. Your concern will be to select individuals who are good communicators, understand the material, are fair, have the time, and have the presence to represent you appropriately.

## **Program Deployment**

Deploying the program will be a combination of having students come to your training centers, and you sending instructors and lead evaluators to their training facilities.

### **Political Environment Considerations**

There are political considerations when it comes to providing certification to different agencies, jurisdictions, and volunteers. Sheriffs are elected, and almost every other agency head is either an appointed civil-servant or a volunteer. Some jurisdictions may also have to overcome competition between disciplines (e.g., fire versus law enforcement) or between paid responder and volunteers or even agencies versus advocacy groups.

## **Volunteer Considerations**

Most SAR responders are volunteers. Education and certification will need to be developed for a volunteer audience which will have diverse educational backgrounds, financial resources and time constraints.

### **Scheduling Courses**

Volunteers are typically available for training on weekends, and intermittently on weekdays. This runs counter to agency personnel which are typically available during



# SAR ACADEMY

M-F day shift. If the instructor cadre is built around agency personnel, then weekend overtime for them will be a consideration in budgeting.

## **Engendered Reliance**

There is a concept called “engendered reliance” which means a situation where an institution has encouraged its customers (audience) to become reliant on their services and is therefore legally obligated to provide those services. If you build a SAR team, and advertise it, and respond to missing person calls, then at some point according to the definition you are expected to respond (not at your convenience, but every time). Imagine a situation where your non-profit has been advertising that you are a SAR team for years. You dispatch your members on calls regularly. Then one day you don’t have anyone that can respond. The family calling you is upset because you have staffed every call you have gotten for several years. Now you don’t have anyone to respond for whatever reason. The family decides that you are not responding because you are either incompetent or discriminating against them. Either way your team is not going to look good to the press, local agencies, or the courts. Legislated response and a formal mutual aid system helps protect you from this sort of situation. This applies most to non-agency organizations, but you should consult an attorney, because this paper is not legal advice.

There is another application of engendered reliance you should consider. For example, your agency decides it is going to be the single provider of training in your state. You publish policies regarding your responsibility as the training agency and maybe you even get it legislated. Then, because of budget, or staffing, or lack of program material, you don’t provide any courses or certifications, or you only provide them sporadically and have a long wait list for course demand. You just set up your SAR teams for failure. They rely on you for their training, but you are incapable of providing the training as required to build responders. A legislated standard of care that accepts education and certification programs that meet or exceed the standard allows responders to select from vendors or agencies as certification providers taking the pressure of your agency. I will reiterate again that you should consult an attorney, because this paper is not legal advice.

## **Budget / Cost**

It all comes down to budget and cost. If you require the responders to come to you for their training and certification and intend to build the education and certification programs in-house, expect to develop a multi-year budget and a multi-year roll out plan.

A state level program will have an economy of scale that a county, parish, borough, or township program will not have.

## **NASAR Can Help Your Program Succeed**

This is a lot to consider and take on. Since 1973, NASAR has dedicated decades of efforts by thousands of contributors to develop and present its education and certification programs.

Programs require continuous maintenance and upkeep to stay abreast of evolving technology,



legislation, experience, and maturing social considerations. The national and international economy of scale allows NASAR to provide and maintain quality programs that are priced with volunteers in mind. Your agency will have to consider what budget, resources and time are available to it for development and maintenance of a SAR education and certification program.

NASAR is not an operational organization. It focuses solely on education, certification, and advocacy. NASAR is not an operational competitor to your field teams.

Through our advocacy program we can help you form legislation and policies, point you towards peers that have been in your shoes or help you navigate the world of standards. We offer guidance like this paper for free to our responder audience.

Our certification and education programs are already built, meet the most important standards making them interstate friendly, and are accepted internationally. We have built position task books that support the standards and your AHJ requirements. You can roll out our programs in a matter of weeks, not years. We can provide instructors, or help you build your own instructors.

Regardless of the route you take to success, we wish you the best of luck, and please extend our gratitude to your volunteers for their SAR stewardship in their community.



# SAR ACADEMY

## Appendix A Standards That NASAR Meets Or Exceeds

NASAR certifications have been developed and used since 1973, longer than any other North American SAR certification body or state program. Many, if not most current agency or organizational certifications have their roots in NASAR material or are unauthorized copies of NASAR materials. NASAR has never provided authorization for an organization to duplicate its certification or education materials under copyright law.

### State Of California Governors OES Mutual Aid Guidelines

In CA there is legislation directing the responsibility for SAR to the county sheriff. Each of the 58 county Sheriffs have a volunteer SAR team(s). Some counties like San Bernardino have dozens of teams encompassing thousands of uniformed volunteers, while other counties like Alpine have a single team that has less than 50 members.

In 2002, the California State SAR Coordinator, Deputy Chief Matt Scharper met with the county SAR coordinators representing the 58 county Sheriff's to begin developing more formal mutual aid guidelines. Each Sheriff was allowed to use whatever standard they wanted for their in-county response. However, to engage in the state OES managed SAR mutual aid system, a team would need to meet the mutual aid guideline. These guidelines were developed by county SAR coordinators under Deputy Chief Scharpers supervision and were presented to the CA State Sheriff's Association for adoption. Deputy Chief Scharper was sensitive to the politics of dealing with elected officials, and one of his requirements was that any guideline produced did not exceed the lowest standard any Sheriff or OES team used, essentially building a guideline that would be all inclusive of any program in the state. CA OES eventually produced and adopted guidelines for:

- SAR Alpine Team Guideline
- SAR Dog Guideline
  - SAR Dog Avalanche Appendix
  - SAR Dog Cadaver Appendix
  - SAR Dog Water Appendix
  - SAR Dog Disaster Type 3 Appendix
  - SAR Dog Disaster Type 4 Appendix
  - SAR Dog Trailing Appendix
- SAR Fixed Wing Aircraft Guideline
- SAR Ground Searchers Guideline
- SAR Incident Support Team Guideline
- SAR Mounted Teams Guideline
- SAR OHV Guideline
- SAR Swiftwater -Flood Guideline



# SAR ACADEMY

- SAR Technical Rope Rescue Guideline
- SAR Tracking Guideline
- SAR Underground Guideline
- SAR Underwater Guideline
- SAR - USAR Guideline

Chris Boyer (NASAR Executive Director) helped author and was involved in the development of many of the CA OES guidelines, including the canine guides.

Note: The CA OES Canine Mutual Aid Guidelines mention the American Rescue Dog Association (ARDA) certification by name. This was done to recognize it as the lowest certification accepted by CA OES and allow others to benchmark themselves against it. NASAR meets or exceeds all the CA Canine guidelines (including ARDA standards) and has been recognized by CA OES for the same.



# SAR ACADEMY

## Appendix B SAR Related Documents

### National Search And Rescue Committee (NSARC)

The NSARC is a federal-level committee formed to coordinate civil search and rescue (SAR) matters of interagency interest within the United States. The NSARC consists of representatives from:

- Department of Homeland Security (DHS)
  - U.S. Coast Guard
  - USCG Search and Rescue Program
  - FEMA Urban Search and Rescue
- Department of Defense (DOD)
  - Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD)
  - Defense POW/MISSING Personnel Office
  - U.S. Air Force
  - USAF Rescue Coordination Center (AFRCC)
- Department of State (DOS)
  - Ocean and Polar Affairs
- Department of Commerce (DOC)
  - National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
  - NOAA Search and Rescue Satellite-Aided Tracking (SARSAT)
- Department of Transportation (DOT)
  - Federal Aeronautical Administration (FAA)
- Department of the Interior (DOI)
  - National Park Service (NPS)
  - U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)
- Federal Communications Commission (FCC)
- National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)
  - NASAR SAR Mission

NASAR attends and presents at the NSARC meetings and sits on the committee that develops and publishes the guides.

The NSARC publishes several SAR guides including:

- United States National SAR Supplement (NSS) Version 2.0  
NSARC developed this Version 2.0 of the *National Search and Rescue Supplement (NSS) to the International Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue (IAMSAR) Manual* for SAR Coordinators, planners, and responders. When compared to the original NSS, this





# SAR ACADEMY

version was completely rewritten to provide the SAR professional with a broad overview of general SAR principles and operations, as well as explain the organization of the U.S. SAR system, in support of the National SAR Plan (NSP) and *IAMSAR Manual*.

- Critical Incident SAR (CISAR) Addendum Version 3.0  
The third revision of the *Catastrophic Incident Search and Rescue (CISAR) Addendum* to the *National Search and Rescue Supplement to the International Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue (IAMSAR) Manual* continues the National Search and Rescue Committee's (NSARC) work in developing guidance for Federal SAR responders in the conduct of disaster response search and rescue (SAR) operations.
- SAR Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) Search and Rescue Addendum Version 1.0  
This Unmanned Aerial System (UAS) Search and Rescue (SAR) Addendum was developed by the United States Search and Rescue Committee (NSARC) to provide background, guidance, and relevant information on the use of UAS in SAR operations.
- Land SAR Addendum Version 1.0  
The Land SAR Addendum was created to provide standardized guidance and information on the search and rescue of persons, vehicles, and missing aircraft operations. This addendum further expands on the implementation of the *United States National Search and Rescue Plan (NSP)*, *The National SAR Supplement (NSS) to the International Aeronautical and Maritime SAR (IAMSAR) Manual* and is the land SAR equivalent to the *United State Coast Guard Search and Rescue Addendum to the NSS*, which provides detailed guidance for the conduct of SAR operations in the oceanic environment.

## ASTM SAR Standards

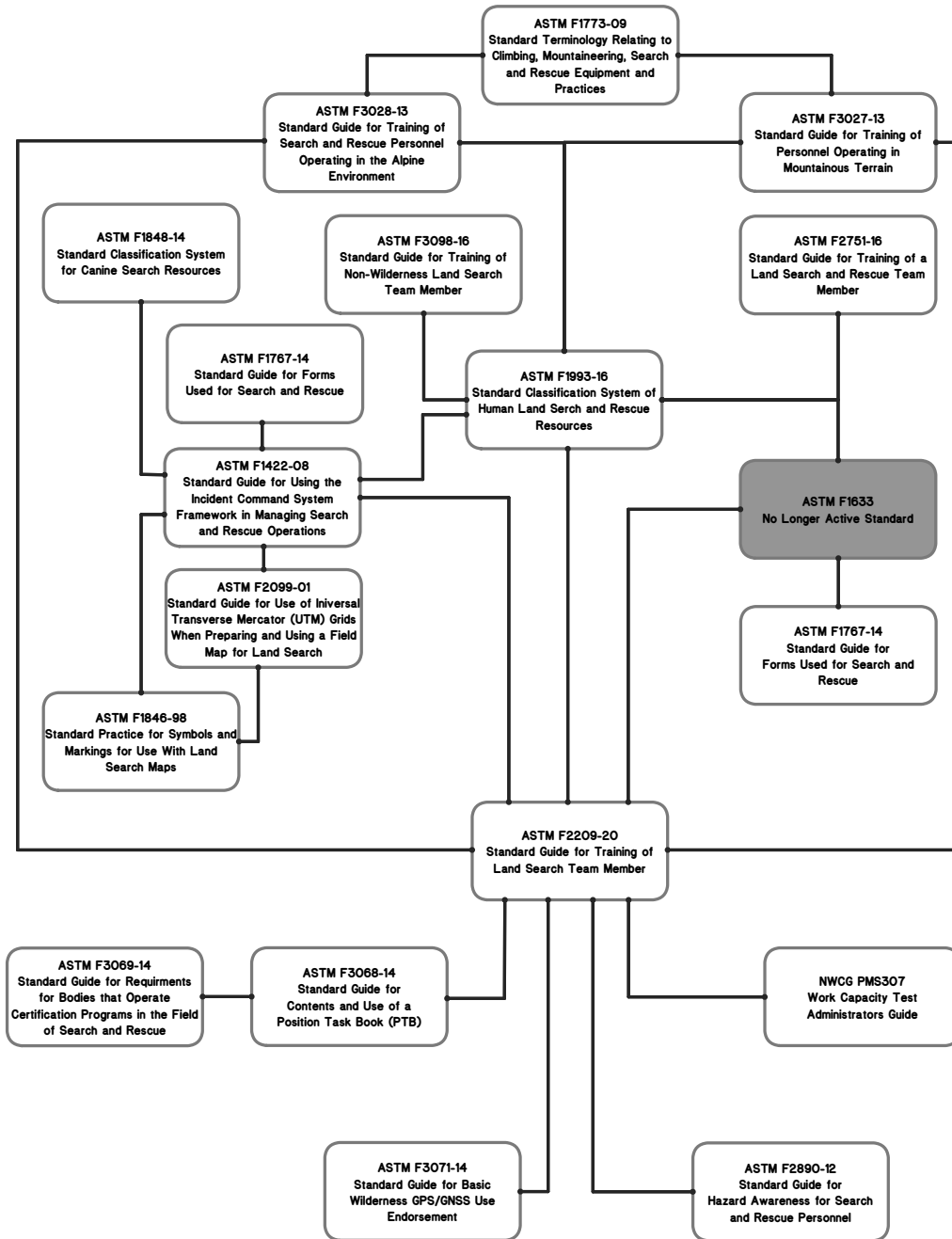
The ASTM Committee F32 on Search and Rescue develops standards for all areas of Search and Rescue. ASTM is a members based society that develops standards based on member contribution and collaboration. NASAR has representation on the F32 committee and monitors the committees work products as they are published. ASTM standards may reference other standards from 3<sup>rd</sup> parties as prerequisites or foundations.

This figure is an example of the related ASTM standards to meet the ASTM F2209-20 *Standard Guide for Training of Land Search Team Member*. ASTM F2209-20 is the basis for the NASAR SARTECH II Wilderness Searcher certification and education.





# SAR ACADEMY



The current F32 standards that apply directly to land SAR include:

- F1422 ICS in SAR
- F1453 Training and Evaluation of First Responders who Provide Emergency Medical Care



# SAR ACADEMY

- F1591 Visual Signals Between Persons on the Ground and in Aircraft During Ground Emergencies
- F1616 Scope of Performance of First Responders Who Practice in the Wilderness or Delayed or Prolonged Transport Settings
- F1653 Scope of Performance of Triage in a Prehospital Environment
- F1654 Training and Evaluation of Individuals Responsible for or Perform Triage in a Pre-Hospital Environment
- F1655 Wilderness Responder Delayed Care
- F1767 Forms Used for Search and Rescue
- F1768 Whistle Signals
- F1772 Harnesses
- F1773 Terminology Relating to Climbing, Mountaineering, Search and Rescue Equipment and Practices
- F1846 Map Symbols and Marking
- F1847 Minimum Training of SAR Dog Crews or Teams
- F1848 Canine Classification System
- F1879 Demonstrating Obedience and Agility in a SAR Dogs
- F1993 Classification System of Human Land SAR Resources
- F2047 Workers Compensation Coverage of Emergency Services Volunteers
- F2099 UTM Grid Mapping
- F2209 Search Team Member
- F2662 Minimum Training of Dispatchers for SAR Incidents
- F2685 Search Team Leader
- F2751 Support Search and Rescue Team Member
- F2794 Level I Mounted SAR Response
- F2852 Tracker Training
- F2890 Hazard Awareness for SAR
- F3024 Training for a Land SAR Strike Team/Task Force Leader
- F3027 Mountainous Terrain
- F3028 Alpine Training
- F3068 Position Task Book
- F3069 Requirements for Bodies that Operate Certification Programs in the Field of SAR
- F3070 Area Dog
- F3071 Basic GPS
- F3072 Intermediate GPS
- F3098 Training of Non-Wilderness Land Search Team Member
- F3144 Evaluating Trailing SAR Dog Crews or Teams
- F3193 Training of a Land SAR Team Leader
- F3222 Terminology Relating to F32 Land SAR Standards and Guidelines



# SAR ACADEMY

## **Department of Homeland Security (DHS) / Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)**

The National Integration Center (NIC) spent over a decade post 9/11 developing Resource Typing in support of the deployment of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and the Incident Command system (ICS) for all-hazard management. The development of the Resource Typing Library Tool (RTLTL) was heavily weighted with fire command experience, and very little wilderness SAR experience. The RTLTL includes 852 Position Task Books (PTB), Position Qualifications (PQ) and Resource Typing Definitions (RTD).

These DHS documents typically reference back to standards from others. For example, the Land Search Rescue Technician (8-509-1193) references ASTM F2209-14, ASTM F2751-2009, ASTM F2890-12, ASTM WK45629, MRA 105.1, NFPA 1006, NIAC IAT Guide 2014, NPS RM-59, OSHA 29CFR Part 1910.120 and OSHA 29CFR Part 1910.1030. To be completely certain that an agency meets or exceeds these standards they will need to build a relationship diagram between the referenced standards and crosswalk them to each other.

DHS produces all-hazard resource types, some have an indirect relationship to wilderness SAR through ICS implementation, but the following entries are SAR specific:

- 8-508-1007 Air Search Team (Fixed Wing)
- 8-509-1256 Boat Crew Member (Search and Rescue)
- 8-509-1255 Boat Operator (Search and Rescue)
- 8-509-1175 Canine Search Specialist – Disaster/Structural Collapse Human Remains
- 8-509-1176 Canine Search Specialist – Disaster/Structural Collapse Live
- 8-509-1177 Canine Search Specialist – Land Human Remains
- 8-509-1178 Canine Search Specialist – Land Live
- 8-509-1179 Canine Search Specialist – Water Human Remains
- 8-508-1164 Canine Search Team – Disaster/Structural Collapse Human Remains
- 8-508-1165 Canine Search Team – Disaster/Structural Collapse Live
- 8-508-1166 Canine Search Team – Land Human Remains
- 8-508-1167 Canine Search Team – Land Live
- 8-508-1168 Canine Search Team – Water Human Remains
- 8-508-1015 Cave Search and Rescue Team
- 8-509-1397 Cave Search and Rescue Team Leader
- 8-509-1181 Cave Search and Rescue Technician
- 8-509-1130 Emergency Services Rescue Manager
- 8-509-1131 Emergency Services Rescue Technician
- 8-508-1265 Fixed Wing Search Team / Disaster Reconnaissance
- 8-509-1170 Helicopter Search and Rescue Crew Chief
- 8-509-1171 Helicopter Search and Rescue Pilot
- 8-509-1172 Helicopter Search and Rescue Technician
- 8-508-1162 Helicopter/Rotary Wing Search and Rescue Team



# SAR ACADEMY

- 8-509-1191 Land Search and Rescue Strike Team/Task Force Leader
- 8-508-1173 Land Search and Rescue Team
- 8-509-1192 Land Search and Rescue Team Leader
- 8-509-1193 Land Search and Rescue Technician
- 8-509-1243 Mine Search and Rescue Strike Team/Task Force Leader
- 8-508-1169 Mine Search and Rescue Team
- 8-509-1182 Mine Search and Rescue Team Leader
- 8-509-1183 Mine Search and Rescue Technician
- PTB-1044 Missing Persons Group Supervisor
- 2-509-1436 Missing Persons Group Supervisor (NQS)
- 8-509-1194 Mountain Search and Rescue Strike Team/Task Force
- 8-508-1171 Mountain Search and Rescue Team
- 8-509-1195 Mountain Search and Rescue Team Leader
- 8-509-1196 Mountain Search and Rescue Technician
- 6-508-1005 Public Safety Dive Team
- 8-508-1019 Radio Direction Finding Team
- 8-508-1264 Stillwater/Flood Search and Rescue Team
- 8-509-1459 Stillwater/Flood Search and Rescue Team Leader
- 8-509-1458 Stillwater/Flood Search and Rescue Technician
- 8-509-1166 Structural Collapse Rescue Technician
- 8-509-1164 Structural Collapse – Search Technician
- 8-508-1159 Structural Collapse Rescue Team
- 8-509-1167 Structural Collapse Rescue Team Leader
- 8-508-1158 Structural Collapse Search Team
- 8-509-1165 Structural Collapse Search Team Leader
- 8-508-1020 Swiftwater/Flood Search and Rescue Team
- 8-509-1184 Swiftwater/Flood Search and Rescue Team Leader
- 8-509-1236 Swiftwater/Flood Search and Rescue Technician
- 8-509-1186 Swiftwater/Flood Search and Rescue Technician – Boat Bowman
- 8-509-1187 Swiftwater/Flood Search and Rescue Technician – Boat Operator
- 8-509-1168 Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Task Force Leader
- 8-508-1266 Urban Search and Rescue Support Team
- 8-509-1471 Urban Search and Rescue Logistics Specialist
- 8-509-1472 Urban Search and Rescue Medical Specialist
- 8-508-1262 Urban Search and Rescue Task Force
- 8-508-1215 Waterborne Search and Rescue Team

## Canadian Standards Association

The Canadian Standards Association (CSA) develops standards through a consensus standards development process approved by the Standards Council of Canada. This process brings together



# SAR ACADEMY

volunteers representing varied viewpoints and interests to achieve consensus and develop a standard.

- CSA Z-1620 Core Competency Standards for Ground Search and Rescue Operations: Searcher, Team Leader, and SAR Manager
- CSA Z-1625 Training Curriculum Standards for Ground Search and Rescue Operations: Searcher, Team Leader, and SAR Manager

## CA State Mutual Aid Guidelines

The CA OES process for mutual aid guidelines was discussed earlier in the document.

- SAR Alpine Team Guideline
- SAR Dog Guideline
  - SAR Dog Avalanche Appendix
  - SAR Dog Cadaver Appendix
  - SAR Dog Water Appendix
  - SAR Dog Disaster Type 3 Appendix
  - SAR Dog Disaster Type 4 Appendix
  - SAR Dog Trailing Appendix
- SAR Fixed Wing Aircraft Guideline
- SAR Ground Searchers Guideline
- SAR Incident Support Team Guideline
- SAR Mounted Teams Guideline
- SAR OHV Guideline
- SAR Swiftwater-Flood Guideline
- SAR Technical Rope Rescue Guideline
- SAR Tracking Guideline
- SAR Underground Guideline
- SAR Underwater Guideline
- SAR - USAR Guideline

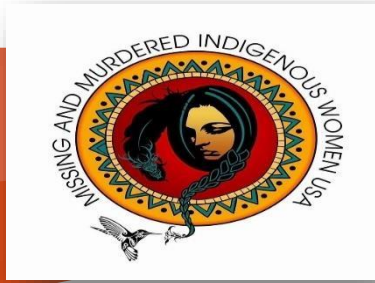
## Department of the Interior / National Park Service (DOI/NPS)

The DOI/NPS has several standards built regarding all-hazard response and specifically SAR and Technical Rescue. These standards are typically enforced for searches that take place on federal lands or in National Parks and are managed by the DOI or the NPS. The standards include:

- Technical Rescue Handbook, 11<sup>th</sup> edition.
- NPS Incident Management Program / Reference Manual - 55 (RM-55)
- NPS Search and Rescue Reference Manual / Reference Manual - 59 (RM-59)
- NPS SAR Position Qualifications



- DOI Incident Positions Qualification Guide
- NPS National SAR Academy Training Manual – Helicopter Rescue Techniques



2.8.2023

MMIWUSA

Portland, OR

503-658-9024

To the North Dakota State Legislature,

In the last six, almost seven years of our operation, MMIWUSA has seen the prevalence of the epidemic of missing and murdered indigenous people in the state of North Dakota. During this time, we have found that the missing and their families are continually failed, and continually lack access to resources that should be available to those families. If law enforcement was properly trained on how to handle missing persons cases, and the proper procedures were implemented along with strong resources for Search and Rescue efforts available uniformly across the state, many families could be served the way that they deserve.

We stand with Badlands SAR and the Search and Rescue Volunteer Association of North Dakota in support of SCR 4007. This resolution requests that the legislature conduct a study on Search and Rescue incidents in the State of North Dakota, and thus begin the process of assessing the needs in the state regarding missing persons and Search and Rescue. The hope would be to implement proper policies regarding Search and Rescue in the future.

We stand behind this because we know that having the proper resources made available for families of the missing in a

timely fashion is paramount to helping to bring missing loved ones home safely. Please consider our work, the work of Badlands SAR, and the families of the missing in your decision about this resolution.

Thank you,

Natalie Bullion

Executive Director

MMIWUSA



To: North Dakota State Legislature and the Senate – State and Local Government Committee  
Date: February 8, 2023  
Re: SCR 4007

Senator Roers and committee members,

Hello Chairwoman Roers and committee members. My name is John Fulwider of Arnegard, North Dakota and I am submitting this letter IN FAVOR of SCR #4007.

I am a retired member of the McKenzie County Sheriff's Officer (1980-2014) and Sheriff of McKenzie County 2013-2014. During that time I also served as a member of the Williams County Dive Team and worked on several cases on the Missouri River.

Hunters and boaters far off from the beaten path and in that, far off from help of the usual means by ambulance or fire truck made these responses very challenging and dangerous. Resources have always been scarce, but we did our best to handle the calls for help.

The Badlands and waterways in our area are very popular for all types of outdoor recreation. Hunting, fishing, boating, camping, hiking, snowshoeing, off-roading, and mountain biking on the Maah Daah Hey Trail system of our public lands areas have always brought many challenges over the years when bad things happen. It is long, long overdue that steps be taken to identify what is needed in terms of training and equipping search and rescue teams in our state. It simply leaves responders wide open and at greater risk with not having the necessary information, regulation, training, knowledge, and equipment for search and rescue incidents as it currently stands. Fire, EMS, and law enforcement are simply not in position or organized to be of adequate capabilities, SAR must be established to fill the void that is and has been present for much too long.

Badlands SAR and the Search and Rescue Volunteer Association of North Dakota deserves the passing of this study as they have spearheaded the efforts to bring SAR resources to our state and help sheriff's in their mandated requirement to oversee search and rescue incidents within their respective counties. Missing persons cases too are in need of review for initial response steps and a uniform method of what needs to take place in a short time when those calls are received. The way incidents and cases have been and currently are handled is one that creates a great deal of liability on agencies and puts a great deal of stress on the emergency response system as it is currently organized. When we send Fire and EMS out to conduct SAR calls that they aren't designed or equipped to handle, it leaves the rest of their districts uncovered as they can only respond with what they have and that is often times the vehicles designed for crash/rescue on our roadways (not off-road in remote areas) and medical calls within our communities. It also takes them out of service and unavailable for typical fire and medical calls for a much longer amount of time.

In conclusion, as a former leader of a law enforcement agency to the largest county in the state, I must respectfully request of you and the entire legislative assembly to approve this study and help these volunteers that are trying to help us bring this much needed skillset to all of us that live in, recreate in, and visit our wonderful state.

Thank you for your time and please vote GREEN on SCR #4007,

John L. Fulwider  
McKenzie County Sheriff (Retired)  
Arnegard, North Dakota  
701-580-0811

To: North Dakota Senate – State and Local Government Committee  
Date: 2/5/2023  
RE: SCR 4007

Senator Roers and committee members,

Greetings, my name is Gus Nelson, from Watford City and I submit this testimony in favor of SCR 4007. I am the vice president of Badlands Search and Rescue and have been a board member since 2019 and also a member of the Search and Rescue Volunteer Association of North Dakota.

As I have lived in the western North Dakota badlands my whole life, I recognize the absolute abundance of outdoor activities to be partaken in, from hunting and fishing, to hiking, horseback riding, and much more.

Being said, it was always a custom of our community to step up and lend a hand to those in need, whether it's of a neighbor, family member, or a total stranger.

After finding out there was a Search and Rescue organization in my locale, I didn't hesitate to submit my application. As the seasons and years progressed, I began to notice some discrepancies in the S.O.P. (standard operational procedure) between the National Association for Search and Rescue (NASAR) instruction and what we as a team were encountering in regard to search initiation and structure.

In regard to SCR 4007, my hope is that we as a state can come together and work united to further educate and train civilian SAR volunteers, law enforcement, as well as the general public, to know there are individuals who will answer a call for help.

Thank you for your consideration,

August W. Nelson  
VP-BSAR  
"In Omnia Paratus"



# Badlands Search & Rescue Service

*"In Omnia Paratus"*

## **SAR FACT SHEET**

**Definition of a Search and Rescue (SAR) Incident:** The search for; possible medical care of; and evacuation of missing, lost, injured, deceased, or stranded person(s) located in a place that is not commonly accessible by highway vehicles or more standard emergency services. (Please note SAR in this context does NOT include "urban SAR" or collapsed structures.)

**Agency Having Jurisdiction / Authority:** The State of North Dakota has placed the duty to coordinate search and rescue on the chief law enforcement officer of each political subdivision. NDCC 37-17.1-28. Typically, this falls to the sheriff or agency having jurisdiction (AHJ). This is a long-standing unfunded mandate. Each sheriff coordinates SAR in their own unique way. Most counties have no SAR team, some (8) have dive rescue/recovery and/or snowmobile teams (2). Some delegate almost all this duty to the non-paid professionals; others combine fire and EMS to do the best they can as they are the only ones willing or available. Still, there are simply too many unknowns and areas for improvement in initial SAR response & missing person procedures, training, readiness, and abilities at the present time in North Dakota.

**Collaboration With Other Entities:** SAR teams work for sheriffs/law enforcement (agencies having jurisdiction) and with fire districts, ambulance services, and other emergency responders. If a SAR incident(s) exceeds the capacity of a county, NDDDES is usually called to secure SAR resources from across the state, from outside the state, and to respond in a mutual aid capacity. If an incident becomes a state-declared disaster, the NDDDES works to ensure the proper SAR resources are available. SAR teams can work closely with a host of State of North Dakota departments/agencies, the North Dakota National Guard, the Civil Air Patrol, the USFS, the NPS, and a great number of other for-profit and nonprofit entities, and local agencies, not to mention other first responders and the health care systems.

**Non-Paid Professionals:** The vast majority of SAR in the United States is performed by non-paid professionals. In North Dakota SAR members are always on call and must be experienced in the backcountry environments of our region; rock climbers, kayakers, snowshoers, mountain bikers, hikers, hunters, etc. These recreationalists are stewards of both our environment as well as the people who enjoy these wild places. SAR members each end up spending thousands of dollars out of pocket each year for personal equipment, for gas, and even lost wages when responding to SAR incidents and training.

**No Charge For Rescue:** There is a strong history and ethic in SAR to provide services free of charge. The 2018 United State SAR Supplement to the International SAR manual strongly discourages charging for SAR. There are many instances of individuals fearing a bill and attempting to self-rescue. This often causes more harm to themselves or others trying to help. There are numerous examples of people delaying a call for help because they fear a bill. This delay often creates more dangerous conditions for the SAR teams. Charging for SAR in Europe has been shown to increase the number of calls and may create a "duty to rescue"; thus stressing the SAR system further and increasing the risk to those involved.

Consider Funding Sources: One example that could be studied for North Dakota is that of the Colorado Search and Rescue Fund (C.R.S. § 33-1-112.5) (SAR Fund). Colorado formed the first statewide SAR Fund to help offset costs incurred by sheriffs for search and rescue. The SAR Fund is funded by mandatory fees on certain sportsmen's licenses and the voluntary Colorado Outdoor Recreation Search and Rescue Card. The fees were statutorily set at 25¢ per license in the 1980s and have not changed. This fund is not insurance to individuals but a fund to be used by sheriffs to reimburse costs associated with SAR or for funds for SAR training or SAR equipment. The SAR Fund hovers around \$400,000 annually. Some of the funds go to reimbursement for direct costs but the large majority goes for equipment and training for future SAR incidents. Every year the requests far exceed the funds available.

Funding and Governance. SAR teams are mostly self-governed 501(c)3 organizations, often with an internal board of directors. Most teams are self-funded through direct fundraising, grants, and donations. A few SAR teams receive funds from their county, others are forced to ask their members to pay membership fees or participate in various bake-sale-type events to keep their teams operating. Fire departments have historically handled SAR incidents as they have been the largest number of personnel, but many have realized that their taxpayers expect fire resources to be available for traditional fire services such as structure fires and motor vehicle crashes. Fire departments have learned that they can't afford the large number of people, equipment, and training necessary to execute successful SAR incidents while maintaining adequate "in town" staffing, readiness, and coverage expect of them.

Advances in SAR: SAR teams are doing their best to exploit new technologies and Badlands SAR and SARVAND are fortunate to have some extremely dedicated non-paid professional SAR members who ensure that North Dakota could stay at the forefront of SAR techniques. The United States Air Force is working to provide better techniques to search for cell phones that are outside of coverage areas, airborne UAVs and submarine ROVs (drones) are commonly being utilized by SAR teams. The Civil Air Patrol has cellular forensics teams and technology that can be utilized with very fruitful results for SAR incidents as well as aircraft available through request of the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center (AFRCC).

Challenges to SAR: As the number of SAR incidents increases, SAR teams, like all sectors of volunteer emergency services across the country, are reporting an aging of their membership with fewer younger people applying or staying for long terms. Retention of members is becoming concerning. Attracting new dedicated members seems to be growing more difficult. There are no individual heroes, very little fame, no fortune in SAR, and a very lengthy initial training period. It is a full-time effort to find dedicated community-minded responders, with a great deal of free time, who have the ability to deal with the psychological challenges (stress injuries), and the physically hard and dangerous work. These non-paid professionals must have the skills and experience necessary to be safe in the North Dakota outdoors while at the same time are humble enough to put his or her team first. With the increase in cell phone coverage and satellite communication devices, recreationalists are calling for help sooner and expecting rapid service. Many of these calls are appropriate, some are simply a strain on the system.

Document Purpose: Now, with some understanding of SAR and with the recognition that North Dakota's growing population is putting pressure on public lands you can understand that SAR is and will be under similar pressure. We support sustainable outdoor recreation, a healthy environment, and believe we are a stakeholder in the North Dakota outdoor recreation economy. SAR, in some sense, is the insurance policy or safety net upon which many outdoor industries and communities rely. SAR serves the residents; the communities; the outdoor industries; the tourists; and, in a very important way, preserves the unique North Dakota way of life. Our goal is to collaboratively engineer a better and more sustainable future for SAR in North Dakota.

As the current leaders of SAR statewide, we see what is occurring across the state and are concerned about the lack of a much needed SAR system statewide. SARVAND is seeking help to develop a new and possibly innovative SAR model. Our members have ideas, but SAR cannot do this alone. Like much of the outdoor recreation industry, SAR is interwoven with many different facets of North Dakota. In order to effectively evolve, SAR via SARVAND needs to be involved in the appropriate conversations and at the table with various industries, non-profits, and many levels of government. SARVAND believes that it is in North Dakota's best interest to have strong and stable SAR teams ready and able to respond for the current and future generations no matter where they may be needed in the state.

## **Search and Rescue is a Public Good**

The Search And Rescue Volunteer Association of North Dakota (SARVAND) agrees with the worldwide expectation, as stated in the United States National Search and Rescue Plan (2016), that emergency services should provide the following services without charging:

- 1) search for missing,
- 2) rescue of living, and
- 3) recovery of deceased persons.

These search and rescue (SAR) services are considered a public service freely available to all. While a large amount of time, energy, and resources may be expended in finding and rescuing or recovering an individual, the SAR community has learned that charging for SAR services may create negative consequences and increase the risks faced by responders.

SAR volunteers are community-minded individuals who see a benefit to society when these unpaid professionals provide SAR services. This difficult and dangerous work generates a great deal of individual and team pride. SAR responders freely provide their skills, experience, physical capabilities, mental fortitude, and teamwork to serve North Dakota communities and those who are missing, lost, injured, or deceased. SAR teams, in many ways, help to sustain the North Dakota way of life.

The Search and Rescue Volunteer Association of North Dakota believes that:

1. When responding to an emergency we provide the best service possible regardless of an individual's race, ancestry, color, gender, religion, age, sexual preference, veteran status, citizenship, physical or mental capabilities, or financial situation.
2. We may work with and request the assistance of others who routinely do charge, and for which services a subject would normally consider to be customary to be charged. Such services might include helicopters, ambulance services, or other medical care facilities.
3. We may enter into financial agreements with those who desire non-emergency or non-standard search and rescue services or services outside what is financially feasible for a volunteer search and rescue organization. Such agreements may be to assist sporting events (backcountry races of mountain bikes, runners, and horseback riders for example) or public gatherings where additional medical & rescue support is needed; or during a state or federally declared disaster.
4. We are not opposed to appropriate requests for reimbursement for expenses incurred and encourage donations to all non-profit search and rescue organizations.
5. We take no position regarding law enforcement issuing a criminal citation or seeking reimbursement from individuals regardless of whether that individual receives SAR services. Additionally, we are not opposed to volunteers or non-profit search and rescue organizations receiving restitution as reimbursement from those who commit a crime when SAR services have been provided to the perpetrator.
6. We recognize that this general position cannot possibly cover every unique situation, this is not specific legal advice, and, as non-profit organizations, SAR teams rely on generous donations to continue to provide SAR services.

*Travis Bateman*

Travis Bateman

Founder

Badlands Search and Rescue

Search And Rescue Volunteer Association of North Dakota



# Badlands Search & Rescue Service

*"In Omnia Paratus"*

**To: North Dakota State Legislative Assembly, House and Senate Members, and the Senate – State and Local Government Committee & Senator Roers, Committee Chair**

**Date: 2/8/2023**

**Re: Senate Concurrent Resolution #4007**

My name is Travis Bateman and I am the founder of Badlands SAR and also the Search And Rescue Volunteer Association of North Dakota (SARVAND).

My background briefly as it applies to explaining the why is that I grew up in North Dakota and enjoyed the family land near a town with a large cow atop a hill to the west of our state capitol. I entered a life of service as an adult and served in the United States Army including two combat tours in Iraq and I am a disabled veteran. Continuing my service I served as a law enforcement officer in North Dakota during the latest oil boom from Stanley to Watford City and McKenzie County where I achieved my lifelong goal to work a police dog and did so with the main goal to remove illicit drugs and criminals from the streets for the betterment of the community. In that, I also fell in love with western North Dakota and the Badlands. It was also my time serving on the county that it was realized that we have a huge void in SAR in our state. This was experienced first-hand while working several incidents of missing and lost people as they recreated, several incidents involving watercrafts on Lake Sakakawea, and other recreational activities involving our trail system on public lands. In late 2018 before I exited law enforcement, the effort was started to begin building SAR in that area.

Since 2018, this organization has worked at bringing search and rescue capabilities to North Dakota on a statewide scale. We started out with the intention of serving western North Dakota but as time went on, it was realized that there were no dedicated SAR services to any acceptable levels anywhere in the state. Any similar groups simply consisted of water-focused boat teams and those of dive rescue/recovery teams. Not to diminish those teams, but there is much more needed throughout the state.

SAR is a discipline that encompasses ground, water, and air elements and is resource and personnel intensive. SAR is best defined as the utilization of sound tactics and procedures in locating the missing, lost, and injured and providing medical aid if needed but to ultimately evacuate them to a place of safety and further medical care. It does also include the recovery of the deceased. Over the course of that time there have been many challenges. We have trained and deployed to real world incidents across the state and learned from each and every one and still others in the state, region, or country that highlighted the issues at hand that come about when someone goes missing.

We have worked with law enforcement agencies, assisted them in their cases, met families organizing their own efforts when all hope seemed lost, and heard the cries and seen the tears when the missing

have been located. We have learned from all impacted or involved during these events. Shared the motivation, frustration, but most importantly, the unification to respond properly and initiate the process that has been carried out for decades all across our nation and the world.

Badlands SAR has thrust itself to the forefront of addressing the needs that have not existed on any organized level in the majority of the state. Yes, there have been clashes. Yes, there has been red tape or even politics injected where they do not belong that negatively influenced an incident or our efforts to help. And while tales such as that exist and have been told from SAR teams in other states, and as disheartening as they are, this organization has pressed forward because the reality is that none of that matters when a person is missing and something needs to be done on an organized and structures scale.

We have wholeheartedly recognized and fully support the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women/People (MMIW/P) movement and what it works at to help with the exponentially high number of missing indigenous people on not just tribal lands but all lands. And we will continue to focus on that and support those efforts and lend a helping hand when requested.

We have had great people step up to join our team. We currently have members in Minot, Watford City, Dickinson, Bismarck, and Jamestown. We have had excellent and professional peace officers and other public safety members thank, commend, and unite with determination and focus. We have had great people support us and donate to our efforts.

All of this, since 2018, has brought us to today.

We had been working on legislation with the 2023 session but after assistance and feedback from four sheriff's in North Dakota and our Senator sponsor, it was agreed that it was better suited to seek a resolution requesting a study for this statewide SAR association. There is a great deal of work ahead with this as one can imagine.

This was applied for in early January as it tied in with the legislation but this route surfaced as a much better option and if we get the assistance, input, and support that is needed, it will help to begin to build for improvement for SAR readiness, response, alerts, search commencement, and overall SAR disciplines and there will in turn be a better mechanism in place when bad things happen in the backcountry and on the waters of North Dakota. Or when children get lost, elderly despondents wander from home, hunters fall in a ravine, mountain bikers crash, a trail rider is bucked from their horse, or someone falls overboard in the middle of a lake.

The Search And Rescue Volunteer Association of North Dakota (SARVAND) was formed.

As to the points for the need for a study, we have identified several key areas to needed:

- Missing person reports and initial response procedures.
- Needs assessments of necessary training and equipment by county.



- Case studies of past incidents in North Dakota.
- Standards and training certification needs as defined by National Association for SAR(NASAR).
- Review of state SAR organizations, identify registration process, and the prerequisites to be listed.
- Preventative SAR (PSAR) education needs for citizens, children, and recreationists.
- Background check system and requirements for SAR team applicants and members.
- Reimbursement program for associated mission costs to SAR members and organizations.
- Reimbursement & grant program options for SAR organizations for training, facilities, and equipment.
- Existing programs within North Dakota that could network and would benefit from SAR in North Dakota.

On behalf of every member at Badlands Search & Rescue and our new endeavor for statewide efforts to bring SAR to all of North Dakota I thank you for the time and opportunity to speak with you on this today and I stand for your questions.

Respectfully,

*Travis F. Bateman*

**Travis F. Bateman**  
**Director & Founder**  
**Badlands Search & Rescue**  
**Search And Rescue Volunteer Association of North Dakota**

---

# SCR 4007

---

9 February, 2023

Chairman Roers and Members of the Committee,

**I submit this written testimony IN FAVOR of SCR 4007.**

My name is Matthew Jameson and I am the one that put together a large scale search in Bismarck/Mandan for Danny Olson and Chase Hurdle last April. I reached out to Badlands Search and Rescue (BSAR) for assistance as the Bismarck Police Department had already seemingly “threw in the towel” and stopped the search. I cannot say I blame them; City and County resources only go so far. That is where Search and Rescue (SAR) come in to play.

It is a common misconception that SAR operates as a rouge entity doing whatever they please, and I can assure you, based on my experience, that is far from the truth. The fact is, no one operates more closely with local law enforcement than SAR. In fact, if local law enforcement does not give them permission to assist, they simply will not.

Badlands SAR is a registered 501(c)(3) organization which survives solely on private donations, and is also awarded the potential for Charitable Gaming dollars. If you look at our neighbors to the East in Minnesota, they have rely heavily on SAR teams which ,in many cases, have more available funds for newer more advanced search technologies than local law enforcement. They are also given a special opportunity to gain much more in depth search and rescue training than some departments allow.

---

I see absolutely no reason that SCR 4007 should not be passed, and I urge you to vote IN FAVOR on SCR 4007.

Sincerely,

Matthew Jameson

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed resolution SCR4007, which directs the Legislative Management to consider studying the formation of a search and rescue volunteer association.

As a volunteer and board member of the Badlands Search and Rescue, I have seen the critical role that search and rescue organizations play to those in need. The proposed resolution recognizes the importance of providing search and rescue organizations with the education and training they need to effectively respond to crisis situations.

Through education and training courses, search and rescue organizations can obtain the knowledge and skills they need to make a difference in high-stress, life-saving situations. This will not only help to improve the response times and effectiveness of search and rescue organizations, but it will also ensure that volunteer members are equipped to meet the challenges presented by these situations.

As the owner of Unmanned Operator drone services, I offer my expertise and equipment to Badlands Search and Rescue for both training and actual search missions. I am confident that we can provide invaluable assistance to first responders in cases of missing persons. Additionally, I see a chance to utilize the Vantis drone network, funded by the state, as a resource to aid SAR teams in both training and real-life search operations.

In conclusion, I would like to express my strong support for the proposed resolution SCR4007. I believe that the formation of a search and rescue volunteer association will help to provide search and rescue organizations with the resources they need to effectively respond to crisis situations and save lives.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Travis Johnson  
Owner, Unmanned Operator



TO: ND Legislature, Senate State & Local Government Committee; Senator Roers Chairman

DATE: February 9, 2023

RE: SCR 4007

Senator Roers and State & Local Government Committee:

I am writing in support of SCR 4007. Search and Rescue teams are essential members of the emergency services team that includes law enforcement, emergency medical services, and fire. Search and Rescue is the only member of the team that does not have a state recognized and supported association.

A state association for search and rescue would improve the ability for search and rescue teams to recruit, train, and perform when needed. In much of the testimony you have before you, there are multiple examples where search and rescue teams are required and worked with the emergency response teams.

This is an opportunity to create a vehicle that will build the partnerships among entities to better serve the residents of North Dakota in situations that may be the worst day(s) of their lives.

Thank you for your consideration, time, and effort on this resolution. I encourage you to vote YES for SCR 4007

Thank you,



Sarah Duttenhefner

Halliday Ambulance Squad Leader

701-260-9799

To: North Dakota Senate  
State and Local Government Committee  
Date: 2/9/2023  
Re: SCR 4007

Chairwoman Roers and Members of the Committee,

I'm writing today to offer neutral testimony on SCR 4007. My testimony focuses on events that I experienced firsthand searching for a young North Dakotan that drown in Montana. It was arguably one of the most beautiful things I've been a part of in my life. Which is the irony of a search for a deceased. But allow me to explain, this was a heart-wrenching tragedy; yet, when the community of Watford City rallied around this family to find their boy, to bring him home, it brought out the best in everyone. The love of the community was inspiring, as was the life of this young man, and the faith of his family. It was disappointing that we couldn't save him, but through the search we learned a lot about living from this young man.

The pro-life community and the churches were really the driving force of volunteers canvassing the Yellowstone for days at a time. Everyone chipped in with what they had, horses, boats, drones, canoes and kayaks. My wife reached out to the McKenzie County Emergency Manager, and that is when the horsepower started coming in. The Search & Rescue and the diving crews, etc., but that was a couple days in. In the end it was the great assistance of a zodiac boat and crew from Williston that made for the successful recovery.

It was a beautiful American experience of neighbors helping neighbors. It was however disappointing as a taxpayer to see the lack of initiative with the Montana Sheriff's department, who offered little help other than to discourage the volunteers. It was a helpless feeling. And that's why the community stepped up. I do understand the limitations of manpower, the risk of creating more tragedies, as well as the economics and probabilities of searching for a drowning victim. Yet, we're an advanced civilization with massive technologies. I'm certainly not a proponent of the government wasting more of the taxpayers' money. But the government does have a responsibility for missing persons. This event did shed light on the great disconnect our government has had from its' fundamental responsibilities. Our government is bogged down in health care, welfare, education and other places it has no business being and has forgotten how to defend borders, protect citizens, and serve the public trust.

In this situation, it was the churches and the volunteers stepping up. Free of charge. Something all public "servants" could learn from. I firmly support trying to improve communication and education to get search & rescue teams to the scene earlier. I think studying the efficacy of the government sounds like a great step in the right direction. Although, I have concerns about the government studying itself. Perhaps an unbiased study group, such as a private university. Beyond just the search and rescue aspect, but really looking at where the government belongs, and how to improve that role. Perhaps a study would be a good time to get back to the basics of government and carrying out its' proper duties more responsibly. With larger populations and human trafficking breaking records, missing persons will continue to grow. It certainly wouldn't hurt to look at how to use the taxpayer's resources more effectively in tragic cases to serve and protect the needs of the community. Thank you for your consideration.

Jake McCoy

Watford City, North Dakota  
406-855-0977

To: North Dakota Senate, State & Local Government Committee

Date: 2/9/2023

RE: SCR 4007 – TESTIMONY IN FAVOR

Chairwoman Roers and committee members,

My name is Matthew Earl, I am a board member and K9 Handler for Badlands Search & Rescue. I have a one-year-old purebred bloodhound named Copper. Copper is a man trailing working dog used for locating missing persons such as children, adults, and the elderly. There are various situations where Copper and I could be used. Runaways, overdue motorists, missing hunters, hikers, mountain bikers, elderly and autistic children that have a propensity to wander and the list goes on. The bloodhound has 300 million olfactory receptors in its nose whereas humans only have six million. The bloodhound is a crucial tool to have for search & rescue.

I am a police officer in the state of North Dakota and there is a dire need for search and rescue in this legendary state. I take calls of missing children, adults, and elderly on a regular basis. We are only able to handle and do so much at times. Search and rescue is another resource that we could use to help find missing people. That child, or that person has a family who wants them found as soon as possible. SAR can help make that process quicker and is able to work for various law enforcement agencies and with fire departments. SAR teams follow the Incident Command System (ICS) and other applicable systems that first responder agencies use.

I bought Copper in April of 2022 with my own funds and am also seeking training and certification now with training sessions almost daily. Copper is a family dog but a working dog as well. I have dedicated my time, money, and other resources to getting Copper, taking him to do training, and keeping him healthy and work ready. I plan on taking Copper to various seminars to learn more about man trailing. Copper is on track to be certified in the fall of 2023 where we would then be available for searches.

I am willing to use my dog for SAR purposes, however there is a need for standards, training, and inclusion in various emergency services aspects, especially when dealing with searches for missing persons. Currently we do lack search and rescue across the entire state and SCR 4007 would help me, the state, and the people of North Dakota be better prepared for various incidents.

SCR 4007 would be a step in the right direction for search and rescue and applicable areas and topics to be thoroughly studied to then move forward with what SARVAND and the NASAR model of national standards and guidelines has in place.

Please vote for SCR 4007 with a DO PASS recommendation.

Thank you,

Matthew Earl

Badlands Search and Rescue  
Board Member / K9 Handler "K9 Copper"



To: North Dakota Senate- State and Local Government Committee

RE: SCR 4007

Date: February 9, 2023

I am writing in support of SCR 4007. My name is Karly Brennan and my family has experienced first-hand the importance of needing SAR services in North Dakota.

I personally reached out to Badlands Search and Rescue when our family member, Joby Seagren went missing on the Missouri River June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Local law enforcement and emergency services were deployed after the initial 911 call came in, but it was made clear to our family that limited search efforts would be made due to limited resources and staff availability on the dive team. Searches were only done for the first 48hrs by water and then the only option left was the Highway Patrol plane to fly over the river twice daily.

No family should be discouraged right out of the gate. We knew as a family that we were in a recovery mode, but we were left alone day after day until Badlands Search and Rescue was given clearance to assist in our search efforts. For the first time in days, we felt heard and relieved to have guidance in performing a community search effort.

Anytime there is a situation that would require SAR services, it is so vitally important to have these services deployed and made available at the same time emergency and law enforcement are sent to a scene. With all agencies working together, I believe the overall outcome will be more efficient and boost the amount of time available to assist in finding the injured, missing or help recover someone in a drowning.

ND is a wonderful state with so many amazing areas to hunt, fish, bike and enjoy water activities. With that being said, cases are on the rise and would benefit greatly having SAR in place. I feel if SAR would have been available to our family immediately, we may have found Joby sooner versus having to live the hell we did for nine agonizing days waiting for him to "bloat and float."

Thank you for taking the time to listen and please take into account all the future families that may require SAR in our state. I urge you to vote IN FAVOR of SCR 4007.

Sincerely,

Karly Brennan

To: North Dakota Senate  
State and Local Government Committee  
Date: 2/9/2023  
Re: SCR 4007

Senator Roers and committee members,

My name is Nick Ybarra. I have dedicated my life to preserving, promoting and enjoying the world-famous Maah Daah Hey Trail, in the North Dakota Badlands. Over the past two decades I have logged more miles and hours on the Maah Daah Hey Trail than anyone else on the planet. I first visited the trail in 2002, as an eighteen-year-old on a Walmart mountain bike and fell head over handlebars in love with the trail. In 2008 I became the first person to “legally” mountain bike the 107 miles of single track trail from CCC Campground to Sully Creek Campground. In 2015 I became the first human to mountain bike the 154 miles from CCC to Burning Coal Vein Campground. Finally in 2022 I doubled the MDH150 and set the record for the first ever MDH300 out-and-back, riding my mountain bike from CCC to BCV and back to CCC, in 107 hours. I also hike, run, snowshoe, hunt and enjoy other activities on the MDH Trail all year round.

Around 2011 the USFS lost funding and staffing to adequately maintain the MDH, and the trail started to disappear. Out of a deep love and passion for the trail my wife and I founded SAVE THE MAAH DAAH HEY, a 501c3 nonprofit organization. We partner with the USFS to perform the annual, hands-on, volunteer trail work that saves the MDH and connecting trails from overgrowth, erosion and ultimately extinction.

In 2012 my wife and I created the Badlands Race Series to promote and share the magic of the Maah Daah Hey Trail with as many people as possible. Our Badlands Races have helped thousands of runners and mountain bikers safely experience some of the most beautiful parts of North Dakota, and arguably the world. Thousands of other trail users have become aware of the Maah Daah Hey through our events and heroic volunteer trail work efforts and have traveled out to the remote campgrounds and trailheads to enjoy the solitude and challenge of this well maintained, raw and rugged, epic 180-mile trail system.

I submit this written testimony IN FAVOR of SCR 4007. As an avid recreational trail user, volunteer trail worker and Badlands Race Director, I see a very real and dire need for SAR in North Dakota. There are some sections of the MDH Trail that span up to fifteen trail miles without even crossing a gravel road. The utter remoteness of the trail combined with the extreme high and low temperatures of our area and the unrelenting elevation changes of the badlands make for very difficult rescue scenarios on the trail. During the Badlands Race events local law enforcement officers and first responders have expressed feelings of frustration due to the aforementioned challenges and lack of staff and resources available to their smaller communities that surround the MDH Trail System.

I believe that a well-functioning SAR program, led with passion and skill, operating in collaboration with current local authorities could be greatly beneficial to all Maah Daah Hey Trail users. My wife and I have seen first-hand some of the challenges of operating as a volunteer nonprofit organization attempting to partner with existing governing agencies for a good cause. Understandably there can be apprehension and hesitancy until trust is earned. However, once a strong working relationship is established a lot of good can come out of those kinds of partnerships. But they must be given a fair chance. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration to establish SAR in North Dakota.

Sincerely,  
Nick Ybarra



# MCKENZIE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

1201 12th St SE Ste B • Watford City, ND 58854

**Matthew Johansen, Sheriff**

Phone: (701) 842-6010

Fax: (701) 842-6455

To: North Dakota Senate, State & Local Government Committee

Date: 03/08/2023 RE: SCR 4007 – Testimony Against

Chairwoman Roers and committee members,

My name is Matthew Johansen, and I am the Sheriff of McKenzie County. I am writing this email to you regarding SCR-4007, a study to form a search and rescue volunteer association. I am writing you to share my thoughts and concerns on this matter. I appreciate you taking the time to read this, and I hope that the legislature will take these concerns, and the concerns shared by others, into consideration moving forward. While SCR-4007 includes language saying that it's a study to form a search and rescue volunteer association, there is already a volunteer search and rescue group formed by the name of Badlands Search & Rescue (BSAR) out of Watford City, ND. I believe BSAR is the driving force behind SCR-4007 and this concerns me. I'm aware of several instances where BSAR attempted to self-dispatch as well as show up on scenes of various incidents within the state without being requested. As sheriff, I know my local resources as well as other resources available to me. I do not appreciate a private volunteer group inserting themselves in the middle of critical incidents. Behavior like this makes it more difficult to conduct emergency operations as well as wasting time to determine who has shown up at a scene and what their intent is.

As the Sheriff of McKenzie County, my primary responsibility is the safety and protection of the citizens who live and work here as well as those tourists that visit our county. My office is committed to achieving that goal and is always seeking innovative ways to ensure our citizen's well-being. However, I do not feel that a study like the one that this legislature has proposed under SCR-4007 is best for our county.

There are several areas of the proposed study that I have reservations about and that I hope the legislature will consider. As you know, NDCC 37-17.1-28 lays out the search and rescue activities. It designates those operations to the chief law enforcement officer of the specific political subdivision where the operation is being held.

Not only would the formation of this type of association hinder the discretion that local law enforcement has in these matters, but it also would undoubtedly hinder the department heads from being able to best utilize the resources they have readily available to them. This is not only detrimental to our resources but has the potential to be detrimental to the citizens we serve.

I also fear what this will mean moving forward with future legislative sessions. I believe legislation like this opens the door for private industries to enter local communities like ours and overwhelm them with regulation—stripping away the local government's authority and control.





# MCKENZIE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

1201 12th St SE Ste B • Watford City, ND 58854

**Matthew Johansen, Sheriff**

Phone: (701) 842-6010

Fax: (701) 842-6455

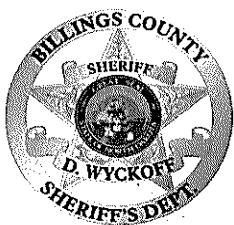
As the chief law enforcement officer of McKenzie County and a citizen of North Dakota, I implore you to vote no on SCR-4007

Sincerely,

Sheriff Matthew Johansen

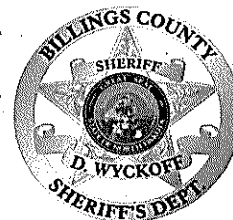
McKenzie County Sheriff





## Billings County Sheriff's Office

DEAN WYCKOFF, SHERIFF  
 495 4th Street • P.O. Box 157  
 Medora, North Dakota 58645-0157  
 Phone: 701-623-4323 • Fax: 701-623-4152



March 3, 2023

Honorable North Dakota Representatives,

My name is Dean Wyckoff, and I am the Sheriff of Billings County. I am writing this email to you regarding SCR-4007, a study to form a search and rescue volunteer association. I am writing you to share my thoughts and concerns on this matter. I appreciate you taking the time to read this, and I hope that the legislature will take these concerns, and the concerns shared by others, into consideration moving forward. While SCR-4007 includes language saying that it's a study to form a search and rescue volunteer association, there is already a volunteer search and rescue group formed by the name of Badlands Search & Rescue (BSAR) out of Watford City, ND. I believe BSAR is the driving force behind SCR-4007 and this concerns me. I'm aware of several instances where BSAR attempted to self-dispatch as well as show up on scenes of various incidents within the state without being requested. As sheriff, I know my local resources as well as other resources available to me. I do not appreciate a private volunteer group inserting themselves in the middle of critical incidents. Behavior like this makes it more difficult to conduct emergency operations as well as wasting time to determine who has shown up at a scene and what their intent is.

As the Sheriff of Billings County, my primary responsibility is the safety and protection of the citizens who live and work here as well as those tourists that visit our county. My office is committed to achieving that goal and is always seeking innovative ways to ensure our citizen's well-being. However, I do not feel that a study like the one that this legislature has proposed under SCR-4007 is best for our county.

There are several areas of the proposed study that I have reservations about and that I hope the legislature will consider. As you know, NDCC 37-17.1-28 lays out the search and rescue activities. It designates those operations to the chief law enforcement officer of the specific political subdivision where the operation is being held.

Not only would the formation of this type of association hinder the discretion that local law enforcement has in these matters, but it also would undoubtedly hinder the department heads from being able to best utilize the resources they have readily available to them. This is not only detrimental to our resources but has the potential to be detrimental to the citizens we serve.

I also fear what this will mean moving forward with future legislative sessions. I believe legislation like this opens the door for private industries to enter local communities like ours and overwhelm them with regulation—stripping away the local government's authority and control.

As the chief law enforcement officer of Billings County and a citizen of North Dakota, I implore you to vote no on SCR-4007. If you have any questions or want to discuss my concerns further, I can be reached at (701) 690-4411.

Sincerely,

Dean H. Wyckoff  
 Billings County Sheriff



# Badlands Search & Rescue Service

*"In Omnia Paratus"*

**To: North Dakota State Legislative Assembly, House and Senate Members, and the Senate – State and Local Government Committee & Senator Roers, Committee Chair**

**Date: 2/8/2023**

**Re: Senate Concurrent Resolution #4007**

My name is Travis Bateman and I am the founder of Badlands SAR and also the Search And Rescue Volunteer Association of North Dakota (SARVAND).

My background briefly as it applies to explaining the why is that I grew up in North Dakota and enjoyed the family land near a town with a large cow atop a hill to the west of our state capitol. I entered a life of service as an adult and served in the United States Army including two combat tours in Iraq and I am a disabled veteran. Continuing my service I served as a law enforcement officer in North Dakota during the latest oil boom from Stanley to Watford City and McKenzie County where I achieved my lifelong goal to work a police dog and did so with the main goal to remove illicit drugs and criminals from the streets for the betterment of the community. In that, I also fell in love with western North Dakota and the Badlands. It was also my time serving on the county that it was realized that we have a huge void in SAR in our state. This was experienced first-hand while working several incidents of missing and lost people as they recreated, several incidents involving watercrafts on Lake Sakakawea, and other recreational activities involving our trail system on public lands. In late 2018 before I exited law enforcement, the effort was started to begin building SAR in that area.

Since 2018, this organization has worked at bringing search and rescue capabilities to North Dakota on a statewide scale. We started out with the intention of serving western North Dakota but as time went on, it was realized that there were no dedicated SAR services to any acceptable levels anywhere in the state. Any similar groups simply consisted of water-focused boat teams and those of dive rescue/recovery teams. Not to diminish those teams, but there is much more needed throughout the state.

SAR is a discipline that encompasses ground, water, and air elements and is resource and personnel intensive. SAR is best defined as the utilization of sound tactics and procedures in locating the missing, lost, and injured and providing medical aid if needed but to ultimately evacuate them to a place of safety and further medical care. It does also include the recovery of the deceased. Over the course of that time there have been many challenges. We have trained and deployed to real world incidents across the state and learned from each and every one and still others in the state, region, or country that highlighted the issues at hand that come about when someone goes missing.

We have worked with law enforcement agencies, assisted them in their cases, met families organizing their own efforts when all hope seemed lost, and heard the cries and seen the tears when the missing

have been located. We have learned from all impacted or involved during these events. Shared the motivation, frustration, but most importantly, the unification to respond properly and initiate the process that has been carried out for decades all across our nation and the world.

Badlands SAR has thrust itself to the forefront of addressing the needs that have not existed on any organized level in the majority of the state. Yes, there have been clashes. Yes, there has been red tape or even politics injected where they do not belong that negatively influenced an incident or our efforts to help. And while tales such as that exist and have been told from SAR teams in other states, and as disheartening as they are, this organization has pressed forward because the reality is that none of that matters when a person is missing and something needs to be done on an organized and structures scale.

We have wholeheartedly recognized and fully support the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women/People (MMIW/P) movement and what it works at to help with the exponentially high number of missing indigenous people on not just tribal lands but all lands. And we will continue to focus on that and support those efforts and lend a helping hand when requested.

We have had great people step up to join our team. We currently have members in Minot, Watford City, Dickinson, Bismarck, and Jamestown. We have had excellent and professional peace officers and other public safety members thank, commend, and unite with determination and focus. We have had great people support us and donate to our efforts.

All of this, since 2018, has brought us to today.

We had been working on legislation with the 2023 session but after assistance and feedback from four sheriff's in North Dakota and our Senator sponsor, it was agreed that it was better suited to seek a resolution requesting a study for this statewide SAR association. There is a great deal of work ahead with this as one can imagine.

This was applied for in early January as it tied in with the legislation but this route surfaced as a much better option and if we get the assistance, input, and support that is needed, it will help to begin to build for improvement for SAR readiness, response, alerts, search commencement, and overall SAR disciplines and there will in turn be a better mechanism in place when bad things happen in the backcountry and on the waters of North Dakota. Or when children get lost, elderly despondents wander from home, hunters fall in a ravine, mountain bikers crash, a trail rider is bucked from their horse, or someone falls overboard in the middle of a lake.

The Search And Rescue Volunteer Association of North Dakota (SARVAND) was formed.

As to the points for the need for a study, we have identified several key areas to needed:

- Missing person reports and initial response procedures.
- Needs assessments of necessary training and equipment by county.

- Case studies of past incidents in North Dakota.
- Standards and training certification needs as defined by National Association for SAR(NASAR).
- Review of state SAR organizations, identify registration process, and the prerequisites to be listed.
- Preventative SAR (PSAR) education needs for citizens, children, and recreationists.
- Background check system and requirements for SAR team applicants and members.
- Reimbursement program for associated mission costs to SAR members and organizations.
- Reimbursement & grant program options for SAR organizations for training, facilities, and equipment.
- Existing programs within North Dakota that could network and would benefit from SAR in North Dakota.

On behalf of every member at Badlands Search & Rescue and our new endeavor for statewide efforts to bring SAR to all of North Dakota I thank you for the time and opportunity to speak with you on this today and I stand for your questions.

Respectfully,

*Travis F. Bateman*

**Travis F. Bateman**  
**Director & Founder**  
**Badlands Search & Rescue**  
**Search And Rescue Volunteer Association of North Dakota**