

SAR team improves odds of locating victims

By KATHY NUSSBERGER
Managing Editor

The odds of victims being successfully located by the Boundary County Search and Rescue (SAR) team, may rise significantly after last Thursday's training in Priest Lake.

With assistance from the 36th Rescue Flight and 336th Training Group at Fairchild Air Force Base in Spokane, area SAR units learned how to improve their networking and communications abilities, while also developing and voting on interagency standardization procedures for a multi-agency rescue.

"Priest Lake Search & Rescue, Inc., hosted the first Northwest Conference, and two helicopter pilots from Fairchild conducted the training," said Boundary County Search and Rescue leader Don Stolley. "These two pilots helped us a couple weeks ago during the rescue of the father and son who were stranded on Roman Nose."

The conference opened with remarks from Bonner County Sheriff Elaine Savage, USAF Survival School Lt. Col. Mike Poole, and a keynote address by Mari Denooy-Swagel.

Stolley added that members of the local SAR team including, Edith Stolley, Ed Robbins, Terry Spreeuw, Sheriff Greg Sprungr and Chief Deputy Richard Stephens attended from Boundary County.

"There were over 75 people from various Idaho counties, Montana and Washington at this first Northwest Conference," Stolley said. "The primary objective was to determine what resources are available to the various SAR teams and provide a Three Day

Winter Wilderness Survival training exercise."

Stolley said his team did not participate in the weekend training because most emergencies occur during the weekends.

"We didn't feel it was feasible to stay in Priest Lake and run the risk of not getting our snowmobiles back to Boundary County in time for an emergency," Stolley explained. "The team from Fairchild demonstrated aspects of their winter survival training program as well as the capabilities of the Huey Helicopters used by the Air Force rescue crew."

Some of the topics covered included the Air Force's regulations, imitations, standards, communications processes/capabilities, operation of the helicopter's hoist system, response times and GPS capabilities.

"The GPS system used to locate victims with the Huey Helicopters, is very precise, right down to the degree, minutes and seconds, thus, if our information is off even a degree, the helicopter crew could end up on the other side of the State," Stolley added. "Which is why we provide reference points such as Roman Nose when we request help in a search."

As an example, Stolley explained how the GPS system could not be used to pinpoint the location during the father and son rescue on Roman Nose.

"The problem with the GPS system during this rescue was that the cell phone provider could not pinpoint their location to less than a five to 15 mile radius," he explained. "And, we had already narrowed our search parameters to a smaller area."

SAR team improves odds of locating victims

By KATHY NUSSBERGER
Managing Editor

The odds of victims being successfully located by the Boundary County Search and Rescue (SAR) team, may rise significantly after last Thursday's training in Priest Lake.

With assistance from the 36th Rescue Flight and 336th Training Group at Fairchild Air Force Base in Spokane, area SAR units learned how to improve their networking and communications abilities, while also developing and voting on interagency standardization procedures for a multi-agency rescue.

"Priest Lake Search & Rescue, Inc., hosted the first Northwest Conference, and two helicopter pilots from Fairchild conducted the training," said Boundary County Search and Rescue leader Don Stolley. "These two pilots helped us a couple weeks ago during the rescue of the father and son who were stranded on Roman Nose."

The conference opened with remarks from Bonner County Sheriff Elaine Savage, USAF Survival School Lt. Col. Mike Poole, and a keynote address by Mari Denooy-Swagel.

Stolley added that members of the local SAR team including, Edith Stolley, Ed Robbins, Terry Spreeuw, Sheriff Greg Sprungl and Chief Deputy Richard Stephens attended from Boundary County.

"There were over 75 people from various Idaho counties, Montana and Washington at this first Northwest Conference," Stolley said. "The primary objective was to determine what resources are available to the various SAR teams and provide a Three Day

Winter Wilderness Survival training exercise."

Stolley said his team did not participate in the weekend training because most emergencies occur during the weekends.

"We didn't feel it was feasible to stay in Priest Lake and run the risk of not getting our snowmobiles back to Boundary County in time for an emergency," Stolley explained. "The team from Fairchild demonstrated aspects of their winter survival training program as well as the capabilities of the Huey Helicopters used by the Air Force rescue crew."

Some of the topics covered included the Air Force's regulations, Imitations, standards, communications processes/capabilities, operation of the helicopter's hoist system, response times and GPS capabilities.

"The GPS system used to locate victims with the Huey Helicopters, is very precise, right down to the degree, minutes and seconds, thus, if our information is off even a degree, the helicopter crew could end up on the other side of the State," Stolley added. "Which is why we provide references points such as Roman Nose when we request help in a search."

As an example, Stolley explained how the GPS system could not be used to pinpoint the location during the father and son rescue on Roman Nose.

"The problem with the GPS system during this rescue was that the cell phone provider could not pinpoint their location to less than a five to 15 mile radius," he explained. "And, we had already narrowed our search parameters to a smaller area."