



# The ERSARA Call Out

1st Edition

October 2007

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## Our Sponsors



We are very pleased to announce that the Lost in the Woods programme is now being sponsored province wide by **West Fraser Mills Ltd.** They supply the provincial wide programme with brochures, certificates, shipment of supplies etc. to instructors all over Alberta.

## What I have learned from ERSARA

*By: Dwayne Walsh*

I'd have to say what I've learned through the training is what I love about ERSARA. From info on proper clothing,

## A Word From Our President

Welcome All,

Welcome to the first edition of the **Edmonton Regional Search and Rescue Association** newsletter. I would like to thank the members who spearheaded this project and submitted articles.

Edmonton Regional Search and Rescue is a volunteer organization providing over 10 years of service to Law Enforcement Agencies, Parks Canada and Emergency Management Alberta (formerly known as Disaster Services). It is our mandate to provide trained volunteers to aid in the search and rescue of people in distress as well as assistance in the event of an emergency or disaster. All of our members must attend a 60 hour Basic Search and Rescue Skills course that teaches the fundamentals of search techniques, lost person behaviour, proper clothing and equipment. Even though the Basic skills course covers all provincially required training, Edmonton Regional Search and Rescue has implemented our own training standards based on our Tasking Agency needs.



In addition to the Basic skills course, everyone must have Standard First Aid and Level C CPR. Other mandatory courses include Map, Compass and Navigation, Evidence Handling and Wilderness Survival. All members must prove competency before they can participate on a search mission. The second series of mandatory training our members undergo in year two is Civil Emergency Response. This course prepares members for response to natural disasters such as a tornado and environmental emergencies. Also, it ranges from hazardous material to pandemics. Components of the Civil Emergency Response course include Basic Structural rescue, Dangerous goods, Evacuation and Triage. Members learn how to methodically and safely search a

what to wear in the heat and the cold and how to layer, to 1st aid and to navigation. There is always training and skills to maintain so when the call comes, you are ready to respond.

Things I had never thought much about before come into play when you are

in ERSARA. Like getting enough rest and eating well. If you get called out

late at night, you have to have the energy because many searches last several hours, or days even. You have to train yourself to remember to drink enough water and cut out the greasy foods as much as possible.

Training in evidence searches and how important clues can be in an investigation and how to handle clues was new to me as well. With the brush in some areas, searching for smaller articles was a big challenge.

Getting out on some of the mock searches we have had was a great way to

get to use my gear and

building, identify hazards and initiate triage for the casualties. Members are also educated on how to prepare themselves and their families for emergencies. The safety and well being of our members is paramount and everyone must competently complete and adhere to their level of training.

[Edmonton Regional Search and Rescue](#) is a Charitable, Non profit organization that relies on public donations to operate. We apply for grants to purchase equipment and fund training. Over the years, we have been partially donated an older model school bus that we converted to a command post and a Suburban truck used to haul our communications trailer as a First Response Vehicle. Both vehicles need to be upgraded. Communications, First Aid and Disaster response equipment is needed as well.

Edmonton Regional Search and Rescue is one of approximately thirty-two Search and Rescue Organizations in Alberta and one of the busiest. We average twenty to thirty call-outs a year for missing persons and evidence searches. With our aging population, searches for people suffering from dementia and/or Alzheimer's disease are increasing. Many people attempting to have a healthier lifestyle by getting active and heading out to the great outdoors are often well equipped but lack the knowledge to properly use it. Most of these searches are for people who have gotten disorientated and then over extended themselves trying to find their way back. Searching for evidence to assist with criminal investigations have also increased. Project K.A.R.E. is a joint task force between the RCMP and EPS to investigate the murders of women who participate in a high risk lifestyle (prostitution). We have conducted numerous searches in various counties as requested by the investigators.

As our name depicts, we respond to search and rescue calls in the Edmonton Region. However, our response extends throughout the province where ever needed. We have been called to assist on searches as far away as Rocky Mountain House, Hinton, Fairview, Demeray, Tofield, Red Deer and many areas in between. Our largest disaster response was to the aftermath of the tornado that went through the Green Acres Campground and the Pine Lake area southeast of Red Deer.

It has been years of hard work and dedication of our members that has lead to the success of [Edmonton Regional Search and Rescue](#). We have set high training standards for our members and it has proven to increase our credibility with the Tasking agencies who

see what works for you and what just looked good in the store. Knowing how to take care of a patient overnight and having the skills to take care of them and you. I can say I know how to start a fire without using a lighter or

matches!! No, I didn't pay someone to do it either.

ERSARA trains in 1st aid every year and also has several SAR medics.

Another avenue to pursue and become highly skilled in is tracking. What I like is there are always skills to keep updated and more to learn and look forward to.

call us for assistance. Just recently we were called to search for a weapon used in a homicide and were successful in locating it. This was a key piece of evidence in the case and was potentially dangerous to the public if discovered by the wrong person. Our members conducted themselves professionally and exactly as they were trained. Needless to say the Homicide Detective was very impressed.

Although we have had many successful searches over the years, some have never been concluded. In an attempt to give her family closure, the RCMP asked Search and Rescue organizations to re-visit the Hinton area a few months ago to search for Stephanie Stewart. She mysteriously went missing from the Athabasca fire tower north of Hinton over a year ago. Unfortunately, we were unsuccessful on this last attempt as well. This is the difficult part of what we do, our task is to locate the missing person, alive or not - we want to give the family closure.

I am very proud to be a member of [Edmonton Regional Search and Rescue](#) and to have been given the opportunity to work with some of the most unselfish people I have ever met. We are on call 24hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year in all kinds of weather and our members eagerly respond. As our world continues to change socially and environmentally, I believe the need for qualified volunteers to assist our Law Enforcement and Disaster services agencies will increase and Edmonton Regional will be there.

Darlene Holden  
President ERSARA

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### Lost In The Woods: A course for kids

Lost In The Woods is part of the public awareness programme that we at ERSARA help provide to the communities of Alberta. Preventative Search and Rescue (PSAR) begins with providing you and your child safety education. Sometimes vacations take families to remote areas to camp, picnic, hike, fish etc., where it is easy for a child to get lost. This educational course will help prevent situations like these from occurring, and will give children the proper tools to deal with these potential situations.

The programme is extensive and includes how to make a survival kit, rules of survival if alone or with someone else (even a pet), how to keep warm, where to wait to be found, where to get water, and how to attract the attention of searchers. The programme also tells children that there is no punishment for getting lost, so they should not worry

about getting into trouble.

Children receive a brochure full of information and a certificate after completion of the programme. Jerry Flemming is the Provincial Coordinator and has made presentations to over 8000 children, and would be happy to answer any questions you may have. If you would like to book a presentation, or become an instructor, please contact him at (780) 434-3695, or e-mail him at [jerry.flemming@ersara.com](mailto:jerry.flemming@ersara.com).

## A Step by Step Enlightenment

*By Jolie Janssen*



A team of three huddles staring intently at a small patch of ground the concentration on their faces utterly intense. In passing it

almost appears as if one has lost a contact lens, but in reality the concentration is for something much larger - a person. They are learning the art of man-tracking, which by definition, is the discoverable evidence of the passage of a human being. In the tracking world it is referred to as 'sign'; in SAR it is the largest chain of clues a subject can leave. In some areas trackers are heavily utilized in SAR events, criminal investigations and crime scene reconstructions and have been instrumental in bringing the lost home, and solving a number of complex crimes.

On September 28<sup>th</sup> thru 30<sup>th</sup>, 24 volunteers joined for three days of tracking training with **Universal Tracking Services** from Washington, USA. They gathered from all over the province as part of the enlightened, those who see what others look at but can't see.

Some came for the first time to learn the art, they learned that wherever a person travels they leave sign and that everybody can see sign; the skill is recognizing what you see. They learned how to properly record footprint evidence and how to find that footprint using a tracking stick and step-by-step methodology. Sound a bit slow and boring? Not according to these students who ended their days with comments like, 'What? It's that time already!?'

scenario with two or more teams using sign-cutting to rapidly follow a line of sign. They focused on organizing and running tracking missions with multiple teams, communication and report writing.

Sign cutting is a method used by trackers to follow a subject's sign, quickly and methodically, using common sense, reasoning, and terrain evaluation. One team follows the subject's sign, or 'prime sign', while the other team goes ahead and cuts along areas of terrain that are likely to readily pick up the subjects sign. Once found, they become the 'prime sign' team and the other team goes ahead and makes a cut again in this way two experienced teams move quickly and easily.

By the end of the weekend, those who were skeptical were made believers. Those who believed were satisfied in their work, and warmed by the enthusiasm of those who had just found what they already knew and believed so deeply. Everyone together understood that this is an art, and a science, that must be kept alive carefully grown by those who could see what others look at but can't see.

### **Fitness for SAR**

*By: Denis babin*

As a SAR Responder you are expected to be able to walk two miles in one hour with your SAR ready pack in typical search terrain.

So, how does a person stay fit for SAR related activities?

There are many ways. Running and walking are probably the two best ways. Other exercises might include cycling, using a tread mill or going to the gym. What is important is getting out and doing some form of exercise. What most experts recommend is 30 minutes of exercise three times a week. For most of us that is an easy thing to do.

If you like to walk or run, Edmonton has plenty of trails along the river and in the many ravines that are through out the city. Some trails are paved, while others are covered with gravel or are just dirt paths. Depending on your level of fitness, some trails are reasonably flat while some areas can get very hilly. The important thing to remember is that searches occur in the area where the terrain is varied, so being able to search in these areas is essential. Therefore, running or walking in different areas with a wide variety of terrain can help you as a searcher. Same thing can be said about cycling. Vary the trails that you ride on, so that when you get called to a search and are asked to ride along the trails, you are physically able to handle the

many different types of terrain that might be in a typical search area.

One area that we all seem to forget about is upper body strength. A typical SAR Responder carries a 24 hour pack that can weigh up to 23 - 30 pounds and as a search goes on, your pack seems to get heavier. Some exercise to help with upper body strength are push ups and pull ups (chin lifts). There are also other exercises that can be done with different weight machines found at most gyms.

The most important part of a fitness program is staying with it. Do an exercise that you enjoy and can do on a regular basis. Sometimes going for a walk or run with a family member or friend can make your exercise routine more enjoyable.

If you are serious about an exercise program, consult with a local gym where they have fitness experts that can set up an exercise program specifically designed for you.

Staying fit for SAR is important not only for yourself, but also for the person that we will be called on to look for.

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## A Healthy Recipe

### Couscous Breakfast Squares

Preparing these moist squares ahead of time makes grabbing breakfast a simple task. Whole wheat couscous is simply sweetened with apple juice and spiced with cinnamon, raisins and almonds. Topped with protein-rich almond or other nut butter, they make a good, healthful snack or dessert too.

### Serves 4-6

- 2 cups unfiltered apple juice
- 1 cup spring or filtered water
- 1/2 cup raw almonds
- 1/4 teaspoon sea salt
- 1 1/4 cups dry whole wheat couscous
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/2 cup raisins

### Optional Toppings

- Almond butter
- Sesame Tahini or Sesame Butter
- Unsweetened Apple Sauce or Apple Butter

Bring juice and water to a boil. Add salt, couscous, cinnamon and almonds. Stir and turn heat to low. Simmer 5 to 10 minutes or until liquid is completely absorbed. Remove from heat. Stir in raisins and

let sit, covered, for 10 minutes.

Rinse an 8x8 inch baking dish with water. Do not dry. Add the couscous mixture and pack it down. Place in refrigerator to cool. Cut into squares and serve as is or add toppings.

### **Nutrition Info**

Per Serving (154g-wt.): 260 calories (50 from fat), 5g total fat, 0g saturated fat, 6g protein, 49g total carbohydrate (6g dietary fiber, 11g sugar), 0mg cholesterol, 240mg sodium

### **ERSARA Upcoming Training**



#### **Fall 2007 Training Schedule**

Now that fall is here it's time to get back to the training. Along with all the old favourites, we've added a couple of new courses this year. A few of the searches we've had in the past year highlighted a few holes in our training regime that we wanted to address (apparently not everyone enjoys getting woken up at 1:00am by a knock on the door and it would be good to know how to handle these disgruntled, but still very concerned citizens). So, that being said, here's the training schedule for the remainder of 2007.

- *October 10 Witness Statements (tentative)*
- *October 14 Verbal Judo TBA*
- *November 3 CER Day 1*
- *November 4 CER Day 2*
- *November 28 Witness Statements (tentative)*

Thank you for reading the 1st Edition of The ERSARA Call Out. The next edition will be published January 2008.

Sincerely,  
The Edmonton Regional Search and Rescue Association