

Meeting Minutes—Wednesday, May 20, 2020
Zoom conference 1800-1935

Attendees:

Program Advisors: Bob Cassello (Alumni); Chuck Boyd (Avalanche, Nordic Backcountry); Michael Lapierre (Mountain Travel & Rescue); Peter Bayer (OEC-ROA); Paula Knight (OEC-ADOS) Jenny O'Donnell (Safety); Austin Hochstrate (Young Adult Patroller); John Segretta (Webmaster); CT Region Admin: Sue-Ellen Repeta (Pequot Section Chief); Tony Philpin (Housatonic Section Chief); Mark Pahmer (Alternate Region Director); Skip Mudge (RD)

Not Present: Tim Appleton (Awards, Sr. OEC); Justin Regan (Certified, OET); Michael Gajdosik (Instructor Development); Kathy Fitzpatrick (Safety); Tom Kim (Snowboard); Paul Katz (Snowboard); Cally Regan (Women's)

CT Region Zoom Account: Per National, there should be no face-to-face events until further notice. In support of that, we expect to have a Zoom account by the end of this week for use by anyone in the region who needs it for ski patrol business. This would include patrol meetings, program planning meetings, classes, etc. Only one person can host a meeting at a time, so please reserve in advance by contacting Skip Mudge by email, text or phone. This will be on a first come, first served basis.

Succession Planning: Please think about this as you move into your season. Who are your best instructors? Who might have the interest, drive and skills to (1) assist you now; and/or (2) take over when you are presented with other opportunities. Now is the time to begin mentoring them.

Instructor News: Does everyone here receive this? If you are an instructor in any discipline and do not receive this, contact Skip. One item that may not have made it to the newsletter is that when we close a course, we need to change the "end date" to the date the IOR actually closes the course.

OEC 6th edition: Order your books now, if you haven't already done so. 93.71 if use code: NSPMEC2. Free shipping through 2020. Many patrollers have already received theirs—only takes a few days to get the book. Eastern Division is buying books for *active* OEC ITs. J&B has a list and is shipping direct to each IT. Paula mentioned that there are some differences. One being that the airway section has been enhanced (e.g., use of oxygen, pulse ox).

CT Region Website Update: John Segretta encouraged everyone to take a look at the website. In particular, all Program Advisors should make sure that their programs are properly represented. Being a website, John cautioned submissions to be light on text (reader fatigue). Keep it to the point, using a newspaper style with the most important information right up front. Maybe another paragraph or two and contact information. 600 words maximum, but ideally a lot less. Email submissions to John (and cc Skip). Email or Word documents work. Photos, icons, etc. are encouraged as well. John is working on how to interface with National to streamline course registration through our site. He has enhanced our presence on Google search so people can find us easily. This was a problem with the old site. We are experimenting with Groups, a feature in Wix that enables groups, such as Program Advisors, Patrol Directors, etc. to have a private area to share ideas. It is important to establish a constructive reason for visiting the website. The more we can do to make this current, relevant and useful, the more the site will benefit the region. We would like to foster the idea that the CT Region is more than seven individual and separate patrols. The website should show how we all work together as a region.

COVID-19 Discussion

Powder Ridge opening for Mountain Biking on Thursday, May 21. We will keep everyone informed so that we may all learn from their experiences and lessons learned. While mountain biking and snow sports offer somewhat different challenges, there should be many lessons we can all learn from Powder Ridge. Also, Timberline Lodge and Jackson Hole have opened up. Both have published their COVID-19 rules on their websites.

National, Division, Region and Patrol level activity on COVID-19 and its potential impact on our operations. Paula Knight shared some insight on National and Division discussions. National is looking at each discipline as well as the national landscape in this regard. With respect to OEC, one group was tasked with answering the question, "what will

it look like to teach OEC?" both for refreshers as well as candidate classes. They have made some recommendations that will first go to Bill DeVarney, National OEC Program Director, then to the Education Committee and then to the Board of Directors. The reason for this is that these recommendations require policy changes, so need to be vetted and approved all the way to the top. While there are many regional differences, we still need to maintain national standards when it comes to our programs. One proposal with respect to the upcoming refresher is to require everyone to take the online portion of the hybrid, and complete the workbook in order to fulfill the 2020 Refresher requirements. The skills portion would be folded into the 2021 refresher. There would be no "traditional" refresher option for this year. OEC classes may also look quite different this season. With the new textbook (OEC 6e) and the online companion, Navigate, coupled with, perhaps videoconferencing, we can get more creative. Many new training aids, such as a book reader to enable someone to listen to the book. One concept is to break the course into two parts. The first part would utilize distance learning for all the didactic (and perhaps skills introduction / demonstration / practice). The second part would be in-person skills and scenario work, and final evaluations. They are also looking at the possibility of online testing. This is currently done in many colleges. More to come, stay tuned. **Please keep in mind that these are recommendations.**

Division Level, Paula is a member of the Task Force for Continuity of Operations—Eastern Division (Under Pressure), aka COOPED UP and shared some of their work. Looking beyond the education piece, they are exploring what the patrol room may look like. 1,000 kids on the hill, crowded patrol rooms, etc. Looking at how EMS and hospitals are functioning, maintaining social distancing, PPE use, etc. Many large ski area clinics (e.g., Stratton, Killington, Mt Snow) will not be open this summer.

Avalanche already doing much of this through PatrollerSchool.org. Online homework, online exams, and now Zoom will enable them to move much of classroom work into the virtual environment. Pilot program coming up will be the Mountaineering and Nordic Instructor Refresher on September 26. Typically a hands-on class, this will be their first "virtual" course. They will experiment with games and other techniques. About 18 people per class, use breakout rooms. Just meet for the field work on a weekend. This should help out quite a bit.

MTR will not take place until February, so there is some time to figure this out by then. Possible that Winding Trails may not open this summer (loading kids on the bus for camp is not safe right now).

OET, Mohawk may have a three-candidate class, which is easy to socially distance for toboggan work. Yelling may present issues, but of greatest concern is course registration for the annual OET refresher. Will need more and smaller groups for signoffs. Concern about the ability to keep patrol room safe—older building with aging carpeting, lots of wood and fabric, crowded patroller prep area and aid room. We hope to get good guidelines from National regarding base and top shack cleanliness. Also have a potential issue with aging patrollers who may also be more likely to present with comorbidities. This may drive more patrollers, young and old, to the Alumni program, at least for a year or two. Concern about bringing food, family members into the patrol room.

YAP, thinking of going back to Zoom. Have a meeting with YAPs in September to touch base with everyone, start to make plans.

Alumni Program may see a large bump in membership with older patrollers who may not be comfortable with new technologies, such as Zoom as we navigate through these unsettling times. Beyond the older patrollers, we may see an influx from patrollers who are just uncomfortable patrolling with COVID-19 largely unmanaged. Bob would like potential Alumni Patrollers to contact him directly. If they go through National, it is harder for Bob to find out what patrols they are coming from. We all need to be aware of these folks and knowledgeable about the program so that we can direct them to Bob. It is important that they continue to maintain their OEC certifications so that they can return to active patrolling when they are ready in a season or two. Regarding the Alumni Day, that is not until February, so really don't need to think about it until November or December. Ski Sundown has been very supportive, and generally don't need much lead time prior to the event.

Mark Clem's Meet the Members of the NSP COVID episode 7 has a good video about how Blue Hills is using Zoom to teach candidate OEC. Here is a link to it: <https://youtu.be/DYzXnGuD0W8> You can also find it from the video tab on nspeast.org.

From the Front Lines: Sue-Ellen who spends her days at a COVID-19 testing center, urges us all to wash our hands and try to stay healthy. She has been approached by many concerned patrollers with questions about what patrols are doing to manage this and keep us safe. We can expect more as the season approaches. One question was if COVID-19 would be covered by workers compensation. While we are not attorneys, the answer is probably not, simply because it could be up to 14 days before symptoms develop. It would be difficult to trace it back to a specific instance. We can become infected through contact with others who are completely asymptomatic yet still carry the virus. So, a concern is that patrollers may bring this back to their families. For some, this may not be worth the risk. It is important that we do our best to protect everyone at the ski area and then communicate this to others who may be apprehensive.

Safety Team: Reach out to Area Management. Patrols need to have this conversation with area management. What are their plans to keep everyone safe? There are many high touch points at our ski areas. What does patrollers' PPE look like? Do our neck gaiters provide sufficient protection? Do we need cloth masks? Surgical masks? N95s? Something else? Do we need one type of mask for "casual" interaction and patient care, and something else for someone we suspect to be COVID-19 (and is, perhaps coughing, sneezing)? When and where do we wear face shields? Gowns? How do we dispose of our PPE?

Final thoughts from Sue-Ellen. For ten weeks, nine nurses have been working in close quarters, sometimes up to four nurses in a seven-foot trailer. They are extremely vigilant in hand hygiene, PPE don/doff procedures. They practice this meticulously. To date, all are COVID-19 negative. One of the things they do is double glove. After a patient interaction, they remove the outer glove, apply Purell, then don a new outer glove. It is possible to stay safe, but it takes training, equipment, supplies and strict adherence to sound procedures.

If anyone has specific questions or concerns, Paula can bring these to the COOPED UP committee.