



PARTNERS IN CRIME PREVENTION

MAY/JUNE 2018

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SEARCH AND RESCUE—THAT OTHERS MAY LIVE

We are lucky to live in Snohomish County, so close to the natural wonders of the Cascade Mountains. It's easy to find trails, rivers, and lakes where we can relax and find peace. But when we go to the mountains we usually think of the adventures, not of what can go wrong.

Most people enjoy the Cascades without incident.

Already this year, however, there have been five deaths from drownings in county rivers. Also, a climber has been helicoptered to a local hospital after a 30 foot fall near Index.

Hazards can include sudden changes in weather from warm and sunny to cold and rainy. Easy trails can become difficult the further a hiker walks. Hikers and hunters can easily become disoriented in unfamiliar terrain. And, rivers are not always suitable for navigating, wading, or crossing. Often, especially in the early spring, snow melt flowing down the county's rivers can be cold enough to induce hypothermia within minutes, incapacitating a victim.

According to Deputy Peter Teske, the

Snohomish County Volunteer Search and Rescue (SCVSAR) unit is responding to hiking and river calls earlier and earlier during the year. And, calls for search and rescue (SAR) service are increasing year after year.

The approximately 300 SCVSAR volunteers contribute an average of 8,304 hours of service each year.

The unpaid volunteers dedicate themselves to a wide variety of missions including operations in wilderness and urban areas, assistance during major disasters, life saving

CPR and first aid assistance, and criminal evidence searches in support of the Sheriff's Office and other local law enforcement agencies. missions can include finding lost hikers, children, people with dementia, mental health issues, or developmental challenges. SCVSAR also conducts swift water rescues and recoveries.

The volunteers dedicate themselves to 24/7 response for any search, rescue, mission or natural emergency.



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**SCVSAR -
VOLUNTEER
OR DONATE**

SCVSAR heavily relies on volunteers to find lost hikers, bring injured hikers/campers to medical aid, and conduct other rescue operations. If you think you would like to help as a volunteer go to this web page for information on membership requirements and to begin your enrollment process:

<https://scvsar.org/volunteer/>

SCVSAR funds its operations through donations. That means volunteers are unpaid. We welcome your donation toward our equipment and operations. For information on how to donate go to:

<https://scvsar.org/donate/>

SEARCH AND RESCUE- ORGANIZED TO SAVE LIVES

Snohomish County Volunteer Search and Rescue has been in operation since its founding in 1958. Over the years it has developed an organization that consists of 7 units and 9 Special Operations Teams.

Units are based from areas of the county including Alderwood, Everett, Marysville, and Snohomish. Other units are composed of the Sheriff's Office, Explorers, and Operations Support.

Successful SAR's must be accomplished by a multitude of specialties all contributing to the successful rescue of lost or injured individuals. The volunteers are organized into the 9 Special Operations Teams.

The Equestrian team can transport supplies to volunteers in difficult terrain. They can also search in difficult terrain giving the riders a higher view and avoiding fatiguing the riders.

The Mountain Bike team can find a missing hiker faster than a search team on foot in terrain that might not be suitable for mechanized equipment.

The Helicopter Rescue Team can search for lost hikers, if necessary hoist them into the helicopter, then transport them to a nearby hospital. The team conducted 53 missions in 2017.

The 4X4 team can shuttle supplies to ground teams that need them. Also, in winter, it can locate people and their vehicles who have become stuck in the snow and winch them out of snow drifts.

Other teams specialize in specific techniques of SAR. The K9 team specializes in the use of dogs to track lost hikers, hunters, etc.

The Man Tracker team specializes in identifying and interpreting signs of people traveling in the woods.

The Swiftwater Rescue team performs search and rescues in hazardous water conditions such as the rivers of Snohomish County.

The Project Care Track team uses radio technology to find people with illnesses such as dementia who have wandered from their home or adult home facility.

The Family Support team provides wide ranging support for families of subjects that the SCVSAR looks for.

Finally, the Operations Support Unit provides command and control to coordinate SAR operations, documents SAR efforts, and mapping services so that SAR participants can know where each element of the rescue effort is located. It also provides meals to SCVSAR members and subject's families to sustain them during long searches.

SAFE HIKING – PLAN, RESEARCH, KNOW YOUR LIMITS

The Washington Trails Association (WTA, <https://www.wta.org/>) says “If you can walk, you can hike.” Having a pleasant hike does not have to be complicated. You should take some basic precautions, however.

Knowing your physical limits can help you from becoming injured. Some questions to ask yourself are “Can I walk or run a mile?” “Do I have ankle or joint problems?” “Do I have asthma, allergies or heart problems?”

If you are new to hiking, start slow with a walk in your local city or county park. Some hikes are easier than others. Starting with easy hikes can help you get in shape for more challenging terrain.

Researching and planning for your next hike can be half the fun. Find hikes that are within your physical level. You can find books on northwest hiking, or the Washington Trails Association has an online Hiking Guide at <https://www.wta.org/go-outside/hikes>. You also want to look for current conditions on hikes. Finding out that a trail is closed because of a washout when you arrive can be a bummer when you have traveled to the trail head. Research trail conditions at WTA’s website at <https://www.wta.org/go-outside/trip-reports>.

Also, check the weather forecast before you go, Remember that weather can change quickly in the Cascades and can be much different than at the lower elevations of Puget Sound.

Wear appropriate clothing for the weather and the difficulty of the terrain that you will be hiking in. You do not need expensive gear, especially for easy hikes. But consider the difficulty of the hike when choosing what you will wear on the trail. On moderate or difficult trails, choose hiking boots that provide support and comfort for your feet and ankles.

Your other clothing should be appropriate to the weather. But remember to be prepared for sudden changes such as rain showers or sudden cooling at higher altitudes. Avoid cotton since it is a poor insulator when wet; that makes you feel colder and increases your risk of hypothermia. Use synthetic or wool materials instead.

Back packs? You need to take extra items to be prepared for any conditions (see page 4 on 10 Essentials). But if you are on a short, easy hike a book bag-style backpack can easily hold your food, water, extra clothing and Ten Essentials. If you are planning longer more strenuous hikes, a daypack should be sufficient.

While you most likely will not encounter any problems on your hike, being prepared for the worst will help you survive.

SAFE HIKING – RESOURCES

- Before you go, fill out this “Hiking Plan” form and leave it with a responsible person who can call for help if you don’t complete your trip: <https://scvsar.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/HikingPlan.pdf>
- Going by a river? Check out this information first: <https://snohomishcountywa.gov/Documents/DocumentCenter/View/206/River-Safety-and-Awareness>
- For more information about hiking in the mountains, checkout the information here: <https://www.wta.org/go-outside/trail-smarts>

SAFE HIKING- THE 10 ESSENTIALS

You are responsible for your own safety when on the trail. Besides doing a little planning and researching, taking the following 10 items with you in your backpack will help you in an unexpected survival situation:

1. **Navigation**- a map and a compass. A GPS can point you in the right direction, but a map and compass can tell you if it is possible to go that way.
2. **Hydration**- take plenty of water to avoid heat stroke, hypothermia and altitude sickness.
3. **Nutrition**- take a day's worth of extra food that takes no preparation and is high in energy.
4. **Rain gear and insulation**- a light rain jacket and extra layers for cold. Wool or poly blends are best to wick moisture away from your skin.
5. **Firestarter**- waterproof matches and a dry or waterproof striker in case you need a fire overnight.
6. **First aid kit**- A useful first aid kit helps if you have a major injury. Hiker first aid kits can be purchased at outdoor stores. Also, consider taking a first aid course from the Red Cross or the Mountaineers.
7. **Tools**- A knife or multitool can be indispensable in preparing food, preparing bandages, and repairing gear. Also, duct tape can fix just about anything.
8. **Illumination**- If you get caught in the dark on the trail you can have a very difficult time safely moving around. Take a flashlight with fresh batteries. Take extra batteries and an extra bulb.
9. **Sun protection**- Take sunglasses and sunscreen.
10. **Shelter**- Take an emergency tarp or space blanket to protect you from a sudden storm or keep you warm overnight.

Some other items to consider taking with you include:

- Insect repellent
- A whistle
- Watch
- Mirror (for signaling)
- Gloves
- Extra socks
- Orange vest (during hunting season)

OFFICE OF NEIGHBORHOODS

MAKING OUR NEIGHBORHOODS SAFER

Homeless Outreach-

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SHERIFF'S OFFICE CRIME PREVENTION WEB PAGE:

<http://www.snohomishcountywa.gov/289/Crime-Prevention>

NEWSLETTER INFO

EDITOR

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If you have questions regarding this newsletter or any articles that appear in it, please contact the editor at neighborhoodwatch@snoco.org

TIP



Snohomish County Sheriff's Office: 425-388-3845

<http://snohomishcountywa.gov/303/Anonymous-Tips>

Crime Stoppers of Puget Sound: 1-800-222-8477