



British Columbia Tracking Association

Fall 2010 Newsletter

Annual General Meeting and Elections

The Annual General Meeting was held at the Comox SAR Hall on Saturday, 21 August 2010. The meeting included the election of the Executive and Regional Directors, as follows:

Executive 2010/2011:

President: Win Koch

Vice President:
Tania Walter Gardiner

Secretary: Kelly Carnochan

Treasurer:
Colleen Cody-Rupp

Regional Directors:

SE: Jerome Liboiron

SW: Gerald Wolfe

Central: Dwaine Brooke

NE: Vacant

NW: Roger Meunier

VI: Peter Wilson

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Web Site:

A new web site is under construction!

President's Message

By Win Koch

Thank you to those that attended the AGM in person, via teleconference and Skype! The next two years are going to be a challenge for the BCTA and I think it is important for all of us to focus on who we are as an association and what we do. We need to let interpersonal issues be a thing of the past as we work towards common goals. We must, despite all distractions, always be ready to perform Tracking as part of a Ground Search and Rescue tasking, whenever we are called out.

We will see change - it will try our patience and may exhaust our free time - especially for the Executive and the Regional Directors, course coordinators and instructors. That is the cost we must incur in order to build a formal program to keep tracking as an essential and viable GSAR specialty in the British Columbia Provincial Emergency Program.

Funding tracking training will remain a challenge. Whether we receive grants or pay as we go, we need to find a way to keep our perishable skills polished and add new abilities.

Another big challenge is to keep all BCTA members and Trackers in general, active and interested - how can we better inform and motivate the Tracking Community?

I see a strong core of dedicated people who give a lot of their time. But we are in need of volunteers to fill key positions within the Executive, Directors and Committees. See the "Want Ads" later in this newsletter.

Although we are all volunteers, we must remember that we also represent a professional image to the Provincial GSAR community at all levels. And there in lays a challenge to us all. We must build upon that image of the trained, skilled and professional Tracker.

I would like to give my personal thanks to all the present and past members who volunteered to be executive and directors of the BCTA. This will be a challenging year - remember to have patience and keep your sense of humour!

2010 AGM Highlights

There were 19 members present, including two via Skype and one via teleconference – the technology worked! The meeting was chaired by the Vice-President, Tania Walter Gardiner.

The treasurer's report was adopted and a motion was made and approved to restrict \$2,000 of the BCTA funds to Tracker Training.

The Chair presented a summary of Board initiatives:

Communication was sent out to BCTA membership and trackers via the 'grapevine' regarding the transition from the JIBC to the BCTA coordinating tracking training in BC;

Guidelines for SAR groups putting tracking training together;

Developing BCTA tracker training standards and a Train the Trainer program to be run through BCTA – based on UTS training standards;

Applying for SAR NIF and Community Gaming Grants and also aiming to approach the SAR Stakeholders Training Committee for training funds; and

Preparing education and communication to membership and stakeholders on tracking in BC.

A question was raised about the train the trainer UTS is working on and if we will be working in partnership with UTS or on our own. The BCTAS will develop a

train the trainer program over the winter, which will follow the UTS model. The plan is to have a draft out in the February time frame,

It was suggested that individual SAR groups include tracking training in their request for grant funds. This would be a good fall back if BCTA is not successful in obtaining grant money. It also shows tracking training as a priority within SAR Groups.

The BCTA Constitution was presented and approved. This document lays the framework for how the society will operate. It is a requirement under the BC Societies act.

Elections were held and the new executive and Regional Directors are highlighted on page one of this newsletter. Contact information will be available on the BCTA website. A vacancy exists for the NE Region, and there is a requirement to elect a new secretary by December 2010.

In-coming President's closing comments: There is a 5-year transition plan and we're into year 2. We are still trying for grant applications, developing tracking standards with the aim to be accepted by the SAR Stakeholders Training Committee that includes PEP, RCMP and BCSARA. By showing them a standard we are living up to, hopefully we can get some money through that avenue. Communications – the minutes will be sent out to membership as well as other correspondence relating the BCTAS initiatives. There will be a newsletter that goes out 3 or 4 times per year.

Meeting Adjourned!

BCTA Training Tracking Courses 2010

Although there was no BCTA funding available for Tracker training this year, SAR groups did a commendable job of hosting eight BCTA and Universal Tracking Services (UTS) courses on a pay-as-you-go basis. Our thanks go out to the course coordinators and instructors who ran the courses, and to all the students who attended. Congratulations to those who achieved their BCTA or UTS certification!

North Cowichan In-House

April 23-25,
28 students, 1 BCTAS Tka
Instructors: Mike, Peter and Sean.

Port Alberni UTS Tk1 & 2

May 14-16.
15 students,
Instructors: Al, Tony and Mike.

Princeton In-House

June 18-20,
56 students, 6 BCTAS Tka,
Instructors: Mike, Tony and Randy.

Comox In-House

Aug.20-22,
16 students, 5 BCTAS Tka
Instructors: Win, Mike, Peter and
Tania

Gibsons In-House

Sept 17-19,
19 students, 2 BCTAS Tka
Instructors: Mike, Tony and Peter.

Saltspring UTS Tk1 & SC

Oct1-3, 16 students,
5 UTS Tka, 1 Tk1, 2 SC
Instructors: Mike and Marv.

Vernon UTS Tk1 & 2 and In-House

Oct 1-3, 24 students
2 BCTAS Tka,
Instructors: Tony, Gordon and Kelly

Squamish Inhouse

Nov 5-7, 26 Students
Instructors: Mike, Tony, Peter and
Sean.

Course pictures and the list of Trackers who successfully achieved certification will be published on the UTS and BCTA web pages.

Stay on-line for Mike's Tracker Grapevine, the BCTA website calendar and the UTS website for info on 2011 courses.

Training Committee Members Wanted!

The Chairman of the BCTA Training Committee is Mike Neeland, assisted by Bart Bjorkman. They would like to see more instructors join the committee. Their major task will be to review the new draft BCTA tracker training standards and a new BCTA Train-the-Trainer course under development. A major effort will be in the works in 2011 to certify new BCTA Tracking Instructors and to re-certify current and past instructors to the new BCTA Standards. Get on board!

Contact Mike at: mikeloretta@shaw.

BCTA Membership

According to our Membership Committee, Bart and Colleen, the current BCTA membership has more than doubled in the last year, from 35 previously, to over 85 trackers. This may include some members who have not renewed their membership for 2010, but there are also several new members who are just being put on our membership roster. Hopefully we can break 100 by 2011!

The number of members is important for our status as a Society and for grant applications. It shows the commitment of the membership to the objectives of the society. Please get out there and encourage the trackers you know to join our association!

Help Wanted – Secretary

The BC Tracking Association Society is looking for a volunteer to fill the position of Secretary within the Association Executive. The duties include conducting the correspondence of the BCTA, issuing notices of meetings, keeping minutes of meetings, have custody of all records and documents except those of the Treasurer, and keep a register of members of the BCTA.

For further information or to volunteer, contact Win Koch, President BCTA wink49@shaw.ca. All volunteers must be BCTA members and will need to stand for election by the members. The term will be for a period of up to two years.

So, what do you get for your membership? Well, if you volunteer for one of the Executive or Director positions – a lot less spare time as you help the Association fulfil its objectives!

Unfortunately, we were not able to obtain any grant funds for training in 2010, but we have re-applied again. Should we be the fortunate recipients of grant money, we will be able to fund and subsidize in-house and contractor Tracker training throughout the Province. This will mean discounts and savings for the BCTA members.

But, throughout the year, the society executive has been very busy trying to secure funding for training, establish standards and criteria, create a constitution, and ultimately a functioning organization able to provide support and training to Trackers all over BC. Not bad on only \$5.00 per member!

Help Wanted - Treasurer

The BC Tracking Association Society is looking for a volunteer to fill the position of Treasurer within the Association Executive. The duties include keeping the financial records necessary to comply with the Societies Act and to render financial statements when required.

For further information or to volunteer, contact Win Koch, President BCTA wink49@shaw.ca. All volunteers must be BCTA members and will need to stand for election by the members. The term will be for a period of up to two years.

Tracker Success Stories

The following summaries were included in our SAR New Initiatives Fund (NIF) Grant application. They are just some of the successful outcomes in searches using trained trackers.

During a recent night search in the Comox Valley for two runaway teens on a trail bike, a team of trained trackers narrowed a possible 200 kilometre radius search area down to a single logging road and then located the subjects in less than one hour, much to the relief of the two families involved.

In Kamloops, a snowboarder who had gone out of bounds and got lost as well as obtaining extensive injuries, was found by a trained tracking team in 2 hours using quick step by step tracking. The paramedic indicated that the subject would likely not have survived to daylight. Without a direction of travel that the trained trackers were able to identify and follow to find the person so quickly, it is likely this individual would not be with us today.

On one of the Gulf Islands there was a search for a woman who was reported missing. Trained trackers noticed there was no sign of her leaving the property of her home, leading to a thorough search of the house. She was found in a semi-coma in a basement storage room. Without the skill of the tracking team being able to say that they saw no signs of her passage out of the home, she may not have been found in time for the medics to save her.

In Quesnel, a man escaped from the Sheriff. Trained trackers followed the

escapee's tracks straight to where he was hiding out and the RCMP member, who is also a trained tracker, detained the man.

In Shawnigan Lake, a man and woman were on a hike with a friend. They were separated from their friend, lost their way and the man incurred an injury preventing him from walking. Trained trackers went to the location where the RCMP dog and handler had their last good scent in searching for the subjects. The trackers cut sign that went the same direction the RCMP dog was heading before losing the scent. By following the line of sign the trackers had identified, they were able to quickly walk right up to the two lost individuals.

Tracker Tales?

Do you have "Lessons Learned" or "Best Practices" you would like to pass on? Please write them up and send them in for future newsletters.

If you have questions, comments, suggestions or ideas, please drop us a line and we'll make sure they get addressed or passed on to the appropriate Board member or Committee, or published in the newsletter!

Send to: Wink49@shaw.ca

Callout SAR

This is a new reality show on the Knowledge Network and other TV Channels. This program may become as popular as Survivorman and Mantracker! Professionally produced, real stories about SAR in Canada. For more info go to: <http://www.calloutsar.tv/> It also includes a Tracker blog.

Regional Directors Reports

Peter Wilson (VI) attended the PEP Best Practices review of the recent Squamish search for Tyler Wright. The concept of a tracker specialist advisor to the SAR Management Team was accepted as a best practice. This would place a senior tracker in the best position to advise and coordinate the most effective use of trackers in the field.

They were also keen on the idea of the BCTA establishing an available trackers list as a resource contact for managers to call when they need specialist trackers in their area. This would be similar to the call-out for cave rescue and other specialists. The BCTA membership roster contains the names, contact information and certification of all the members, whether they are affiliated with a GSAR group or not. Details still have to be worked out, but this is a positive recognition of Tracking as a province-wide GSAR specialty. It is suggested that Regional Directors will be the most likely points of contact to call out trackers for searches within their regions.

“Tracking is about being able to pick pepper out of fly shit in the woods, in the dark!”

Help Wanted BCTAS Regional Director

The BC Tracking Association Society is looking for a volunteer to fill the position of NE Regional Director. The duties include: liaising with GSAR training officers and trackers within the region, providing tracking training materials and advice, facilitating tracking training, assisting other Regional Directors and providing reports, as required.

For further information or to volunteer, contact Win Koch, President BCTA wink49@shaw.ca. All volunteers must be BCTA members and will need to stand for election by the members. The term will be for a period of up to two years.



“Tracking skill and knowledge are of little value, if they cannot be passed on effectively!”