

# **SAR COORDINATES**

**August 2009**

**TONTO RIM SEARCH AND RESCUE SQUAD, Inc.**

**P.O. BOX 357  
STRAWBERRY AZ 85544**

A self-supporting, not-for-profit group of volunteer citizens dedicated to improving safety in the Arizona wilderness.

**Operating under the authority of the Gila County Sheriff's Office  
John Armer; Sheriff**

## **TRSAR Squad meets monthly**

General Public Welcome  
2nd Thursday @ 7:00 - 9:00 PM  
Payson Public Library Meeting Room  
328 N. McLane Road - Payson, Arizona

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## ***SAR Academy:***

***More Info At:***

**[Arizona SAR 2009](#)**

**[Arizona SAR 2009 Registration](#)**

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## Commanders Corner

2009 continues to be a pretty busy year for TRSAR, and continues to have some challenging missions, including a number of all-nighters. Thanks to all who continue to show up no matter what time the call goes out.

I want to stress a couple of things that frequently have great bearing on the ultimate success of our missions. They are simple things, and they just need practice and awareness of their importance to our job.

The first is tracking. We have a number of members on the squad with great tracking skills, and many others who are learning and growing their skills. Every subject we search for leaves tracks of some kind. It is extremely important that we are constantly aware of this and always searching for tracks. Sometimes it can mean the elimination of a large area from our search grid if we can definitively say no tracks went into that area. By the same token, it can generate focus on an area where we can definitively say tracks went into a particular area. You can also tell a lot by paying attention to the number of tracks going in and coming out of an area. Roger and I drove straight up to some missing subjects late one night in Hellsgate just by observing closely their tracks at each possible trail junction. The loss of tracks is also meaningful, as it would indicate where someone went off trail for some reason.

The second item is GPS. Most of you have them, and they are a great tool. Some folks may not be aware of all of the capabilities, or may not be completely comfortable with using it. There are a number of useful teaching aids available on the internet. Far and away, the best teaching aid is to just use it. Use it when hiking and jeeping. Compare your progress to a paper map and learn how to translate between the two. Geocaching is a popular occupation that helps folks learn how to use their GPS. Search for GeoCaching on the internet and there is vast information out there to get you started. There are a number of GeoCaches in the Payson area. The most important thing is to just use it – use it until you are completely familiar with it.

### **Recent Mission Summaries:**

07/04/09 – Fossil Springs, below Irving – Subject reported as dehydrated, altered state of consciousness, on the side of a mountain. We arrived around 1:30 PM. Pine-Strawberry Fire was on scene and had hikers almost to the subject. Since it was dark, we didn't have a clear idea on how to get the subject down, so helicopter was called to assist with spotting. The helicopter was able to one-skid land near the subject, drop off their medic, then was able to one-skid land closer to the subject and pick him up from

his location and fly him to the command post.

07/11/09 – Hellsgate Wilderness – Three subjects backpacked in to camp, but ran low on water and decided to hike back out. On the way out, 2 of them got separated from the 3rd. The 3rd subject searched for the other two, then hiked out to the trailhead and called for assistance. We put together 4 teams of jeeps/quads to cover the network of trails where folks typically get lost on the way out of Hellsgate. About 1 hour after dispatching the teams, one of the missing hikers showed up at the trailhead badly dehydrated, to report that the remaining person had collapsed and was showing signs of severe heat stress. We hydrated him quickly as best we could, then had him guide a team in to the remaining subject. He was located, a medic from Hellsgate fire was driven to his location by quad and jeep, and he was treated on scene until he could be transported back out to the trailhead where he was taken by ambulance for further treatment.

07/16/09 – Fossil Springs, upper trail – 3 subjects reporting heat stress issues, one of them reporting breathing difficulties. We assisted Pine-Strawberry fire in providing water and assisting them up the trail to the trailhead.

07/18/09 – Bear Flats – Two subjects hiked up Christopher Mountain from Bear Flats. We sent two hiking teams in from two different directions, and they hiked all night from approximately 1:00AM until daybreak without locating the subjects. We also had a helicopter search for approximately an hour. We were set to call out additional searchers/hikers early Sunday morning when the missing hikers showed up at the R-Bar-C Scout Ranch along highway 260 above Box Canyon. They apparently got off trail, and possibly saw the lights of R-Bar-C and headed that way.

07/19/09 – Star Valley – Horseback rider lost in network of trails. Sgt Hudgens went in on his quad, and requested assistance. JJ Logan went to assist. They found the subjects tracks, and trailed them until they located the subject. They assisted in getting her back to her property.

07/19/09 – Fossil Springs – Several hikers reporting heat stress issues. We sent a team in with water, and they assisted the hikers out to the trailhead.

07/23/09 – Flying W Ranch near Young – Subject rode west of Young on her quad, apparently got mixed up on the roads, and eventually her quad quit running, possibly out of fuel. She could only give spotty indications of where she might be. Gila County deputies spent several hours searching, and eventually called for assistance because of the large area and incomplete/inconsistent directions. I called out quads and jeeps and we focused on an area west of Flying W Ranch because the deputies had eliminated a couple of other possible areas in their efforts. Jeeps and quads searched until daybreak when she was spotted hiking along a road. We rehydrated her, and drove her back to command.

Stay safe and stay prepared.

Bill Pitterle – Commander, #500

***Don't forget; the meetings this month are August 11th for the Board and August 13th for the General Meeting.***

## **Saving strangers**

**Payson Roundup  
"Our View"  
31 July 2009**

Pop quiz: Do you know anyone who would take a call in the middle of the night saying you might be in trouble — and spend the next 12 hours hiking in steep, rough country trying to find you? And would they give you water and a happy slap on the back when it turned out you'd been insufferably foolish?

No? Not many friends so brave, strong and selfless?

Well, think again — we know some folks who would happily do that for you, although you just don't happen to know them.

So we want to once again thank the volunteers for Tonto Rim Search and Rescue, who turn out every weekend to save strangers.

Mind you, we don't necessarily admire the good sense of the people who end up in need of rescue, but we're agog at the character and selflessness of the volunteers who show up.

## **Lost woman found....**

Payson Roundup  
By [Alexis Bechman](#)

July 28, 2009

It was another busy week for Tonto Rim Search and Rescue volunteers who battled sleep deprivation and exhaustion in a series of overnight rescues.

Last Wednesday, a 45-year-old woman from Young went missing after leaving her home for a late night ride on her quad.

The woman had planned to return home quickly, but soon found herself lost in a maze of trails 12 miles west of Young, near the Flying W Ranch. Around 8:30 p.m., the woman called home to report she did not know where she was. Her family called authorities and gave a “sketchy” description of where she was, said Tonto Rim Search and Rescue Commander Bill Pitterle.

Gila County sheriff’s deputies searched for the woman for several hours, but found no tracks to her whereabouts. Around 1 a.m., Pitterle received a call for assistance from the sheriff’s department and rounded up a small group of volunteers.

Using information received from the woman’s cell phone company that stated she was 15 miles away from the cell tower, five searchers were able to plot a map where she could be located. Searchers scoured roads until early morning but could not find the woman. Even a helicopter found no sign of the woman or her ATV.

After five hours of searching, Pitterle finally got a break around 6 a.m., when he spotted the woman walking down a dirt road several yards below his vehicle.

The woman was uninjured but dehydrated and cold.

Four days earlier, on July 18, searchers had spent another exhausting night out on the trail, this time in Bear Flat, hunting for an out-of-town couple.

The couple, who were staying with a friend, had discussed hiking several trails in the area earlier in the day. When the couple’s friend left to run errands around 5 p.m., the pair decided to set out on an evening hike. By the time the man returned, the pair was still out. So, he decided to wait and see if they would turn up. However, by 11 p.m. the man decided to call the sheriff’s office to report them missing.

Nine volunteer searchers set out on several trails surrounding Christopher Mountain, which is 30 miles east of Payson, while a helicopter searched from the air.

After five hours of looking, Pitterle decided to call back his searchers around 5 a.m. Pitterle planned to send everyone home for a few hours to rest and then begin looking again around 8 a.m.

However, the couple ambled into the -Bar-C Boy Scout Ranch before rescuers could return.

Reportedly, the couple, in their 40s, had set out on a trail but got lost when they took a wrong turn. Realizing they were lost, they camped for the night and when daylight came, headed downhill to the camp.

With the exhausting mission completed by Sunday morning, Pitterle thought he could head home for some rest.

Only a few hours after returning home, Pitterle received a call that a woman was lost in Star Valley on her horse. The woman had recently moved to the area and was mixed up on a trail. She reported she could see Highway 260 but could not figure out how to get there. Pitterle sent several searchers up on quads who escorted her home safely.

Pitterle got another call around 4 p.m., this time reporting a group of hikers was dehydrated on Fossil Springs Trail. Searchers located the group, gave them water and walked them out to their vehicles uninjured.

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## **August 2009 Training & Events Schedule**

|                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| 8 –<br>Aug<br>(Sat)                 | Shelter Building – Time: 0800 – Location: FR 198<br>(look for the cones)  |
| 15-<br>Aug.<br>(Sat.)               | Rope Training – Time: 0700 – Place: Pine Canyon<br>Narrow – Instructor: Roger Miotto  |
| 22-<br>23<br>Aug.<br>(Sat.-<br>Sun) | SAR Academy – Place: Roosevelt Substation –<br>Time: 0800-1600 – This is a mandatory training for<br>squad members who haven't taken it – Any<br>member can also take it again (this is put on for<br>our South Gila SAR) |

## Planned Training Sessions ( Coming this Year)

|                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| 12 – Sep (Sat)                 | Tracking Practice – Time:<br>TBA – Location: TBA                            |
| 16 – Sept (Wed.)               | CPR – Time: 1700 – 2100   |
| 18-20 Sept. (Fri., Sat., Sun.) | ARIZONA SAR<br>CONFERENCE 2009,<br>Place: Salvation Army<br>Camp, Heber, AZ |
| 10 – Oct (Sat)                 | Tracking Certification –<br>Time: TBA – Location: TBA                       |
|                                | Planned Navigation Training<br>– Compass and GPS                            |
|                                | Planned Mock Mission  |
|                                | Planned ATV over night ride<br>120 miles                                    |

If you would like to volunteer to run a training session, or if you have a training session request contact any Board Member or Don Johnson

See following notes:

To reserve use of squad ATV, contact Don Johnson at 928-474-5335. Jacket, gloves, boots, helmet, and eye protection required to operate Squad ATV

Active: Members wishing to remain on active status must attend at least three official Squad functions per quarter of the calendar year, as well as two training exercises per six months of the calendar year.

Reserve: Members who wish to remain on reserve status must attend at least one official Squad function per quarter of the calendar year as well as one training exercise per six months of the calendar year.

## Business Cards for Active Members

All active members are permitted to have business cards with your SAR info on them. If you do not have them yet, or if you have used up the ones you had, contact Mike Taylor to place your order. They are nice to have when you are doing any Squad activities, and the best part is they are free. A common use for them is to hand out to family members of the search/rescue subject.

Email [miket@trsar.org](mailto:miket@trsar.org) or call 978-8009.

## **Website**

Tonto Rim SAR Members can now have your very own email address through our site. Just contact our Webmaster at [jack@jackswebs.com](mailto:jack@jackswebs.com) to arrange for it, no cost to you or us.

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## **Other SAR News**

**Yosemite Search and Rescue (YOSAR) is the emergency response team for Yosemite National Park.**

Each year, an average of 150 visitors are lost, injured or die in the rugged environment of Yosemite National Park. Yosemite Search and Rescue (YOSAR) was established in the 1960s to respond to these emergencies with a cadre of trained professionals. Today the YOSAR team is comprised of Park Rangers, SAR sitters, SAR interns and other community members.

In any given week, team members may be crossing a swollen stream toward a stranded boater, rappelling from a helicopter to a severely ill climber, or extracting an unconscious person from a wrecked vehicle.

The majority of the YOSAR missions (roughly 60%) involve hikers, either ones who have become lost in the wilderness or injured on the trails. The duration and complexity of these missions can range from a month-long, \$100,000 effort to a two-hour, two-person assist. Approximately ten percent of YOSAR missions involve climbing accidents. Often, these rescues attract the most attention because they are coupled with risky exposure and technical challenges. The remaining SARs are as varied as the activities in Yosemite.

YOSAR got its start at the same time as American technical climbing, in the 1950's and 1960's, as the NPS relied upon climbers for wall rescue work and eventually all kinds of searches and rescues. The "SAR Site," an elite team of non-government specialists in high angle rescue, was established in Camp 4, so that team members could be available all season – and eventually all year – for missions.

For the past twenty years, YOSAR has handled about two hundred incidents per year in Yosemite, most of them from April through October. In addition, YOSAR gives mutual aid to the other national parks in the west, as well as to surrounding counties. Finally, many of the individual team members are on state, national, and even international search and rescue resource lists.

In many of its specialties – big wall rescue, emergency medicine, helicopter rescue, canine search – YOSAR ranks among the best teams in the world. However, because of its history, YOSAR is structurally quite different from other SAR teams in that many of its critical functions are unpaid and voluntary. The French team at Chamonix, for example, is salaried; search and rescue is seen there – accurately - as a full-time job for which constant paid training is required. In other countries, such as India, mountain search and rescue is seen as an adjunct to military operations, somewhat comparable to the United States Coast Guard.

YOSAR team members that are not NPS employees are rated as various kinds of specialists by the National Park Service, and during a mission are paid at an hourly rate. Because missions are quickly completed, this means that our most active volunteers are lucky to make as much as \$4000 per year, even though they are on call 24-7. Since funding not tied to specific incidents is almost non-existent, YOSAR members must volunteer their time - and often pay their own way - to get vital training in emergency medicine (most YOSAR members are EMTs), rope systems, and other demanding and highly-specialized skills and knowledge.

## **Evacuation of Fallen Lead Climber on El Capitan Yosemite Valley, El Capitan, New Dawn**

***Click on the THUMBNAILS for full photo. Click "back" on your browser to return from the photo.***

***Check out the high tech way of cooling the brake bar (next to the last picture)***



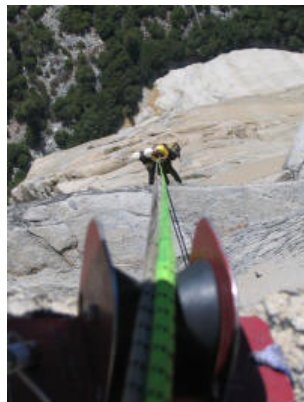
After being flown to the summit, the rescue team reviews the plan.



The injured/stranded party and their portaledge on the New Dawn traverse from Texas Flake, seen from El Cap Meadow.



Rescuers Ed Visnovske and George Paiva drop over the edge of the North American Wall with their haul bags.



Visnovske and Paiva from the edge attendant perspective, with an edge roller (foreground) preventing the weighted line from being cut on the rock edge.



Rescuer's view of the stranded party, approximately 1,000' below, who have packed their portaledge.



Visnovke rigging in preparation for being lowered with the patient.



With thousands of feet of 11mm rope out, enough heat can be generated by the brake bar to damage the rope. Water is applied for cooling.



At the end of the rescue it's still dangerous to drop 3,000+' of rope from the top of El Capitan. It must be hauled back up.