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Proceedings

Executive Summary

SARscene is an annual gathering of Canada's search and rescue (SAR) community and brings together SAR responders and emergency services, public educators, policy makers and stakeholders from across Canada and the world.

On November 20 and 21, 2017, in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Public Safety Canada (PS) and the Manitoba Office of the Fire Commissioner (MOFC) co-hosted SARscene 2017.

The theme for this year's conference—*Moving Forward Collaboratively*—was selected to build upon last year's theme: The Evolving Role of Search and Rescue.

SARscene 2017 included three plenary sessions, 12 parallel sessions, and a showcase that provided an opportunity for six SAR New Initiatives Fund (SAR NIF) beneficiaries to display their work on major projects, tools, services, networks and good practices supporting the SAR community.

A total of eight meetings were facilitated, occurring both before and after the conference, to provide an opportunity for various SAR committees and groups to meet face-to-face.

SARscene 2017 by the Numbers

- 3 plenaries
- 12 parallel Sessions
- 28 presenters
- Approximately 230 delegates

Province and Territories	Participants	Percentage
British Columbia and Northwest Territories	22	10%
Alberta	20	9%
Saskatchewan	12	5%
Manitoba	92	40%
Ontario	57	25%
Quebec	11	5%
New Brunswick	2	1%

Nova Scotia	4	2%
Prince Edward Island	1	-
Newfoundland and Labrador	0	-
Yukon	1	-
Nunavut	0	-

- 6 organizations at the SAR NIF Showcase
- 8 stakeholders committee meetings

Acknowledgements

PS and the MOFC would like to recognize the support provided by the individuals and organizations that contributed to the conference's success. Whether by presenting, facilitating or providing support, SARscene 2017 would not have been possible without their valuable contributions.

Canada's Heavy Urban Search and Rescue Task Forces (HUSAR)	Ontario Provincial Police (OPP)
Canadian Armed Forces (CAF)	Royal Canadian Air Forces(RCAF)
Canadian Coast Guard (CCG)	Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP)
Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary (CCGA)	Saskatchewan Provincial Government
Canadian Safe Boating Council (CSBC)	Search and Rescue Manitoba Volunteer Association (SARMAN)
Manitoba Provincial Government	Search and Rescue Volunteer Association of Canada (SARVAC)
Mental Health Commission of Canada	Toronto Police Service
Ontario Provincial Police (OPP)	Transport Canada (TC)
Canada's Heavy Urban Search and Rescue Task Forces (HUSAR)	Winnipeg Police Service

Summary of Proceedings

Presentations and their respective discussions that took place during SARscene 2017 are summarized below.

Opening Ceremony

Dominik Breton introduced himself as the Director of the National Search and Rescue Secretariat and Master of Ceremonies for the event, and welcomed those in attendance to SARscene 2017.

The Winnipeg Police Pipe Band marched in, followed closely by the guests of honour. Following the band's performance, Pipe Major Bunston and Drums Major Canell were invited to the stage to take part in the traditional toast to the colours.

Guests were then invited to remain seated to view a special Canada 150 video, titled "Anthem", created by the National Film Board.

Traditional Welcome

Elder Dennis White Bird, Manitoba Assembly of Chiefs, provided a traditional welcome and welcomed everyone to Treaty 1 territory for SARscene 2017.

Opening Remarks/Welcome

Opening remarks¹ were provided by guests of honour. In order of appearance on stage:

Blaine Pedersen, Manitoba, Minister for the department of Growth, Enterprise and Trade

Good morning everyone,

As the Minister for the department of Growth, Enterprise and Trade and responsible for the Manitoba Office of the Fire Commissioner it is my pleasure to welcome you to SARscene 2017.

This annual conference brings together search and rescue responders and other emergency services providers, educators, policy makers and stakeholders from across Canada. This conference provides an excellent opportunity to share knowledge and ideas, learn about the latest technologies and services, and discuss important issues facing the search and rescue community. Perhaps most importantly, this event works to foster continued cooperation across all levels of emergency management in Canada, as well as across all search and rescue disciplines, including air, water and land. Through events like SARScene, we continue to

build a strong and vibrant Search and Rescue capacity across the country. For this reason, the Province of Manitoba is honored to be able to co-host this important event with our colleagues from Public Safety Canada.

I would like to recognize the work of all the search and rescue practitioners across this Country, including the dedicated professionals of our Department of National Defense Search and Rescue air squadrons, our Canadian Coast Guard, Parks Canada, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police as well as the thousands of volunteers from the Civilian Aviation Search and Rescue Association, the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary, the Search and Rescue Volunteer Association of Canada, and the Heavy Urban Search and Rescue taskforce.

Being a member of the search and rescue community is something that you should all be very proud of. I can assure you that our Government is honoured by, and appreciative of, the outstanding level of service that you provide to the citizens of Canada. Together, you have taken significant steps to develop and deliver training programs in support of the search and rescue community, and to advance public education, and prevention activities which all help to reduce search and rescue incidents across the country. As well, you have worked to hone your skills, and prepare your response networks to support that important call to duty at any time of day or night.

The Government of Manitoba understands and appreciates the need for communities to engage in strategic partnerships in every aspect of emergency management operations. This is especially true when responding to search and rescue situations.

Through the various search and rescue networks, you are capable of mobilizing large numbers of trained personnel and equipment in a very short amount of time, in situations where every second counts. By working collaboratively, you are able to take control in emergency

situations and are able to provide order and an effective,



From left to right: Cameron Abry, Manitoba Association of Fire Chiefs, Mike Gagné, Director of Operations, Manitoba EMO, Dave Lussier, President of SAR Manitoba, Blaine Pedersen, Manitoba Minister of Department of Growth, Enterprise and Trade and responsible for the Office of the Fire Commissioner, Stéphanie Durand, Director General, Policy and Outreach Directorate, Emergency Management and Programs Branch at Public Safety Canada, Danny Smyth, Police Chief City Of Winnipeg, Rick Head-Dakota, Ojibway Police Service, A/Commissioner Scott Kolody, RCMP, Dennis White Bird, Manitoba Assembly of Chiefs, Dominik Breton, National Search and Rescue Secretariat at Public Safety Canada, and David Schafer, Manitoba Fire Commissioner.

¹ Please note that all opening remarks have been checked against delivery.

coordinated response. You locate our loved ones, educate the public, get people home safely and, during times of tragedy, provide families with closure. Your tireless efforts highlight the dedication and commitment that you offer to our communities.

The theme of this year's conference is *"Moving Forward Collaboratively"*, a theme that is so very important for the success of every aspect of emergency management. Over the next few days, you are going to hear a number of presentations and discussions regarding the Search and Rescue model developed here in Manitoba. The Manitoba model has its roots within the Manitoba Fire Service and our very successful provincial mutual aid system. The foundation of our modern day model lies within the dedication of three very important teams:

- The Search and Rescue Manitoba Advisory Council —comprised of all of our stakeholders
- The Search and Rescue Manitoba Volunteer Association— Comprised of our dedicated Ground Search and Rescue Volunteer Network.
- Canada Task Force 4—our Heavy Urban Search and Rescue Team

It is a model that has been built on the strength of partnerships, collaboration, respect, and most importantly, the long standing friendships that have been developed between the participating agencies throughout the years. As well, Manitoba has been fortunate to have access to Federal assets placed strategically across the province, including:

- The Royal Canadian Air Force 435 search and rescue squadron located here in Winnipeg,
- The Canadian Rangers located across Northern Manitoba, and;
- The Canadian Coast Guard operating in Gimli.

Through this model, we have been able to establish an all hazards search and rescue program that is prepared to respond to anything this province, or country may be faced with. I wish to thank all those from our Manitoba partners who are in attendance this week, and thank you for all that you do to help keep the citizens of our province safe.

One of the first presentations that you will here today deals with the concept of "SAR Modernization" and the efforts of our federal partners at Public Safety Canada to set the vision for the future national model in collaboration with all of stakeholders, including the provinces and territories. These are exciting times for the

national SAR community, and we are proud to be part of that discussion, and hope that the successes that we have experienced in Manitoba can help in some small way with the development of that national modernization effort.

On behalf of the Province of Manitoba I thank you, and wish you a very enjoyable conference.

Stéphanie Durand, Director General, Policy and Outreach Directorate, Public Safety Canada

Good morning to all, and welcome to SARscene 2017. I'd like to pay special thanks to the co-hosts of the conference, the Manitoba Office of the Fire Commissioner, and to the Search and Rescue Manitoba Volunteer Association for their assistance in putting this all together. For all those of you, who have travelled to be here today, welcome to Winnipeg!

Winnipeggers are all too familiar with the notoriety as – let's say – one of the colder cities of the world. In temperature only, of course. Not only is it reflective of the Canadian experience, but there's a certain comfort in getting prepared for the winter, and taking advantage of the infrastructure that keeps us safe and warm. It's hard for us to imagine surviving Canada's often unforgiving and extreme conditions in dangerous situations: A mountain adventure gone wrong; a sudden emergency plane landing in a remote area; or even someone getting stuck on an ice floe in Canada's north. It's even harder to conceive that these situations can and do happen all the time, in a country spanning over 15 million square kilometers.

Many of you here today represent Canada's search and rescue community, working tirelessly, 24/7/365, to respond to Canadians in need. Search and rescue teams in Canada are a hardy bunch, ready to tackle the unthinkable in exacting circumstances. These are true Canadian heroes; part of a network of responders at all levels of government – as well as volunteers – who contribute to keeping Canadians safe. It's a field of work in which collaboration is clearly the watchword. It includes our Canadian Coast Guard, the RCMP and

provincial policing organizations, provincial and territorial governments, everyday mariners, and many, many more.

It's a complex and extremely challenging line of work.

And coordinating the many, many groups involved – from the scouts and rangers, to the volunteers, to the first responders, to government departments, to the Canadian Armed Forces and beyond – can be a daunting task. But thanks in



The Winnipeg Police Pipe Band

no small part to the opportunities that SARscene presents, you have the chance to be better-connected, and ready to work in a coherent and coordinated way. It's inspiring to see so many partners in the National Search and Rescue program joining together today, under the banner "Moving Forward Collaboratively."

This week, you'll have the chance to share your experiences and expertise, learn about how new technology can help you do your jobs, and to make new connections that can help save lives and keep people safe. That's something that feels especially important these days. We've recently experienced some of the worst wildfire and flooding seasons on record. We've witnessed a tragic and extremely rare and deadly hurricane season, taking a massive toll on our southern neighbours. We've taken pride in the Canadian rescue workers – and even Canadian rescue dogs – who have pitched in to help our Mexican friends search for survivors after a series of major earthquakes. And across the vast expanse of our country, it seems every week we hear of the rescue of stranded hikers, searches for missing boaters, crashed paragliders, and – what seems to be a dangerous norm – the rescue of out-of-bound skiers.

Whatever your involvement in the search and rescue field, you need to be at the ready, have the tools and training you need to do your job, and the support to get it done. The Government of Canada takes great pride in providing that support. As you know, the Search and Rescue New Initiatives Fund is one way we do that. It's a contributions program that provides annual funding for projects to advance this important function in Canada. Since its inception nearly 30 years ago, it has supported a variety of projects across Canada that addresses local and regional needs, and the needs of partners like you.

That means better support for Canadians in areas across the country, to enhance the effectiveness, efficiency, economy and innovation of search and rescue activities. Over the past few months, MPs have been making important funding announcements under this program. Whether that's funding to provide basic search and rescue for ground operations, or to support the efforts of the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary, the Government is proud to do so, and will continue to provide that support. The Government of Canada also reinstated funding for Heavy Urban Search and Rescue, through \$3.1 million dollars annually, announced in Budget 2016.

Of course, how the Government supports your work goes far beyond the funding. Aside from organizing conferences like SARscene, we are

deep into our collaborative work with many partners through the National Search and Rescue Advisory Council, which will provide inclusive and strategic advice to the Government on search and rescue. The inaugural meeting of the Council took place just a few weeks ago. Many of you here are involved. I look forward to hearing about the evolution and work of the Council, especially as we move forward toward defining a national search and rescue policy framework.

You are all part of a community that deserves great credit, and our utmost thanks. On behalf of the Government of Canada, and all Canadians – thank you for all you do. I wish you all the best at SARscene 2017!

Thank you.

Danny Smyth, Police Chief, City of Winnipeg

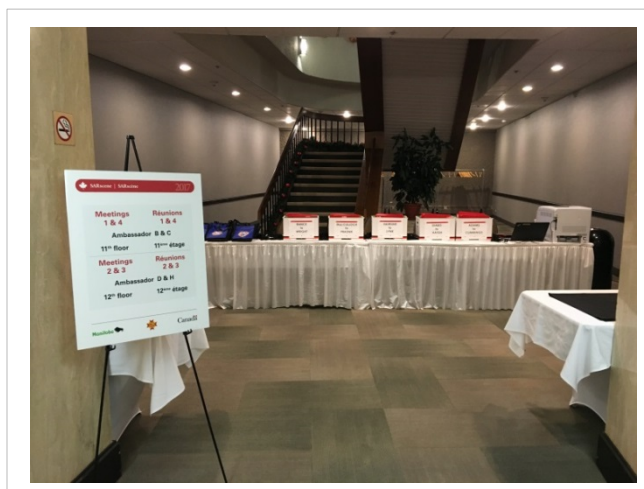
The Winnipeg Police is a strong supporter of the SAR community. We have members within our Service that are very dedicated and compassionate to ensuring a skilled and timely response when required. Let's face it: when you live in a place that experiences extreme changes in weather we need to have a skilled and responsive group. People's lives depend on it. Sharing and collaboration will help all of us meet those challenges going forward.

Dave Lussier, President of the Search & Rescue Manitoba Volunteer Association

As president of the Search & Rescue Manitoba Volunteer Association (SARMAN VA) and on behalf of the Ground Search and Rescue volunteer network in Manitoba, it is my pleasure to welcome you to SAR Scene 2017. This conference provides an excellent opportunity for the three pillars of the search and rescue community; air, marine and ground to network, build relationships and share information amongst SAR peers from across this country.

SARMAN VA represents 22 teams across the province of Manitoba with approximately 400 volunteers. The network of volunteers works closely with the police force of jurisdiction and the OFC to provide the boots on the ground

support for lost and missing person events. SARMAN VA is proactive with prevention and public education through the Adventure Smart Program with the delivery of the Hug-A-Tree program and the Survive Outside program throughout Manitoba.



SARMAN VA participates at the national level with representation on the SEARCH & RESCUE VOLUNTEER ASSOCIATION OF CANADA BOARD (SARVAC). SARVAC has been instrumental in addressing national SAR priorities such as the development of the CSA standard for GSAR and the creations of an insurance policy tailored to protect volunteers in all GSAR related training and response activities.

This conference agenda has a number of interesting speakers and workshops and I encourage you to attend as many of the sessions as you can. In closing, please enjoy the conference and make the best of this opportunity to network, share information and develop relationships with other SAR peers.

Thank you.

Scott Kolody, Assistant Commissioner, Royal Canadian Mounted Police

Thank you Mr. Breton, Minister Pedersen, Chief Smyth, Mr. Lussier, honoured guests, ladies and gentlemen,

I am honoured to bring greetings on behalf of the RCMP in Manitoba and I welcome everyone to this great city and amazing province. Firstly, let me offer my congratulations to Public Safety Canada and the Manitoba Office of the Fire Commissioner on what I am sure will be a very successful SARScene 2017. This event is an incredible opportunity for everyone and every organization involved in search and rescue to learn from each other, to share knowledge and enhance partnerships.

The theme of this year's conference is "Moving Forward Collaboratively". As we are all aware, collaboration and strong partnerships are truly fundamental to search and rescue operations. In Manitoba, the RCMP is responsible for policing about 650,000 square km, an area far larger than many countries.

So when we receive a call that hikers haven't returned, or a child has wandered off, or that hunters have lost their way, it is never just one RCMP unit tasked with finding and bringing them to safety. It requires a rapid response from so many organizations and individuals. Within the RCMP, we may call upon our own search and rescue experts, our police dog services and our airplanes to assist. Even with every available member searching,

we often need additional resources from municipal, provincial and federal governments as well as private assets and help from volunteers. Through training and preparation, these resources always come together no matter the time of day or the location to help find people in need.

In fact, just this past summer, members of our Winnipegosis Detachment received a call of three overdue boaters. The detachment coordinated with our Search and Rescue Unit, the Trenton Rescue Coordination Centre and Manitoba Conservation in order to bring those folks home safely. And just last month, our Wabowden Detachment collaborated with Police Dog Services, Conservation, Canadian Rangers and the Office of the Fire Commissioner to find a lost hiker in the Pisew Falls area. These are just two examples that highlight the importance of pooling our resources, of collaborating and combining efforts to save lives.

And that is why conferences such SARScene are so important. Keeping our lines of communication open and sharing the responsibility of keeping all Canadians safe. Thank you again for everything you do and I wish you a successful conference.

Cameron Abrey, Manitoba Association of Fire Chiefs

Good morning,

It is my great pleasure to be here this morning to welcome you to our Province on behalf of the Manitoba Association of Fire Chiefs. It is so great to see such an amazing networking opportunity offered that allows personnel and teams to learn new ideas and the chance to share existing ideas with each other.

When I look at your agenda and see the various Boards that met Sunday afternoon, the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary, Civil Air Search and Rescue Association, Ground Search and

Rescue Council of Canada and Search and Rescue Volunteer Association of Canada and now look around the room at all the participants here today, there is no doubt in my mind that we are prepared and ready to respond when called upon. I feel confident in saying that the greatest minds in public safety are here to learn from each other and grow the capabilities of their teams to respond to the needs of the public we serve.

The topics that I see in your agenda will only strengthen the network of the responders; the



move forward with the public safety broadband network that will allow for better, faster and more integrated communications to large scale operations and how to handle large numbers of spontaneous volunteers right down to mental health preparedness.

I returned from Ottawa on November 09, after having attended three days with the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs Government Relations Week. Thirty-three Chief Officers from across Canada assembled on Parliament Hill to meet with Members of Parliament and lobby for funding to not only support and develop mental health programs for all first responders, but to provide program delivery for free to first responders. One of the other initiatives the CAFC asked the federal government for was support for the Heavy Urban Search and Rescue teams to be qualified with the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group and to put cross border agreements in place both here at home between province to province but also on the international map. There was a total of 96 meetings scheduled with MP's, Ministers and Senators; and the information shared by the CAFC delegates regarding their meetings in the debriefing following the two days was all very positive.

I would like to thank all the delegates in attendance here this morning for their dedication to duty, and sense of volunteerism in making Canadians safer. I stand before you this morning and reflect for a moment; I see the variety of groups here meeting together and learning from each other over the next few days, and I think of the few days in Ottawa working with other Chief Officers to make positive changes for all first responders, and I look at your theme of the conference; "Moving Forward Collaboratively". In the true sense of emergency services, that is exactly what we are doing, working as a team and working for change to make things better. I wish you well, learn lots, share with others and stay safe.

Plenary 1 — Moving Forward Collaboratively

Key Note Speaker: Ms. Stéphanie Durand, PS

Session Summary

Stéphanie Durand commenced by welcoming everyone in attendance and expressing pride to be co-hosting with partners at the MOFC. Ms. Durand reaffirmed the notion that SAR in Canada is a shared responsibility amongst countless partners including the federal government, provinces and territories, municipalities, First Nations communities, first responders and thousands of volunteers who donate their own personal time and resources.

Volunteers

The three national volunteer associations SARVAC; CASARA; CCGA were recognized for their recent formation of a Volunteer SAR Council. The Council's priorities (utilization, accountability, protection, prevention) were acknowledged and Ms. Durand confirmed that PS is committed to ensuring that these matters are brought to the table to achieve effective and efficient outcomes that support the volunteer community and effectively enhance the provision of Canadian SAR services.

Volunteer's contribution to recent emergency management and disaster response (ice storm in New Brunswick, the flooding in Ottawa, or the forest fires out west) was also acknowledged by Ms. Durand. She stated the volunteer's work was vital to emergency response efforts and played a significant role in mitigating the effects of the disasters.

Ms. Durand commented that for reasons linked to various circumstances, notably climate change, disasters are increasing in both frequency and severity and this will lead to an increasing demand on emergency services including those in the SAR community. This is forcing not only the federal government, but all partners and citizens, to be more innovative in the way we approach emergencies and disasters. In these times, SAR professionals have acted as leaders in demonstrating the importance of remaining open to change and being able to adapt in order to maintain a truly resilient country from an emergency management perspective. Ms. Durand thanked the volunteers for stepping outside of their traditional SAR role and into a role that, in many ways is different, but in one particular way, very similar: working tirelessly to keep Canadians safe.

National Search and Rescue Advisory Council

Ms. Durand highlighted that for the past 25 years, SARscene has played a crucial role in bringing together SAR responders, policy makers and public educators to share knowledge, improve skills and abilities, learn about the latest technologies and foster continued cooperation and interoperability.

She also highlighted that PS has been working hard to ensure that those with SAR responsibilities have a voice in an inclusive forum dedicated to the discussion of matters affecting the entirety of the SAR community.

As a result of these efforts, a new National SAR Advisory Council was recently established and had an inaugural meeting earlier in the month.

Ms. Durand stated that the National SAR Advisory Council had been endorsed by both federal and provincial/territorial governments to provide strategic advice on SAR policy and program matters. Consisting of several organizations,

including federal departments, provinces and territories, Indigenous organizations, the tri-services (police/fire/paramedic) and the three national volunteer associations (CCGA CASARA, and the SARVAC), this governance body provides an inclusive forum and a collective voice for the entirety of Canada's SAR community. Ms. Durand indicated that PS was looking forward to reinforcing relationships with SAR partners and engaging in meaningful collaboration within an inclusive and cohesive SAR system.

Ground SAR Champion

Ms. Durand took the opportunity to share that PS, as the Ground SAR (GSAR) Champion, is working to facilitate the continued delivery of a highly-effective SAR service and to ensure that matters affecting the GSAR community are equally considered. She stated that PS was working to promote collaboration, support programs and identify priorities that encourage multi-jurisdictional interoperability throughout the country.

Ms. Durand stated that PS will be engaging police services of jurisdiction to explore opportunities to support them in the establishment of a body for the discussion of SAR matters and to include this dedicated body within the broader SAR governance construct.

Also, it was noted that PS had been working with National Indigenous Organizations on their role in SAR and how to build stronger relations and better involve them in the SAR governance construct. Ms. Durand was happy to share that progress was being made. One specifically big step: National Indigenous Organizations were now participating as members on the National SAR Advisory Council. This was a tremendous step towards improving representation from valuable members of the GSAR community in national SAR governance and for expanding opportunities for collaboration amongst all SAR partners.

National SAR Framework

Ms. Durand reminded those who attended SARscene 2016 of the focus on engaging SAR partners on formally defining the National SAR program. The passionate feedback provided by the SAR community was vital to the ongoing development of a national, strategic level policy document that defines Canada's SAR policy framework and governance construct. In the coming year, Ms. Durand shared that it was her hope to be in a position to bring this document to the National SAR Advisory Council, and also to federal and provincial/territorial governments to seek their endorsement.

Federal Government Investments

Ms. Durand discussed the federal government's investments in SAR, notably Canada's Defence Policy, recently announced by National Defence, which identified investments by the RCAF related to sustaining domestic SAR capability,

to include life extension of existing systems, acquisition of new platforms, and greater integration with internal and external partners. She also shared that National Defence had reaffirmed SAR to be a core mission for the CAF making it clear that they have an operational role for aeronautical SAR and a willingness to support other types of SAR in collaboration with other partners.

Also, she shared that details on the Prime Minister's announcement of the Oceans Protection Plan which would ensure that Canada's coasts are protected in a modern and advanced way that maintains environmental sustainability, safe and responsible commercial use, and collaboration with coastal and Indigenous communities. This initiative already proved to be important in a number of areas related to SAR including the efforts of the CCG in the North.

SARscene Format and Program

Ms. Durand addressed the changes to the format of SARscene 2017 in relation to past years. One change in particular was the absence of the National SAR Awards. Ms. Durand explained that PS is preparing to launch the Emergency Management Exemplary Award (EMESA), which received Ministerial approval in May 2017.

The EMESA was developed by both federal and provincial/territorial governments to highlight the importance of formally recognizing SAR professionals and SAR volunteers across Canada. There will be five award categories, two of which will be dedicated to SAR: one for SAR volunteers and one for SAR employees. The emblem for the award was created with the Canadian Heraldic Authority under the office of the Governor General. The prototype of the medallion was almost complete, with the outer ring of colour varying by category: the SAR medallions will be orange. Ms. Durand thanked the SAR community for their active collaboration in developing this award. Also, she thanked the Volunteer SAR Council and GSARCC, both of which will play key roles in reviewing nominations. Ms. Durand announced that PS was expecting to launch the inaugural selection process for this award in the coming weeks.

With respect to the conference program, Ms. Durand stated that PS and MOFC have strived to acknowledge the current issues affecting the SAR community—such as leveraging volunteer capacity and mental health preparedness—but also highlights the very tangible link that SAR has with the broader emergency management community by covering topics such as the Public Safety Broadband Network.

Ms. Durand also identified the Canadian HUSAR task forces as presenters, who would discuss, during their sessions, their work and how they ensure a whole of community response in times of a disaster. On this topic, Ms. Durand announced that given functional similarities with traditional SAR activities,

PS believed that there was a place for the response mechanism used during structural collapse incidents, by HUSAR, in a broader SAR system. By connecting HUSAR under the National SAR Secretariat, PS hopes to create new additional support opportunities for both traditional SAR partners and existing or future USAR teams.

Closing

In closing, Ms. Durand encouraged all participants to take the time to not only attend as many sessions as possible, but to network and interact with the SAR and emergency management professionals in attendance. Once again, Ms. Durand thanked everyone for their attendance, and for the work that they do every day to help keep Canadians safe.

Plenary 2 — Weather Basics, Awareness and Preparedness

Speaker:

Ms. Natalie Hasell, Environment and Climate Change Canada

Session Summary

Natalie Hasell provided a review of weather terminology, and explained the differences between the various weather bulletins. She also provided information on how to receive these bulletins.

Meteorological concepts were discussed as well as the different types of weather systems which affect the area.

Ms. Hasell provided information and tips on lightning safety, and how individuals can protect themselves should they find themselves caught in a lightning storm.

Furthermore, Ms. Hasell's talk also offered an extensive description of the types of winter weather phenomena seen across the Prairies and related precautionary measures to be taken when facing these circumstances.



Plenary 3 — Search and Rescue in Canada — Looking Forward to the Future

Presenters:

Colonel Iain Huddleston, RCAF

Mr. Dave Schaefer, MOFC

Mr. Scott Wright, SARVAC

Facilitator: Ms. Stéphanie Durand, PS

Session Summary

The session highlighted that although the primary role of the SAR community is SAR, there is also a role in disaster response.

The establishment of the National SAR Advisory Council was noted as a positive step towards strengthening Canada's SAR governance construct.

Climate change was discussed including its impact on SAR and the new challenges that it has created.

Youth programming and academic relations in SAR were emphasized as areas of focus.

It was also noted that the use, application, and advancement of technology are impacting how SAR is accomplished.

With respect to priorities and strategies, the importance of investing back into the community was noted (e.g. volunteers and technology). It was also recognized that there is a need to set aspirational goals to set direction for the community. In doing so, there is also a need to ensure clarity that cascades to the national, regional, and local levels. The establishment of end state goals, that will drive direction for the community as a whole, was also noted as an important element for the community.

Finally, prevention must be considered a core function of SAR and should not be considered a secondary function.

Parallel 1 — Innovation, Technology and New Tools: Highlighting the Proposed Public Safety Broadband Network (PSBN)

Presenters:

Ms. Janelle Beaudette, PS
Ms. Connie Cheung, PS

Facilitator: Mr. Chris Charron, PS

Objective

Engage the SAR community and understand how they may benefit from a PSBN, the challenges currently faced by this group, and the needs of those participating in SAR activities to determine the impact of a PSBN.

Session Summary

A background and overview of the PSBN was presented:

More specifically, it was communicated that PSBNs are secure high-speed wireless data communications networks that can be used by emergency responders and public safety personnel to communicate with each other in emergency situations and during day to day operations.

It was noted that they are different than cell phone networks. They are more secure; dedicated and high-speed; first responders have priority; and they allow for more interoperability. They are not land mobile radio as they have different applications and capability.

An opportunity exists for interoperability with the United States.

With PSBN, public safety users could use applications that require large amounts of data (e.g., downloading/uploading, streaming video, greater situational awareness). Considerations for a PSBN for Canada include governance, cost and revenue, coverage, user requirements, efficient use of spectrum, harmonization and alignment with the US.

Stakeholder engagement will continue via sessions/workshops.

Parallel 2 — Consultation on Priorities for SAR Volunteers

Presenters:

Mr. Frank Schuurmans, CASARA

Mr. Randy Strandt, CCGA
Mr. Scott Wright, SARVAC

Facilitator: Ms. Jacqui Bannach, PS

Objective

Provide a comprehensive understanding of the opportunities and challenges collectively facing SAR volunteers as they define and seek a path forward to address the priority areas under the Volunteer SAR Council.

Session Summary

The presentation focused on a number of priority areas for SAR volunteers with a focus on what can be done today versus what can be done five years from now.

The SAR Volunteer Council's priorities were discussed, specifically the potential for better utilization of SAR volunteers by federal, provincial and territorial partners. It was also noted that ground, air and marine volunteers experience similar challenges. Managing overutilization in times of disasters was identified as being important, as this can create stresses on individuals. Underutilization can sometimes be a result of agencies of jurisdiction not using them.

During the presentation, it was noted that the community needs to get away from thinking "it is not my mandate".

Liability coverage was identified as an ongoing issue with all volunteers. In some areas, ground SAR volunteers are not covered. It was insisted that this needs to be addressed within five years. There is a lack of consistency around coverage across the country.

Finally, prevention was reaffirmed as a core component of saving lives, but also acknowledged that it is prone to being overlooked. In some areas, prevention has fallen off the radar due to engagement issues and other priorities.

Parallel 3 — Mental Health Preparedness and the Road to Readiness

Presenter:

Mr. Steve Jones, Burlington Fire Department
Facilitator: Ms. Véronique Langlois, PS

Objective

Introduce valuable skills, tools and resources specific to: stigma and barriers to care; healthy coping strategies and mental toughness which are part of the Road to Mental Readiness (R2MR) basic course.

Session Summary

The message from Steve Jones focussed on the importance of maintaining good mental health to be able to provide adequate support when helping others. In the SAR community, it is also very important to reduce stigma with respect to those who experience high levels of stress, fatigue, anxiety, addiction, eating disorder, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and suffer in silence. The conversation about mental health is generally on the negative side rather than the positive side despite a common understanding that mental All emergency responders experience and struggle with post-traumatic stress “symptoms” at some point, and this is normal. If you can talk about it, have a place to fall, and be supported by peers and family, the path to post-traumatic stress disorder could be avoidable. The emergency community needs to create a more supportive environment for all, ensure affective leadership and reduce stigma, so that people won’t be afraid to ask for help and will be treated in a timely manner. In effect, this will reduce the sickness silent period.

The presentation then focused on the education-based program: Road to Mental Readiness. The program is based on neuroscience, sports psychology and resilience material and is offered by the Mental Health Commission of Canada.

For more information regarding the Read to Mental Health Readiness training, please visit the [Mental Health Commission of Canada website](#).

Parallel 4 — Leveraging Volunteer Capacity in Canada (including non-traditional SAR)

Presenters:

Mr. Duane McKay, Province of Saskatchewan
Mr. Lawrence Conway, PS
Mr. Rod Penney, PS

Facilitator: Mr. Rod Penney, PS

Objective

Present an update on the Federal, Provincial and Territories project ‘Understanding and Enabling Volunteer Management in Canada’, and discuss how SAR volunteers can play a key role in supplementing EM volunteer response capacity. This will include an example of how a ground SAR team has assisted with the response to floods last spring in Ontario and Quebec.

Session Summary

Rod Penney set the stage with a contextual presentation: disasters are increasing in frequency and severity. This trend will continue as per climate scientists. As such, costs are increasing.

He then briefly discussed ongoing efforts to align SAR within the broader Emergency Management Strategy for Canada. The modernized National Search and Rescue Framework will look to strengthen SAR Response and Prevention capacity by clearly articulating the collective objective of Canada’s SAR community, defining roles and responsibilities and outlining the governance framework for Canada’s SAR system. The overall goal of the modernized framework is to ensure a whole of society perspective on SAR policy going forward, ensuring that the voices of the SAR volunteer community and Indigenous Communities are integrated into future SAR policy development.

Lawrence Conway provided a brief on his experience in the spring 2017 floods in the Ottawa/Gatineau region. He then provided a timeline of the disaster response. Also, a map of the disaster zone was provided identifying the various areas where his team was spread out.

His volunteer team performed: liaison with EOCs, operations management, staging area management, volunteer management, welfare checks, sandbagging, monitoring, information management, evacuations, barricades, health advisories, communications, and transportation.

The total length of his team’s deployment was 24 incident days, 2574 hours.

Duane McKay spoke to his experience with the Emergency Management Volunteer Tiger Team and the excellent lessons learned during a trip to Germany.

He noted that although response is an important component, recovery can be just as important. Expect about 30% of available resources to be ready to respond to an emergency/disaster.

In partnership with Manitoba, Saskatchewan is moving forward the Emergency Management Volunteer initiative. GSAR volunteers in Saskatchewan have expressed an interest in participating in the initiative.

Mr. McKay stated that the initiative is not meant to take anything away from what currently exists, but rather focuses on filling gaps. It is about insuring that the capacity exists to properly respond to various incidents and also to ensure that you can fill the gaps that open up during them.

Parallel 5 — SAR in Remote Areas: A Conversation on Indigenous and Northern SAR

Presenters:

Superintendent Peter Garapick, Canadian Coast Guard,
Mr. Ted Rankine, Canadian Safe Boating Council
Mr. Murray Wagner, Representative, Indigenous and
Northern Affairs Canada

Facilitator: Ms. Cristiane Peever

Objective

Highlight the progress made and best practices utilized to strengthen community capacity to respond to maritime incidents and discuss other mitigation or prevention measures which could be implemented to address these risk areas.

Session Summary

The programs discussed during this presentation were successful because of the collaborative relationships between the program (federal program or other) and the communities that they are working to serve. Being able to respond to the needs of the community is important.

Northern SAR has unique requirements that need to be informed by the communities that SAR personnel serve.

SAR goes beyond response. There are opportunities to prevent incidents, particularly in the North, now that the environment is changing (ice, weather, waves, water are all different today compared to 40 years ago). There are good opportunities to both learn from, and teach, the communities.

Parallel 6 — Large Search Operations

Presenters:

Mr. Stuart Evans, RCMP, “D” Division
Mr. Clifford Samson, OPP

Facilitator: Ms. Véronique Langlois, PS

Objective

Discuss Manitoba Case studies where Command was challenged from the onset with the number of spontaneous volunteers and responding resources. These case studies will focus on the lessons learned from all aspects of the incident.

Session Summary

This session highlighted the importance of both learning from the past and preparing for the future. Also, that the coordination of searches remains to be the responsibility of search managers/trained individuals. Making use of spontaneous volunteers is important as everyone has a role; however, people who are most experienced must be posted to the area where there is a greater likelihood of finding the individual.

It was also noted that Incident Command has proven beneficial due to the large number of people involved.

Parallel 7 — Setting the course — A Transport Canada (TC) Marine Safety Update

Presenters:

Ms. Michelle Maruk, TC
Mr. Larry Spears, TC

Facilitator: Connie Cheung, PS

Objective

Provide an update on TC programs and regulations to increase boating safety awareness and compliance through education and awareness to reduce the number of Marine SAR incidents across the country and reduce fatalities.

Session Summary

TC’s mandate is to ensure all Canadian vessels are covered in regulation from canoes to cruise ships, in all our waterways with a goal on reducing the number of boating fatalities, injuries and incidents.

Office of Boating Safety (OBS) has providing training, conducted workshops, information sessions, and developed numerous new partnerships as well as processed thousands of licenses and/or permits.

In 2015 Pleasure Craft Electronic Licensing System (PCEL) was launched, and processed over 100,000 transactions. Improvements to the PCEL System are being made to address key concerns, with consultations to come this fall on delivery options with key stakeholders. Funding has been provided to input historical data.

Vessel Operating Restriction Regulations (VORR)
Modernization: Transport Canada’s has initiated a review of the process in August and is undertaking consultation to explore options to deliver a modernized VORR program.

Part of the current problem is the lag; hence looking for efficiencies to encourage timely updates to the system/data.

Boating Safety Contribution Program (BSCP) has funded 64 projects across Canada, totalling \$8.7M. All available funding has been allocated until March 31, 2018 (eight projects + three new projects). Small units/projects are highly encouraged to apply, as often those smaller projects are the most benefited and provide invaluable assistance.

Pleasure Craft Operator Competency (PCOC) program is managed through the Marine Personnel Standards, Pilotage and Medicine unit.

Average number of PCOC issued annually (five year average) 155,000. This provided an age restriction, as well as mandatory testing – thus reducing incidents.

Rental Boat Safety Resources: TC developed user-friendly tools and materials to engage stakeholders in the boat rental industry. This has provided training and standardized checklists for those who rent boats to the (often) inexperienced.

Joint TC – USCG Working Groups on Equipment Design: Working on New Lifejacket Standard – UL 12402 / Joint Canada-US Standards. In the past we have worked on separate standards. The standards will be the same in the US and Canada. They are essentially finished, and are in the implementation stage. New work is also being done.

Parallel 8 — SAR Alerting

Presenter: Major Myrian Lafrance, CAF

Facilitator: Ms. Cristiane Peever

Objective

Discuss products and processes that work best for receiving alerts, collecting information necessary to minimize investigative time, to avoid false or unnecessary alerts, and to effectively reach SAR authorities and the implications for public awareness and prevention programs.

Session Summary

The presentation provided an overview of the various alerting systems:

PLB (406) – Can only be activated manually; some pilots will use them as an ELT beacon.

EPIRB – Variety of types with various alerting mechanisms (e.g. strobe)

ELT (aircraft) – Like a PLB, manually activated, some have crash activated alerting.

Others: *16 – cell phone range, will connect you to JRCC, 911 – cell phone range, mobile applications on various platforms (e.g. app store, google play) will send generic message to a pre-determined contact based on your GPS location.

Spot: marketed as a PLB. Will gather information and, if activated, distress alert will be sent to a response coordination centre. After a spot beacon ping, they will attempt to contact you. If that fails, your information will be relayed to search authorities.

False alerts continue to be an issue: various reasons (batteries, accidental activation of beacon, equip malfunction, etc.).

Parallel 9 — Exploring the Manitoba Model for SAR

Presenters:

Mr. Stuart Evans, RCMP, Division “D”

Mr. Tobin Praznik, MOFC, Emergency Services College—
Program Manager, Provincial GSAR Coordinator, CANTF4
Task Force Leader

Facilitator: Ms. Véronique Langlois, PS

Objective

Provide an overview of the Manitoba SAR model that includes both provincial response teams, SARMAN and CANTF4 (H)USAR. The overview will include the oversight of teams, roles and responsibilities, call out procedures and the importance of partnerships and relationships

Session Summary

In this session, case studies highlighted several examples of how SAR functions under the Manitoba Model. Each portion of the session was followed by a Questions & Answers session with conference delegates.

Part one focused on SARMAN: An advisory council formed in 1993, registered non-profit, made up of several stakeholders that works to discuss common issues, share information/policies

Part two highlighted the USAR model and how it can support activities other than structural collapse (e.g., support fire department, sprinkler systems, support MB Hydro during ice storms/events, etc.)

Parallel 10 — SAR in Major Municipalities

Presenters:

Sergeant Randy Antonio, Winnipeg Police Service
Superintendent Bill Neadles, Toronto Police Service

Facilitator: Ms. Jacqui Bannach, PS

Objective

Highlight the growing demand for SAR and its impact on policing resources in major municipalities and the tools available to both prevent and respond to incidents

Session Summary

This session highlighted the importance of support from the provincial government in the successful provision of SAR.

The demographic is changing with more SAR incidents being attributed to the vulnerable populations.

Importance was placed on innovation and ensuring that continual improvements to technology are leveraged, including social media which helps to spread the word and find the missing or lost.

Parallel 11 — HUSAR: Leveraging Relationships and Identifying Opportunities for Collaboration

Presenters:

Ms. Amanda Nolan, PS
Canada's HUSAR Task Forces – Mr. John Davidson (CAN-TF3) and Ms. Sue Henry (CAN-TF2)

Facilitator: Ms. Amanda Nolan, PS

Objective

Leverage relationships with federal, provincial and volunteer SAR organizations, NGOs and local emergency response organizations to ensure a whole community response and advance public safety.

Session Summary

PS and Canada's HUSAR Task Forces co-presented this session.

PS provided a brief introduction to Canada's HUSAR program, including its history and current status.

The Task Forces then described their specific HUSAR capabilities, which include advanced/recce parties, SAR/structural collapse, communications, logistics, emergency medical assistance, technical and canine search, and structural specialists. They also provided detail on their disaster response capabilities, which include transport, water purification, flood and water transport, incident management teams, mental health support, hazardous materials, and all-weather operations. The Task Forces also described what they are not, which includes Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and Explosive (CBRNE), GSAR, cave rescue, avalanche rescue, mountain rescue, equipment light, off road specialists, and firefighting. It was emphasized that HUSAR is just "one piece of the puzzle" in the SAR continuum.

The room was then opened for discussion where a conversation took place on opportunities for the HUSAR teams and the traditional SAR community to connect with each other.

Parallel 12 — SAR Operations and Readiness

Presenters:

Mr. Scott Kerbis, MOFC, Manitoba Emergency Services College
Mr. Dave Lussier, SARMAN

Facilitator: Ms. Véronique Langlois, PS

Objective

Focus on the preparedness and situational awareness for SAR volunteers. Concepts of leadership, stress management, safety, documentation, communications and social media will all be touched on within this presentation.

Session Summary

Manitoba SAR Model initiated in 1980s. Each district has GSAR team. Not all are firefighters.

2009 need to develop SARMAN volunteer association. Mainly built from fire services to include GSAR and other services. Recruitment of volunteers is proactive, to tap into various resources to spread the workload. Consists of 4-500 volunteers.

Five Geographical Districts in Manitoba.

Challenges for volunteers – Teams are not deployed on a regular basis. Volunteers are lost. Skills need to be up kept, which take time. People who volunteered did not volunteer for one activity. Burnout is an issue.

Safety is key – situational awareness and common sense!

Closing Ceremony

The closing remarks of Mr. Dominik Breton, are reproduced below²:

Good afternoon. We arrive now at the end of this event, and it is my pleasure to be, for the last time, the Master of Ceremonies. I would like to take this opportunity to highlight key elements of this conference.

Another round of informative parallel sessions just wrapped up this morning after an excellent opening plenary session that covered a wide range of topics under the theme: Looking Forward to the Future. Panelists discussed the SAR community's role in disaster response, the benefits of the newly established National SAR Advisory Council, how climate change is impacting SAR and creating new challenges, youth programming and academic relations and the importance of leveraging new and innovative technologies.

SARscene gathers people who are engaged to continue the conversation on the SAR priorities. Your attendance at the three plenaries and twelve parallel sessions demonstrates your passion to work together to advance improvements in SAR. To do so, several initiatives are ongoing, which will benefit from your continuous engagement. Such as:

- the establishment of a high-speed wireless data communications network for use by emergency responders;
- further the discussion to utilize more effectively and more efficiently SAR volunteers, and to leverage and transfer your SAR skills to assist others in times of an emergency, as we saw when the 22 members of SARMAN assisted in responding to the Fort McMurray forest fires ;
- identify opportunities for prevention; populations at risk, proper messaging; especially as we continue to experience the effects of climate change;
- understand that success is founded on being sensitive to the culture of the communities;
- document case studies as they are a good way to share lessons learned and best practices, and seek/create opportunities to exchange;
- continue increasing the knowledge of the tools and technologies at the disposal of SAR community;

- understand the various types of SAR alerting and the challenges that come with them, in order to be able to inform the public accordingly;
- exploring effective, and innovative, solutions from both response and prevention perspectives to address an increasing rate of maritime incidents;
- reflect on the lessons that can be learned from Manitoba's strong, collaborative SAR model and their work towards building relationships to improve interoperability. Consider what could be implemented within your jurisdictions or organizations;
- identify areas where (H)USAR and the broad SAR community can work together and support each other;
- the success of SAR in major municipalities depends on support from government in dealing with the changing demographic from a vulnerable population perspective. As such, it is important share the information and the evidence with those that are empowered to affect change; and
- recognizing that first and foremost, everyone's safety and security is of utmost importance during SAR operations and in paths to readiness.

And, at the end, this reinforces the need for a collective commitment to maintain the engagement amongst us, as a vital key to achieve success.

I hope that you have enjoyed your stay in Winnipeg, and you leave with renewed enthusiasm, ideas and have re-connected or made new connections with colleagues from across the country. I also hope that you have taken every opportunity to contribute to the discussions and share your knowledge and perspective, which was and will remain an objective of SARscene.



² Please note that the closing remarks have been checked against delivery.

SAR NIF Showcase

Lead: Ms. Cristiane Peever, PS

Representatives and Organizations:

Randy Antonio – Search and Rescue Manitoba Volunteer Association (SARMANVA—WINSAR)

Bobbi Buchanan – Search and Rescue Saskatchewan Association of Volunteers

Dawn Callan – Paddle Canada

Diem Franke – Playsafe Productions

Ted Rankine – Playsafe Productions

Graham Ketcheson – Paddle Canada

Sebastien Marcoux – Parks Canada

Tobin Praznik – Province of Manitoba

Objective

To showcase the various projects which address local and regional needs to enhance the effectiveness, efficiency, economy and innovation of SAR activities.

Final Words

SARscene brought together delegates from across the country to discuss SAR priorities, and ensure the safety of citizens.

The participation of many stakeholders, recurring participants/speakers and new ones, contributed to make this event a success, and is an excellent demonstration of what can be achieved through collaboration. PS is very pleased to have worked with the co-host, the personnel of the Manitoba Office of the Fire Commissioner, as well as with the SAR Manitoba Volunteer Association for putting together such an enriching SARscene.

SARscene also offered the opportunity for stakeholders to demonstrate progress towards the SAR Framework which aims to defining an inclusive and cohesive SAR system and strengthening SAR governance.

Finally, a heartfelt thank you to every one of you for attending the conference. PS and MOFC have planned for an engaging and meaningful event, but at the end of the day, it is the delegates that make the difference. As the honored guests have mentioned at the opening ceremony, the SAR community is very dynamic, dedicated and proud, and there is no doubt that SARscene 2017 would be successful, because you make it so.

Hope to see you at the next SARscene.



Organizing Committee Members and Support Group