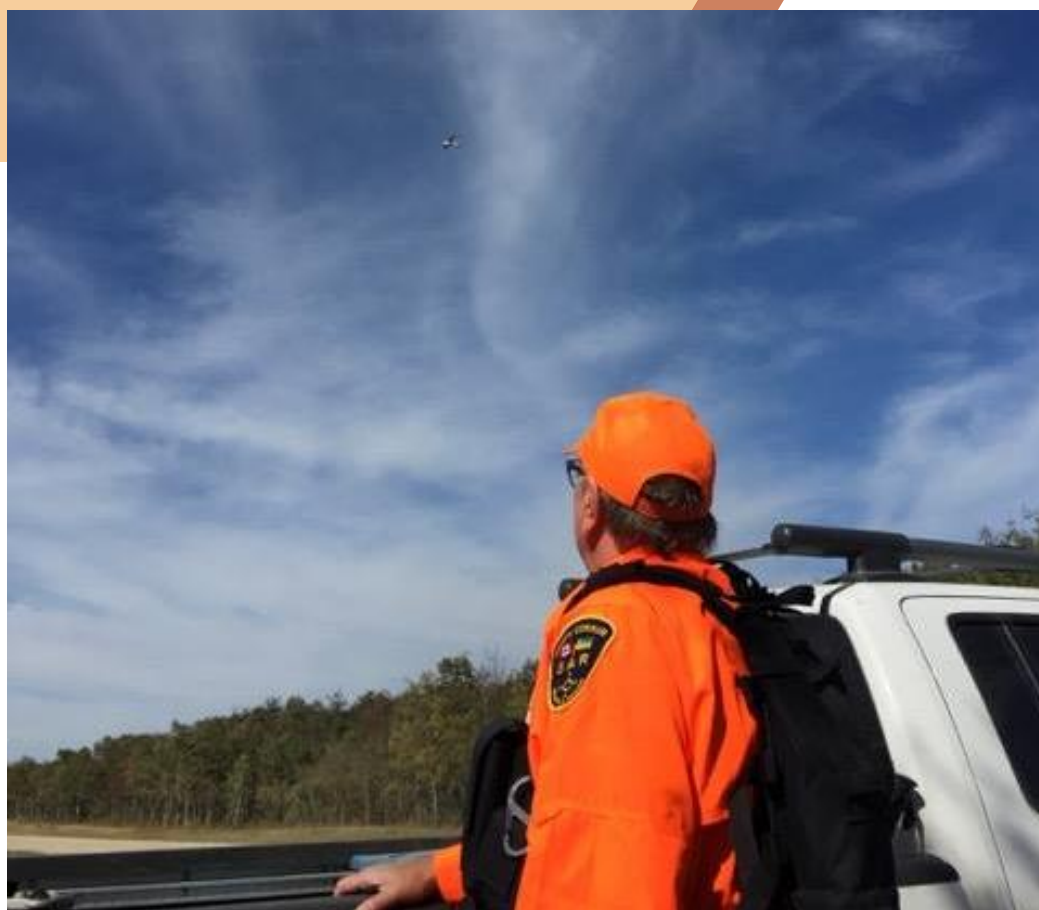


# Search and Rescue Saskatchewan Association of Volunteers

## ANNUAL REPORT 2018





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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Search and Rescue Saskatchewan Association of Volunteers (SARSAV) had a very busy year in 2018, with plenty of activity on all fronts.

Our core purpose of existence is to support search and rescue activities across Saskatchewan for lost or missing persons. 2018 was a successful year in that regard, with a total of 37 activations by our Authorities Having Jurisdiction (AHJs). Member chapters responded to calls from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), Moose Jaw Police Service, Prince Albert Police Service, Saskatoon Police Service, and assisted with a search managed by Parks Canada. Our members worked alongside Emergency Management and Fire Safety (EMFS, now called the Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency) on a search. Over 2000 search hours were logged by SARSAV volunteers.

Personnel belonging to one of SARSAV's 18 member chapters volunteered nearly 18,000 hours in 2018, nearly half of which were in training and almost a quarter on administration to develop the professionalism in search and rescue expected of us by our AHJs and the public.

Our community outreach activities accounted for over 1300 hours at community events and 334 hours of Preventative SAR activities, with our AdventureSmart presenters reaching an audience of over 5700.

After years of anticipation, SARSAV's Civilian Canine SAR program saw a major milestone in the release of national RCMP standards for civilian SAR dogs. Another milestone was achieved with Saskatchewan's first certified SAR dog, Jenga.

Not to be overlooked is the contribution of funding through Public Safety Canada's New Initiatives Fund (NIF) Program. SARSAV was busy in 2018 wrapping up the third and final year of the *Saskatchewan Communicates* NIF in March and entered year two of the *Saskatchewan Data Management and SAR Resource Tracking from Field to National Fora* NIF.

# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Greetings to all,

2018 was a year of consistent growth and progress. From building up teams and training to the CSA GSAR standards, to the roll out of rugged military grade tablets, and progress on a provincial SAR Data Management System to more joint work in search management during a SAR event and closer collaboration with our AHJs and with Public Safety SK supporting a unified response to emergency management, we have seen a lot of growth.

With the welcoming of our 18<sup>th</sup> chapter in December we saw growth in numbers, progress towards collaboration, and a bright new beginning.


We have made huge strides in interoperability with our neighbouring provinces, cross-border activations, exercises and trainings with SAR Alberta and Manitoba OFC. Provincial Emergency Management partnerships have strengthened in both training and responding together. This coming year will see more coordination and resources for Ground SAR across SK.

2018 saw the implementation of AD&D insurance for ALL of our chapter members and D&O insurance for SARSAV's executive and board as well as each chapter's executive. This was funded by SARVAC for 2 years from September 2018.

We still have areas of insurance needs – full liability coverage, WCB, and equipment. There is ongoing work within the province to provide for these gaps, and we expect some great news soon.

SARSAV has seen much progress from our beginnings 22 years ago to where we are today. From the community-level response of our trained professional volunteers to the joint effort of a province-wide search capacity, we have built upon our foundation substantially.

As we work together on a search team, reach out with prevention efforts, or join another course or search exercise we always remember the goal. It is not the bright orange we wear with pride, it is not the years of knowledge we keep in our minds and the skills we ever sharpen, or the checks in the log book. It is the person. The lost and missing. Each and every subject is our reason for existing. The reason for our work. Our motivation to continue to give and our reward at the end of a mission is to know we did our best for those whom we work for.



Each of you who give your time to train, respond, and those who support the SAR responders give so much...we could not be without each of you! You make SARSAV who we are; you have driven the growth we have seen; YOU are the heart and the soul of our organization.

We closed this year with nearly double the search activations from the year before. There is no doubt of the need for trained coordinated response and no denying the dedication and professionalism of the team of over 250 active field ready members of SARSAV and the nearly 50 others who fill support roles within teams. I am so proud of each of our members, and so amazed at their selfless dedication to provide the work needed to continue to provide the level of response that SARSAV is known for. Keep up the strong work!

Looking forward to 2019!

*Bobbi Buchanan*

*President*

*Search and Rescue Saskatchewan Association of Volunteers (SARSAV)*

# HISTORY

*Like many things in this world, the Search and Rescue Saskatchewan Association of Volunteers was born out of tragedy.*

In 1994 a young Ashley Krestianson lost her way, and life, south of Tisdale. The massive search spawned development in communities across Saskatchewan with the goal of providing volunteers to assist the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) should such an incident happen again.



The RCMP in turn realized they would need to have trained people to help with such a search. The RCMP and representatives from the communities met and SARSAV was formed in 1996.

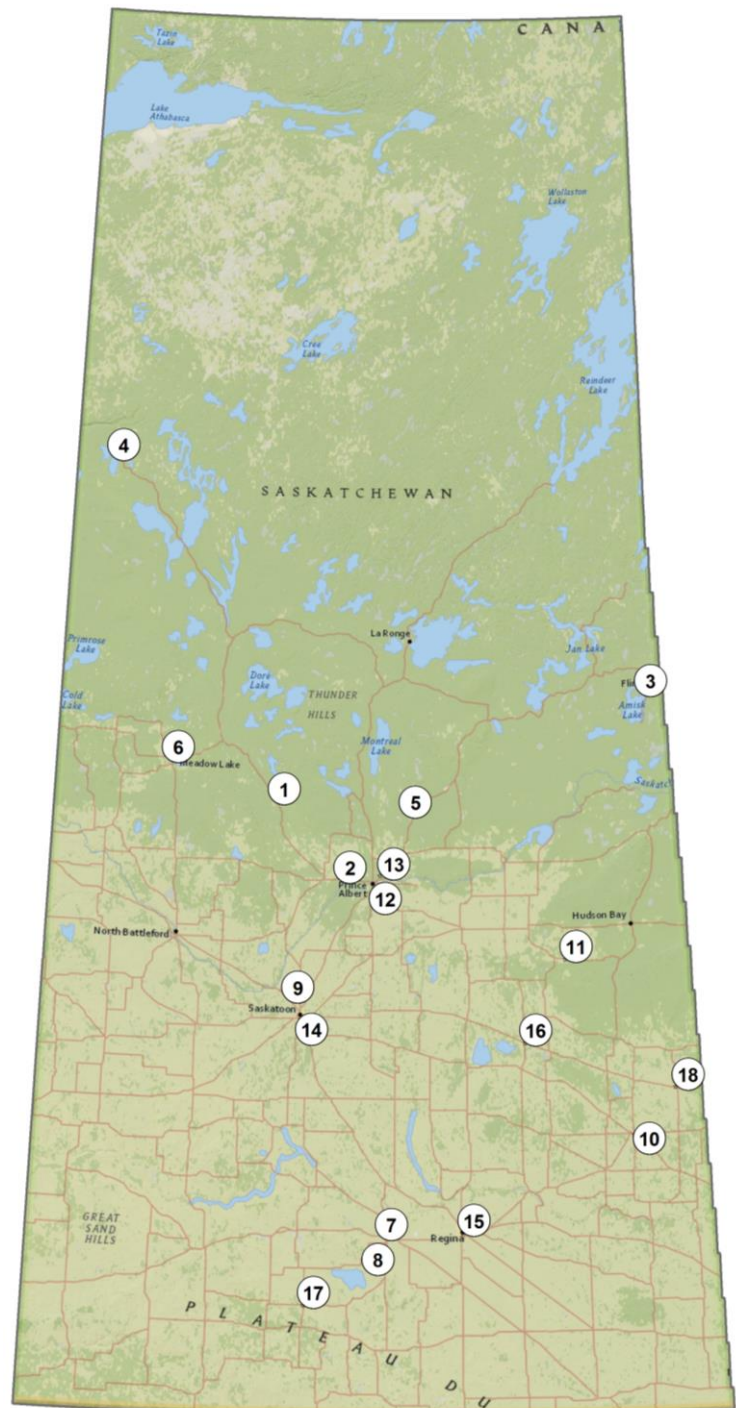
SARSAV became the umbrella to member chapters (community-oriented) and under the direction of the RCMP started getting trained. The training standards have grown to be part of the national umbrella for Canada and continue to grow and be monitored. The high quality of training and organization has created "Search and Rescue Professionals" both paid and unpaid.

The evolution of SARSAV continues, and the relationship with the RCMP in search and rescue has become more of a partnership. SARSAV and the RCMP, along with new partners such as the Ministry of Justice, go on making Search and Rescue in Saskatchewan a model that is envied.

# MEMBER CHAPTERS

SARSAV had a total of 18 chapters in 2018:

1. Big River SAR
2. Buckland SAR
3. Denare Beach SAR
4. Dene Trackers SAR (La Loche)
5. Hwy 55 North SAR (Candle Lake/Smeaton)
6. Meadow Lake and District SAR
7. Moose Jaw SAR
8. NFTC Ground Search Team (15 Wing, Moose Jaw)
9. North Corman Park SAR
10. Parkland SAR (Yorkton/Melville)
11. Porcupine Plain SAR
12. Prince Albert Grand Council (PAGC) Search, Rescue and Recovery
13. Prince Albert North SAR
14. Saskatoon SAR
15. Search and Rescue Regina
16. Wadena and District SAR
17. Wood River SAR
18. X-treme SAR (Kamsack)



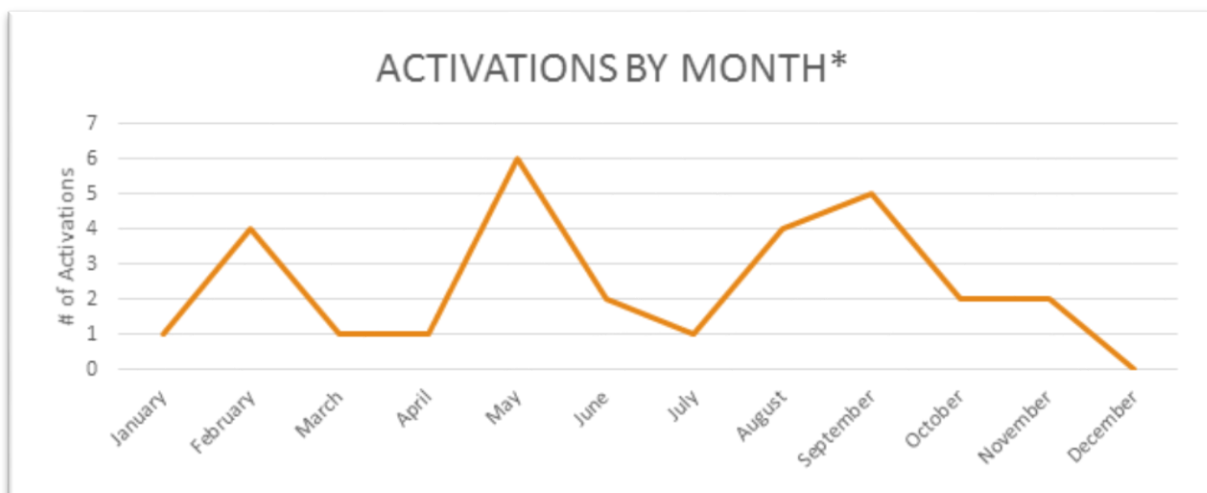


# ACTIVATIONS

While SARSAV member chapters focus most of their attention on assisting lost or missing persons, our Authorities Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) call upon our expertise for a variety of SAR missions. In addition to our “traditional mandate” of search and rescue of lost or missing persons, SARSAV responds to calls for assistance with severe weather, disaster assistance, evidence recovery and human remains recovery.

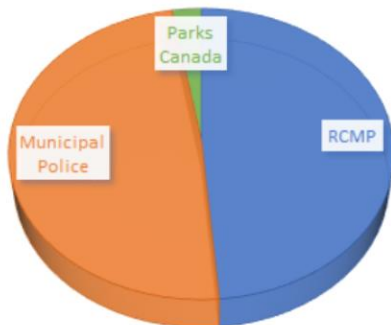


In 2018, SARSAV was activated by our AHJs a total of 37 times, all for traditional roles.

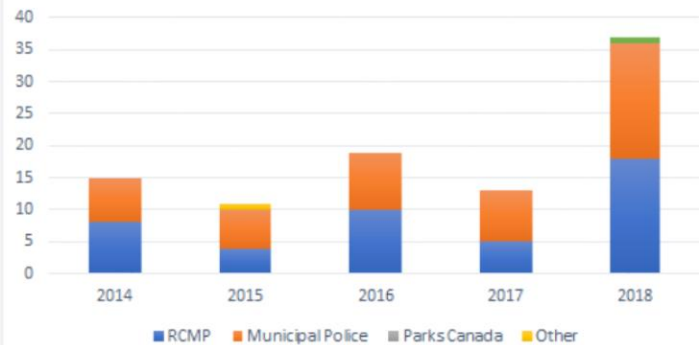


\*represents data from 29 of 37 searches

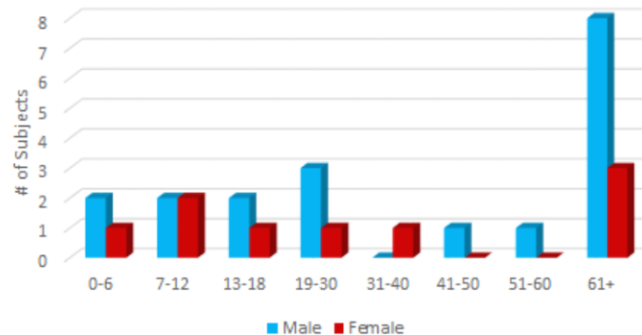
### ACTIVATIONS BY AGENCY



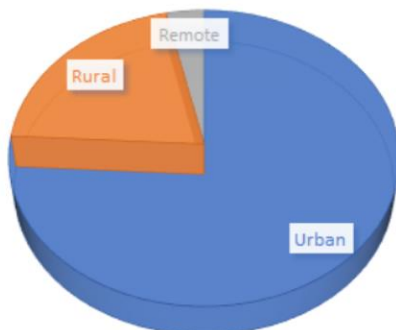
### ACTIVATIONS BY AGENCY (2014-2018)



### SUBJECTS BY AGE\*



### INCIDENT LOCATION\*



### SEARCH OUTCOME\*



\*represents data from 29 of 37 searches

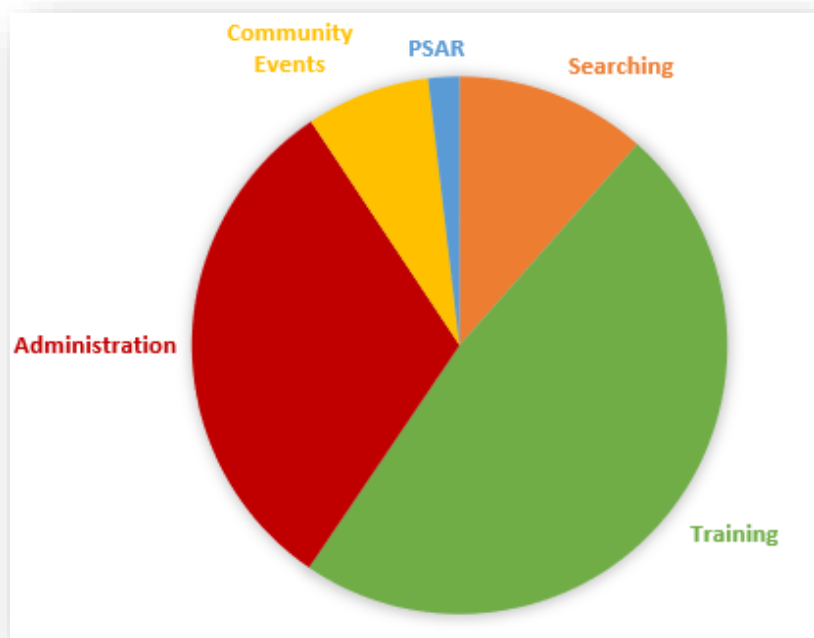
# VOLUNTEERING

## Powered by Volunteers

SARSAV's strength comes from the dedication and commitment of its members. Search and rescue services in Saskatchewan are predominantly provided by volunteers – *unpaid professionals*.

The Government of Canada's *Search and Rescue Volunteer Tax Credit* breaks down volunteer hours into Primary and Secondary Service. Primary Service is defined as hours spent supporting the primary goals of the organization, including searching, time spent on standby, attending team/unit meetings, and attending training. Secondary Service refers to hours spent supporting the function and administration of the organization. This includes administrative duties, attending community events, participating in preventative public education activities, assisting in logistics, or conducting fundraising. The tax credit applies to those who volunteer more than 200 hours in a year (with at least 101 hours of Primary Service).

SARSAV members reported a total of 17,816 volunteered hours for 2018. Countless other hours are undoubtedly spent but not recorded or reported.



Primary Hours			Secondary Hours				TOTAL VOLUNTEER HOURS
Searching	Training	Total Primary	Administration	Community Events	PSAR	Total Secondary	
2,058	8,543	10,601	5,548	1,333	334	7,215	17,816

# TRAINING

Becoming a SAR volunteer takes a lot of work, which has led to the oft-repeated phrase “*SAR is hard!*” Our unpaid professional members train to meet the CSA Group’s ***Core Competency Standards for Ground Search and Rescue*** which were implemented in 2015. SARSAV member chapters train using ERI Canada curriculum.

On the road to becoming a search and rescue professional, our members will spend 40 hours taking their **Searcher** course as well as ICS 100 and First Aid & CPR training. Once a Searcher has gained valuable search experience, some decide to pursue a leadership role by becoming a **Team Leader** through an additional 16-hour course. Even more advanced certification can be gained by becoming a trained **Search Manager** through 40 additional hours. If the core training is not enough, searchers often take additional training such as ATV, UTV, or Snowmobile Operator courses, Near Water Search, Tracking, Wilderness First Aid, Incident Command System, or becoming an AdventureSmart presenter.



The 2018 year was a strong one for advanced training - the year started with SARVAC and CSA Group hosting a Trainer’s Workshop in Saskatoon in January. Search Manager training was also held in Saskatoon in January with seven participants. Of course, many teams also hosted their usual Searcher and Team Leader certification courses.

# PREVENTATIVE SAR

The best search is the one that never happens. One of the mandates of Search and Rescue organizations is to prevent lost or missing persons incidents or minimizing harm that comes from them. SARSAV volunteers achieve this mandate, in part, by giving AdventureSmart presentations.

AdventureSmart is a national program that encourages Canadians and visitors to Canada to *Get informed and go outdoors*. Search and Rescue volunteers provide AdventureSmart presentations to suit all age groups.

In 2018, **Saskatchewan AdventureSmart presenters** gave a total of 87 presentations, a majority of which (55) were Hug-A-Tree and Survive. These presentations **reached over 5700 members of the public** and accounted for 334 volunteer hours.

Presentation	# of Presentations	# of Participants	Presenter Hours
Hug-A-Tree and Survive	55	2154	153
Survive Outside	23	1137	83
PaddleSmart	1	5	3
Tradeshows	1	125	18
Community Events	2	2200	21
Presenter workshop - Hug a Tree	2	33	20
Presenter workshop - Survive Outside	2	33	20
Presenter workshop - PaddleSmart	1	25	16
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>5712</b>	<b>334</b>

# CIVILIAN CANINE SAR

2018 saw some important developments affecting the SARSAV K9 program, first with the release of the RCMP civilian SAR dog standards and second with the certification of a SAR dog in Saskatoon.

In June 2018 the long awaited RCMP Civilian SAR Dog Standards were finally released. This gave those who were training SAR dogs an opportunity to know what would be expected of them in order to work within RCMP jurisdiction. Up until this point we had been training dogs to generalized SAR dog standards, but of course having the specifics of what is expected is very important. These standards set a high bar for both the handler and the dog: the handler must meet certain levels of training and be able to demonstrate various skills, while the dog is expected to be trained in 2 search disciplines right off the bat. Those 2 disciplines are tracking, where the team follows an old ground scent, and searching, where the dog scents air currents over a large area looking for any live human scent. These standards are geared towards wilderness search and do not allow for urban style search, evidence search or building search. This is not a surprise as we had been told by RCMP that they intended to utilise civilian SAR dogs for wilderness search only.

There are a few other disciplines that are not contained in the RCMP civilian SAR dog standards: disaster search, human remains detection (HRD), water search and avalanche search. Obviously there will be no need for avalanche search in Saskatchewan, but the other disciplines of disaster, HRD and water searches, are all highly specialised disciplines that can be crucial in some searches. As a result, we see the need for another civilian SAR dog standard which would incorporate these disciplines so that SAR dogs can be developed in Saskatchewan for aid in disasters and recovering deceased individuals.

At this stage, the Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency has started the development of a SAR dog standard that could be utilised in Saskatchewan, specifically as they develop their Heavy Urban Search and Rescue (HUSAR) capabilities. The need for disaster response readiness is ever present, and the use of disaster dogs is one of many tools that can be crucial at the right time. Public Safety would be looking to bring SARSAV in on the planning and development of this standard, not just to be a disaster standard, but also a standard that incorporates various search dog disciplines and may then become an option for municipal police agencies to adopt if they choose to utilise civilian SAR dog teams in missing persons searches.

A SARSAV committee has been formed to work on the development of civilian SAR dogs in Saskatchewan. Members of this committee are made up of members from SARSAV chapters from across Saskatchewan, with one of the SARSAV Board of Directors, Nathan Bartholomew, acting as



chair of this committee. This committee is tasked with making recommendations to the SARSAV Board and working on whatever the SARSAV Board may task regarding SAR dog development.

Finally, as all the questions surrounding standards and how they are used continue to swirl, in the background of all this we finally have our first certified civilian SAR dog in Saskatchewan! Jenga and handler Kate have been working with the Search and Rescue Dog Association of Alberta (SARDAA) for the last several years, and in the summer of 2018, they were certified by the Edmonton



Police Service in the air scent discipline, both in urban and wilderness environments. A memorandum of understanding has been signed with the Saskatoon Police Service, and they are another tool that can now be used within Saskatoon for the recovery of missing persons. This is an important pioneering step forward, and as 2019 begins, we hope that this year will bring success to Kate and Jenga's efforts as they work together with Saskatoon Search and Rescue.

*Report by Nathan Bartholomew  
Chair, Civilian Canine SAR*

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS



## **Bobbi Buchanan, President**

Bobbi has been a SARSAV volunteer since joining Porcupine Plain SAR in 2006, starting as a recruit up through Search Manager, trainer for Searcher and Team Leader and has served as Secretary and currently President of PPSAR since 2013. She joined the SARSAV board as a Director in 2012, then serving as Vice President before her current role.

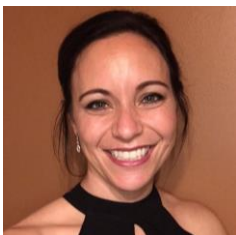
Bobbi works as a Primary Care Paramedic. In her leisure time she enjoys geocaching, hiking with her dog and giving AdventureSmart presentations.



## **Ian McNeil, Vice President**

It was during his first teaching assignment in La Loche that Ian fell in love with the Northern lifestyle of the outdoors and became immensely involved with SAR. Throughout his life he has been involved in over 60 searches and had many various roles in SAR: La Loche Denetrackers, SARSAV, Civil Air Search and Rescue Association (CASARA), and the Provincial Partnership Committee on Missing Persons (PPCMP).

His interest in volunteering has ranged from La Loche Fire Dept, Saskatchewan Roughriders and Regina Little Theater. Ian now enjoys retirement, volunteering and spending time with relatives, friends and family.



## **Ané Roodt, Treasurer**

Ané grew up on a farm in South Africa and moved to Canada in 2006. She is a member of Parkland Search and Rescue, Deputy Superintendent for the St. John Ambulance Medical First Responder volunteer group in Yorkton, and member of Saskatchewan Public Safety Division's Emergency Volunteer Group. She is also an Emergency Medical Responder.

Outside of her volunteer activities, Ané works as a medical office administrator, notary public, and accountant. In her personal time, she is an adventure seeker and enjoys time with friends, martial arts, target shooting, horse riding, and learning new and useful skills.





### **Tracey LaGasse, Secretary**

Tracey grew up on a grain farm in southwest Saskatchewan. Through her work as an Emergency Medical Responder in Gravelbourg, she got involved with Wood River Search and Rescue when it formed in 2000, serving as its President for most of its life. She describes this as a life-changing event because this is where she met her husband!

On the SARSAV Board since 2013, she was soon 'volun-told' into the position of Secretary, and has served in that position ever since. Tracey is also an Assistant Provincial Coordinator for the AdventureSmart programs. In her spare time, Tracey teaches high school science as well as Firearm Safety, and she enjoys orienteering, camping, hunting, quadding, and fishing with her husband and two sons.



### **Merilee Morales, Training Chair**

Merilee has been involved off and on with Search and Rescue in Saskatchewan for the past 10 years. Living in many places in SK, she has had the opportunity to be part of the Saskatoon, Porcupine Plain and Big River teams.

Professionally Merilee manages Canadian Interactive Training Facilitators, coordinating a variety of business development, first aid and safety classes in Saskatchewan. In her spare time, she likes to travel, do photography and spend time with her son and her dog.



### **Linda Mushanski, PSAR Coordinator**

Linda first became interested in SAR while working with Emergency Measures Organization and Public Safety in the Yukon. She joined SAR Regina in 2009, later transferring to Wood River SAR. Linda is a Searcher and Team Leader Trainer as well as a Search Manager, and has also been an AdventureSmart Master Trainer since 2010.

Linda enjoys all things outdoors, including hiking, kayaking, snowshoeing, skiing and geocaching, and uses those experiences to enhance her SAR skills and vice-versa.



### **Kevin Ferrie, Fundraising Chair**

Kevin began working in Prince Albert National Park in 2000 as a Park Warden where he first became involved with Search and Rescue, and took on the role of Visitor Safety Coordinator in 2011. Kevin's time is shared between Waskesiu and Saskatoon. He enjoys camping, fishing and spending time with his wife Angela and their 4 dogs.



### **Nathan Bartholomew, Civilian Canine SAR Chair**

Nathan Bartholomew has been a director with SARSAV since March 2018. He chairs the SARSAV K9 committee, working towards the development of civilian GSAR dogs in Saskatchewan. Currently Nathan is a member of Saskatoon Search and Rescue, is a husband and father, volunteer church minister and volunteer firefighter.



### **Scott Wright, Provincial Liaison**

Scott likes to tell people he has been involved in SAR for more than 4 decades. Scott was instrumental in the establishment of SARSAV and deserves a lot of credit for training and mentoring most of the SAR personnel in Saskatchewan.

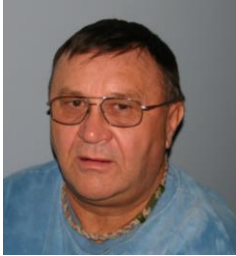
In addition to serving as Provincial Liaison for SARSAV to foster the relationship between volunteer SAR and provincial stakeholders, Scott is the current President of the Search and Rescue Volunteer Association of Canada (SARVAC).

Outside of SAR, Scott enjoys spending time with his wife and daughters near Saskatoon.



### **Dustin Brears**

Dustin has been a member of Parkland Search and Rescue since the creation of the group in the Yorkton-Melville area in 2015. He is a team leader and has experience on many different types of searches. He is a Canadian Registered Safety Professional, trained as a Primary Care Paramedic, and a weekend pilot. He lives in Yorkton with his wife and two girls who all enjoy the outdoors, flying, camping, and ice fishing.



### **Pat Casement**

Pat has a long history of involvement with the emergency planning and emergency response world. His introduction was as part of Wadena Emergency Measures in 1994, and he took over as EMO Coordinator in 2012. He was a founding member of Wadena and District Search and Rescue (WADSAR) in 2005, taking on the role of President in 2007. Since then, he has achieved his Search Manager, Mantracking I and II, and AdventureSmart Master Trainer certifications, and has been on the SARSAV Board since 2011. Pat also served with the Saskatchewan Emergency Planners Association (SEPA) from 2015 to 2018.

Pat has also dedicated his volunteer time with other non-emergency groups such as Wadena Players Theatre, Ducks Unlimited, and the Royal Canadian Legion.



### **Jean Champagne**

Jean was a founding member of Denare Beach Search and Rescue (DBSAR). Since its inception in 2015, Jean has held the position of President and became a SARSAV Director in 2018.

Since retirement, Jean enjoys outdoor activities such as fishing (summer and winter), snowmobiling and quadding, teaching wilderness survival including map, compass and GPS, and entertaining his grandkids.