**Search and Rescue**

**Saskatchewan Association of Volunteers**

**(SARSAV)**

**Introdu**



***DRAFT***

**Strategic Plan**

**2020 - 2024**

**Introduction**

The Strategic Plan is intended to guide the Search and Rescue Saskatchewan Association of Volunteers (SARSAV) in meeting goals, celebrating successes, strengthening partnerships, and advancing the abilities and roles of ground SAR volunteers in Saskatchewan over the next 5 years. It is designed to be a living document, reviewed annually and updated as required.

We acknowledge that SARSAV serves the lands encompassed by Treaties 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, and 10 and the homeland of the Métis. We are all called upon to respect the First Nations and Métis ancestors of this place, and to and reaffirm our relationships with one another as we work toward achieving the goal of reconciliation.

We acknowledge the 2015 Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Call to Action to abandon the colonial policies of the past, address colonial legacy, and to engage in a process of reconciliation with Indigenous peoples of Canada. We acknowledge that we walk upon the territories and original nations of the first peoples of this land, whose children and families continue to be disproportionately affected by lost and missing persons incidents in Saskatchewan and throughout Canada.

# **Mission**

*"To save lives by fostering, coordinating and encouraging excellence in volunteer search   
and rescue organizations in Saskatchewan."*

# **Vision**

*"To have a provincial community of skilled search and rescue volunteers whose contributions are valued and supported by the public and all levels of government."*

# **Guiding Principles**

* Cooperating and collaborating with all SAR Providers
* Respecting roles & responsibilities of jurisdictions
* Respecting the cultural diversity of SAR providers and users
* Creating value from innovative ideas and best practices for SAR practitioners
* Responding to the needs of the public and stakeholders in a timely way
* Maintaining credibility, accountability, and integrity with all stakeholders
* Providing services to our public in a respectful and compassionate manner
* Reviewing, updating, and enabling roles that SAR members can fill

# **Accomplishments**

**Financial Sustainability**

* MOU with Municipal Police and Saskatchewan Association of Chiefs of Police – signed May 2019
* Sask. Public Safety Agency has become the GSAR Champion in Saskatchewan. Working on closer partnerships and integration of GSAR into Emergency Management. Insurance support in place, Sustainability support discussions ongoing
* Draft MOU with Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency in review stages

**Training and Development**

* Formulated a province-wide SAR Response Procedure (Activation Pro and MOU)
* Maintained active voice on guidance committee for GSAR Standards (CSA)
* Data Management system in place to gather and store information
* 6 Multi-Jurisdictional Search Exercises (MJSEs) in last 5 years
* 2 annual SARVAC workshops in SK 2016 and 2017
* SARVAC Trainer Workshop in 2018
* Various Team Leader and Searcher acrossthe province delivered up to CSA Competency and Curriculum Standards
* Search Manager training up to CSA standards
* Searcher and Team Leader Trainers up to CSA Standards

**General Public Education Regarding Prevention**

* Widespread delivery of both the AdventureSmart programs and Presenter courses, with greater training, support, and breadth of reach to include new partners
* Mechanisms to monitor and evaluate program successes are in place: provincial PSAR Coordinator and assistants
* National insurance policy in place for all SARVAC AdventureSmart presenters
* Active participation in development and roll-out of AdventureSmart Trip Plan App (2019)

**Advocacy**

* National Search and Rescue Volunteers’ Tax Credit established for the 2014 tax year
* Radio Insurance policy secured in 2017 – funded by SARSAV
* Increased coverage by traditional and social media venues
* Quarterly Board meetings where issues relevant to chapters are discussed
* Internal liaisons with RCMP, AHJ
* Volunteers are fully insured for AD&D, D&O (by SARVAC) and Liability (by Min. of Gov. Relations) through SARVAC Algomawhen on search or training activities
* Provincial Search and Rescue Volunteers’ Tax Credit established for the 2020 tax year
* Partnerships with CASARA, SEPA, PPCMP, Residential Health Support Workers
* Active participation and promotion of annual Missing Persons Week
* Established “Compass Award” for individuals outside of SARSAV whose contributions have enhanced the organization

**GSAR Volunteer Promotion and Retention**

* MOUs and insurance coverage demonstrate value that AHJs and partner agencies place on SARSAV members
* TL-TTT and SM courses had participation from RCMP, Parks Canada Agency, and Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency
* GSAR Memorial Ribbon developed
* Proposal submitted for GSAR volunteers to be included in the SK Protective Services Medal
* Initiated provincial recognition program for members with greater than 20 years service

Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities & Threats

**Strengths**

* Strong leadership in the provincial body, providing a united provincial voice
* Broad range of skills and expertise
* Represents all regions of Saskatchewan
* Increased awareness of SARSAV amongst all AHJs - Police Services, Provincial departments such as Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency, and federally with Parks Canada Agency and Public Safety Canada
* CSA GSAR Competency Standards have been adopted by our AHJs as the provincial training standards to which we train
* Positive organizational growth in both number of chapters and number of active members within chapters
* Commitment to public awareness and preventative measures
* Support from SARSAV and cooperation from chapters in areas of record keeping
* Increase in cooperation between chapters in training and searches
* Functioning under ICS – filling various roles becomes seamless
* Faster activations: improved knowledge in RCMP detachments, improved relationships, streamlined activation process through PECC
* Recognition by our AHJs as professional, trained, competent volunteers
* SARSAV President’s participation in SARVAC (as SARVAC Secretary) ensures Saskatchewan needs are recognized nationally (e.g. funding for Insurance coverage for Searchers)

**Challenges**

* Lack of incidents affects member recruitment and retention (in some geographic areas)
* Membership engagement and retention
* Narrow demographics within the organization – lack of diversity
* Influence of public (non-searcher based) social media during a missing person event – can help or hinder pre-investigative phase
* Lack of awareness of the organization and its role amongst volunteers and stakeholders (suggestion: having provincial representation at local events / meetings)
* Inconsistency in regional / local needs, priorities, and opportunities (positive changes with hosting MJSEs in various locations have helped with this)
* Adjusting to the changing ways that SAR is evolving (ex. Equipment, technology, …); resistance to change
* Time – work won’t release them, small volunteer base being taxed, families, recertification, …
* Increased amount of commitment required to get certified and maintain the certification
* CAE: not able to deploy for other events (need to be available any time the aircraft are flying)
* New provincial trespassing laws: how does this impact us?
* Balancing promoting local chapters and promoting SARSAV (maintaining individuality while bolstering the awareness of the larger organization)

**Opportunities**

* More individual teams have advanced to the point that they are looking to mentor other chapters and to become more involved provincially (ex. Hosting MJSEs or other events)
* Motivation to progress the organization, chapters, and individual members
* Continue to elevate SARSAVs level of recognition / awareness similar to other organizations as CASARA, CCGA, Red Cross, etc.
* Alignment with provincial Emergency Management for SAR response and non-traditional response and greater interoperability
* Provincial Dispatch oversight and support
* Recognition by our AHJs as professional, trained, competent volunteers
* More opportunity for shared training events with our partners (RCMP, Municipal Police, SPSA, Parks,…)
* Ability that SARSAV has to increase awareness of missing persons; partner with other organizations similar to our connections with SEPA and PPCMP
* Strengthen partnership with CAE through exercises
* CASARA – transference of skills, cross training
* Getting more involved with school systems (ex. ESRT in SE Cornerstone and Sask. Rivers); needs more promotion of that program within school divisions and to new divisions throughout the province. Would require working with Ministry of Education and Sask. School Boards Association (SPSA can help provide the logistics and information about it)
* Continue educating the public to notify police sooner in case of a missing person
* Increase the “brand recognition” of SARSAV through better channeling of energies
* CSA Standards provide clearer guidelines on training, response, accreditation, and certification
* The understanding of cultural norms and expectations, particularly with First Nations groups, continues to grow
* Success with NIF applications provides opportunities of a priority to SARSAV (e.g. Communications, Data Management Systems, SARSCENE)

**Threats**

* Lack of financial resources and a sustainable funding source
* Complacency by authorities that GSAR will continue to do its job regardless of funding
* Concern over other entities entering GSAR and being considered as professionals, misrepresentation of us or their own abilities, take advantage of those who are grieving, self-activation, lack of understanding, safety risk, …
* Aging membership
* Lack of SARSAV recognition and identity in the public at large, and misidentification of SARSAV in the media

# **Strategies**

**Key Result Area:**

**Financial sustainability**

**Objective: Secure a committed source of financial support for SARSAV’s functioning**

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| **Outcomes** | **Strategies and Actions** |
| 1. Garner support for our business case from the GSAR champion | 1. Articulate the ongoing need to bring together GSAR volunteers from all parts of Saskatchewan 2. Engage the GSAR champion in the development and acceptance of SARSAV’s business case that will allow us to continue offering opportunities for training and collaboration |
| 1. Access funding to leverage timely and urgent opportunities | 1. Identify and select the opportunities which require additional funding 2. Source the appropriate funding agencies and collaboratively develop proposals 3. Forge a long-term partnership agreement with new partners 4. Secure funding agreements from existing partners |

**Achievements:**

**Strategies**

**Key Result Area:**

**Training and Development**

**Objective: Train and develop GSAR Volunteers so that they continue to meet or exceed the GSAR needs of their communities and the nationally accepted standards**

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| **Outcomes** | **Strategies and Actions** |
| 1. Identify, accept and publish Provincial SAR response standard, training curriculum, delivery approach and evaluation criteria in order to support common skills and competencies. | 1. Analyze and provide recommendations to committee as CSA standards undergo their regular review 2. Maintain an active voice on CSA Accreditation and Certification committees 3. Review the delivery of training in SK to ensure that CSA standards are met, and communicate such to the bodies responsible for accreditation and certification |
| 1. Define the role of GSAR volunteers in larger Public Safety realm to facilitate effective and appropriate training and development, as well as seamless response | 1. Clarify and develop consensus in SARSAV for our role in emergency preparedness and readiness 2. Secure partners’ agreement on definition of the role 3. Communicate to membership and stakeholders the agreed upon definition of role 4. Establish and meet training and development needs 5. Ensure policies and procedures are in place, and enacted, that allow for seamless integration into the larger Public Safety system |
| 1. Create a Saskatchewan forum for focusing on operational GSAR best practices and information | 1. Maintain and update a system to gather, store and disseminate information to partners 2. Provide a yearly forum for GSAR volunteers to come together in Saskatchewan |

# **Strategies**

**Key Result Area:**

**Prevention**

**Objective: Increase the public’s ability to survive in ground based lost person incidents**

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| **Outcomes** | **Strategies and Actions** |
| 1. Promote AdventureSmart programs and Trip Plan app | 1. Continue to provide / support training of AdventureSmart presenters   1. Focus on public awareness through tradeshows and trailhead information 2. Develop trailhead signage that can be provided to parks and recreation areas 3. Active promotion of AdventureSmart Trip Plan app |
| 1. Administer mechanisms to monitor and evaluate program(s) successes | 1. Design and provide a system of data collection 2. Collect the information 3. Communicate results to partners |
| 1. Develop wider range of partnerships with groups that share common interests (e.g., snowmobile and ATV groups, outdoor educators, …) | 1. Identify opportunities for collaboration with new partners 2. Discuss common topics and identify possible common tactics 3. Work with these partner agencies to ensure fluidity and consistency of the delivery of AdventureSmart messaging |

# **Strategies**

**Key Result Area:**

**Advocacy**

**Objective: Effectively advocate on behalf of the chapters and their members**

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| **Outcomes** | **Strategies and Actions** |
| 1. Advocate for the critical needs of members when appropriate | 1. Communicate hot list to Board of directors 2. Encourage members to communicate critical and urgent issues 3. Contact the relevant authorities to make them aware of the critical needs and to provide recommendations for action 4. Engage with appropriate stakeholders to pre-empt escalation of issues |
| 1. Regular communications with AHJs regarding successes and areas for possible improvement on GSAR response | 1. Meet with leadership of AHJs and SAR partner agencies twice annually to bring forth issues and collaborate on matters relating to enhancing partnerships 2. Collaborate in the re-development of a Saskatchewan SAR Advisory Council 3. Regular quarterly formal debriefings with SARSAV and AHJs following searches |

**Strategies**

**Key Result Area:**

**GSAR Volunteer Promotion and Retention**

**Objective: Strengthen our collective capacity to deliver excellence in Search and Rescue in Saskatchewan**

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| **Outcomes** | **Strategies and Actions** |
| 1. Increase the profile and recognition for GSAR volunteers within its stakeholder groups and the public | 1. Create a Provincially recognized recognition program for the service of volunteers 2. Strengthen the SARSAV recognition program 3. Support the membership in leveraging media opportunities when appropriate 4. Seek opportunities to inform stakeholders (conference and meetings) |
| 1. Ensure that the role and value of SARSAV is understood within SARSAV’s membership, its stakeholder groups and the public | 1. Define SARSAVs roles and responsibilities and the expected outcomes in relationship to the key partners 2. Develop and implement a communications strategy and action plan |
| 1. Jointly plan and deliver activities when appropriate | 1. Identify common goals and collaborate on these with our AHJs 2. Promote these activities, including recognition of partners, using social media platforms before, during, and after the event |

**Strategies**

**Key Result Area:**

**Cultural Competence**

**Objective: Demonstrate the ability to understand, communicate with, and effectively interact with people across cultures.**

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| **Outcomes** | **Strategies and Actions** |
| 1. Increase knowledge of different cultural practices and worldviews | 1. Acknowledge the strengths of our existing partnerships, particularly with First Nations 2. Foster secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships, partnerships, high expectations for equity and respect for diversity 3. Consult the 94 Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to determine how these can guide best practices 4. Identify best practices from across Canada in developing new SAR related resources with First Nations 5. Develop a portfolio on the Board that works to strengthen these relationships |
| 1. Ensure appropriate cultural practices are respected | 1. Institute a practice of Treaty land acknowledgement at all gatherings 2. Consult with members of First Nations regarding issues of sensitivity and protocol, identifying and implementing specific recommendations 3. Encourage voluntary participation in events such as Round Dances 4. Enhance the awareness of and respect for perspectives, cultural ceremonies, and traditions around searches |
| 1. Jointly plan and deliver activities with First Nations partners when appropriate | 1. Continue to have an active voice on the PPCMP, and participate in Missing Persons Week activities 2. Strengthen advocacy for, and reduce stigma toward, Indigenous persons who go missing |

# **Review of Plan**

Progress of the Strategic Plan will be assessed on an annual basis, and it may be updated to meet the evolving needs of SARSAV, our partner agencies, and the people whom we serve.

The reviewed and/or renewed Strategic Plan will be presented to all members at each Annual General Meeting by the Chair of the Strategic Plan committee.