

making-a-good-team

Here's some of my ideas for building a good Search and Rescue team. Every situation is different, and I'm undoubtedly seeing only a small portion of what's really out there. So take what I have to say with a large grain of salt.

Let your accomplishments speak for themselves. Search and Rescue is hard, often thankless work. It can also be very prestigious. Avoid the trap of being motivated by the prestige. If I claim to be better than I am, I may impress people for now. But very shortly people will recognize me for what I am, and consider my word unreliable. My motivations for what I do will be questioned. The same thing applies to Search and Rescue groups. And a Search and Rescue group needs to be trusted, to be seen as reliable, and to have unquestioned motives before people will feel comfortable turning to it.

Respect volunteers. People volunteer for Search and Rescue because they feel they can help out. But everyone has a life beyond search and rescue, a life that includes time commitments, that has problems, that means they cannot do all that they want in volunteering. Accept that volunteers sometimes aren't able to follow through, can only give so much time, and make mistakes. Respect the volunteers for what they are able to contribute, and thank them for it.

Be open to ideas. Encourage people to find their own solutions. Know that there is more than one way to approach any project. Know that procedures are set down for a reason, but the reasons may change or no longer be appropriate, and that the procedures can be changed.

Be open to the community. Welcome all people in to the group, to the degree they want to be. Avoid being seen as associated with any one clique. The public are the ones that need to rely on the search and rescue group. They should not feel inhibited because the group is tied to the wrong clique. Similarly, having broad ties to the community gives wonderful dividends in the form of financial and more subtle support.

Build a team. Being a team means that you know, respect and trust each other. Getting that kind of relationship takes time. Take the time. Work together. Train together. Learn each other's strengths and weaknesses. Solve problems. Build a team.