

NIF BC SAR Rope Rescue Program Update Project

2017/18 Second Quarter Report (July 1 to September 30, 2017)

EMBC overall steering of the project continued to be affected through the 2nd Quarter by the heavy emergency management demands of the record wildfire season in British Columbia.

Curriculum Development – Access to the April draft manual and quantities of the Field Guide enabled BCSARA personnel to gain experience with the new curriculum and provide the Project Management Team with comments, editorial corrections and questions about the techniques. In late September, the PMT began basic revisions to the manual text and initiated improvements to diagrams as appropriate.

Instructional Aids – EMBC has approached BCSARA to take on distribution of future editions of the Field Guide and management of the derivative app. The concept would have Field Guide editions produced for distribution and sale on a cost-recovery basis while the app would be downloadable from the BCSARA members site and available for purchase commercially through app stores. The app can be updated easily to reflect changes in practice as they may evolve, which could do much to eliminate the traditional problems associated with trying to keep hard copy reference material current.

Dynamic Rescue Systems has handed off a set of draft instructional field sheets containing reference material for selected new curriculum techniques to the PMT. The PMT will revise the content as necessary to conform to any changes resulting from the manual's practical review period and pass the updated masters back to Dynamic for production..

Some problems have emerged with the series of training videos produced under the Dynamic Rescue Systems contract and the draft products are still under review.

Training in the New Curriculum – Volunteer-organized regional rope rescue workshops were held at Sutton Pass (Vancouver Island) and Agassiz during the 2nd Quarter. In anticipation of offering the long-planned regional “transition workshops”, the JIBC worked on course designs in August and delivered a pilot workshop to 16 participants at Squamish early in September. A second workshop with 13 participants followed in Parksville at the end of September and four more are scheduled for October/November to cover the other regions of the province. The format of these workshops continues to be refined as JIBC instructors evolve consistent approaches to teaching new curriculum techniques. Owing to time constraints, these sessions have not offered formal certification of participant proficiency. However, like the volunteer-organized regional workshops, the JIBC training continues the process of orienting current personnel to the new curriculum and enables them to continue their training with greater confidence. With continuing practice at the team level, supported early in the new year by the project's various instructional aids, many practitioners are expected to be ready for formal Technician 1 evaluation in the first half of 2018.

Next Steps – The work of the NIF Project Management Team will end with the delivery of the various curriculum and training products that have been in development for some two years. Implementation of the major program changes will be in the hands of other key players.

BCSARA is looking at taking on a coordinating role for BC SAR technical rescue practices through creation of a Technical Committee with subcommittees for Rope Rescue and the various other specialist disciplines. Including advisory members from the broader rope rescue disciplines, the Rope Rescue subcommittee would be responsible for advising EMBC through BCSARA channels, in effect becoming the “keeper of the flame” for the technical curriculum of the SAR rope rescue program.

EMBC continues to work on the Provincial Operating Guidelines and training model for the new rope rescue curriculum and certifications. The three-level training structure is intended to improve training in advanced skills of the type previously included in the Team Leader training, separating them from the leadership skills which were covered relatively lightly in the previous Team Leader courses.

Technician 2 level skills can now be taught more thoroughly, probably as modules more often than as a single course, and it is anticipated that aspiring Team Leaders will take additional specific leadership training such as the JIBC EMRG-1660 course.

EMBC has yet to define the options for rope rescue training and is examining approaches to “accrediting” commercial and institutional trainers to deliver recognized training and certification in the new curriculum. Based on initial workshop discussions in 2016, training may offer three options to achieve Technician 1 certification:

- Supported by the instructional aids developed by the NIF Project, experienced and competent team members (probably RRTLs) will train new rope personnel “internally” in the required competencies and, after appropriate recorded practice and a team recommendation, they will be evaluated/certified in formal courses offered annually by commercial/institutional trainers approved by EMBC.
- Commercial/institutional trainers will offer annual BCSARA-subsidized Technician 1 courses regionally. After appropriate recorded practice and a team recommendation, candidates would proceed to an evaluation as above.
- Commercial/institutional trainers will offer “for fee” courses to candidates funded by their local teams. In theory, the format might be extended beyond a weekend (e.g., 5-7 days) and might include an evaluation/certification at the end.

Technician 2 training and certification would probably be delivered by commercial/institutional trainers in modules, with subsidized annual training regionally, based on identified needs. Again, week-long for-fee courses would probably be available for candidates or teams prepared to cover the costs. As noted in an earlier project report, the current proficiency of particular team members in Technician 2 skills (primarily over the edge) will be recognized on an interim basis until formal training and evaluation in Technician 2 skills is introduced, following the initial push to develop competency in the foundation Technician 1 skills.

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