

After Action Report

DATE: 19 June 2010

SUBJECT: After Action Report –Turkey Creek Canyon Search

FROM: Robert Hollister, CC RACES Officer

TO: David Noland, CCSO SAR Coordinator

CC: Mike Evans, CC Emergency Services

Pat Hartley, CC IT Department

CC RACES Team

1. PURPOSE:

This report briefly describes the support provided by the Cochise County (CC) RACES Communications Unit to the Cochise County Search and Rescue Unit mission on 19 June 2010. It does not address any SAR specific operational issues.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

At approximately 22:30 on the evening of 18 June, the RACES/ARES unit was requested to respond to support a Search Mission in the Turkey Creek area of the Chiricahua Mountains in southeast Arizona. Two females in their 50's/60's had been horse back riding in the vicinity of the Crest Trail and had called 911 saying they were lost. The SAR team was requested to deploy and be operational at approximately 0500 on Saturday morning to begin the search. The team needed to leave Sierra Vista by 0330 to arrive at the command post at Sunglow Ranch at the base of Turkey Creek Canyon. The subject's truck and horse trailer was located rather quickly near the Saulsbury Canyon Trailhead in Turkey Creek Canyon. SAR ground trackers were able to track the horses up to the Crest Trail and determined that the riders were headed north toward Rustler Park. AZ DPS Helicopter arrived mid morning and flew up to the Crest Canyon trail and located some campers who had seen the two riders. In a brief interview they told the DPS Air Crew that they had provided the two ladies a place to stay overnight and fed them. Early in the morning the campers had sent an experienced hiker with our subjects toward Rustler Park. AZ DPS Ranger then flew north along the trail and observed them approaching Rustler Park around 12 noon. Members of one our SAR ground teams made contact with them shortly thereafter. Although the subjects were not prepared for over night camping, they apparently survived the night without difficulty and had adequate supplies provided to them by the good samaritan campers. The ARES/RACES team returned to Sierra Vista at approximately 1430 in the afternoon.

3. LESSONS LEARNED/ISSUES:

Call Out – Due to the late night callout and early morning commitments/appointments, it was difficult getting a full team together for this mission. Only an MCU driver and Chase

Driver were identified and deployed to support this mission. A Home Unit member came up on the air shortly after the ARES/RACES team setup and became operational. As soon as it appeared this mission was likely to go into a second operational period, a relief team was assembled and prepared to deploy to arrive around 1400. Fortunately, the subjects were located shortly before the relief team was preparing to leave Sierra Vista and was not required.

ICS Form 217 – We do not have a copy of the County ICS Form 217 in the MCU. We need to have a copy of the available frequencies on board. On this mission we did use the "Air-band" Radio and also made contact with a Forest Service helicopter as they flew enroute to the Horseshoe fire.

MCU Camera - While the mast camera is still functional from a video standpoint, the County IT Department has still not fixed the camera control issue. It was reported as out of service in an earlier After Action Report (Stronghold Training Event, 3/10/2010) The camera would have been useful today for situational awareness.

Map Support Computer – Apparently the battery for the computer that supports the "Setup" data is dead. We had to reset all the normal functions that are typically held in memory (Date/Time/etc). We noticed the slide-out tray that holds the computer keyboard was loose. Upon closer examination most of the screws holding it place were very loose. That was rectified immediately.

4. COMMENTS:

Site Assignment – The MCU was located at the entrance to Sunglow Ranch (mile post 4.5 on Turkey Creek Road). This location provided good coverage to the mission and there were very few spots that we were unable to hear the deployed ground team. We have supported other missions in Turkey Creek and when we deployed further up the canyon, we experienced radio hear-ability problems. Setting up a little further away, as we did today, has some advantages and definitely worked well today.

MCU Drivers – We can still use a few more trained volunteer drivers to help out and share the driver responsibilities across a larger population. This would reduce the number of times some of the drivers get tapped to respond.

Amateur Repeater- The 147.02 RACES repeater worked well at that location for relay to the Home Unit.

Astron Power Supply – When setting up to use the Air-Band radio it was noticed there was no DC power being provided by the Astron Power Supply. Upon close examination it was determined that the power cord on the back side of the equipment rack had simply vibrated loose. Problem was rectified on the spot.

MCU Windshield Wipers – The 4-year old windshield wipers are falling apart. A new set was purchased upon return to Sierra Vista. We need a ladder to get to them so we can replace the old ones.

5. ACTION ITEMS:

Recruit More Drivers.

Remind the County IT Department that the Camera Control problem has not yet been fixed.

Request copy of County ICS Form 217 from IT Department

Replace Map Support Computer backup battery.

Install new windshield wipers.

Appendix – Participants

CCSO SAR Unit

AZ DPS Ranger

RACES Team

Jim Lewis – MCU Driver/Operator

Bob Hollister - MCU Operator/ /Chase

Barb Heck – Home Unit

Pat Thies – Home Unit Backup