

## HISTORY OF SUNSHINE COAST SEARCH AND RESCUE (SC SAR) AND REASONS FOR JOINING.

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2009-11-18.

SC SAR initially started as two separate entities; Sechelt SAR and Gibsons SAR. The Sechelt team started in 1976 under the leadership of Bill Lawson. Bill was a member of the Sechelt RCMP Auxiliary and he worked at the pulp mill in Port Mellon. He put an ad in one of the local newspapers looking for interested people to join a Search and Rescue team and I was interested. We had our inaugural meeting at the RCMP office in Sechelt and besides Bill and myself, I recall there was one other man, the late Don Caldwell and two women, Pat Wing and Vivica Watson. Don, like me, was a hunter and fisherman and loved the outdoors. Pat and Vivica also liked the outdoors and were keen to help. Other than Bill, none of us had any formal SAR training nor did we have any equipment, other than our own. Over the next few years, we added a few more members.

I'm not sure exactly when Gibsons SAR started but it would have been in the early to mid 1980's, and after we started in Sechelt. The Gibsons team started mostly with the forestry crew from Canadian Forest Products at Port Mellon. Kelly Hatful was one of them and Kelly is still with us today, although his time is somewhat limited at times as he is now an instructor at BCIT and commutes there every day. Other folks from the Gibsons/Roberts Creek area also joined that team. Eileen Bonaguro was one of them and she is still with us today. Harry Almond, from Roberts Creek, was another. Harry is still part of our group and recently retired as the Chairman of SC SAR after 17 straight years. He is now our Honourary Past Chairman and is now closer to 86 years of age than 85.

In the mid to late 1980's, both SAR teams joined forces to become Sunshine Coast Search and Rescue. We took on more new members, formed an executive, and started with some formal training. Over the years we held our meetings in various locations on the Coast: Gibsons Rod and Gun Club across from the Cemetery, Gibsons Fire Hall, Frank West Hall in

Elphinstone, and now on occasion in our new Hall next to the Sunshine Coast Regional District Office. We call it the John Hind-Smith Hall, or JHS, for short. John was one of the early, if not founding members, of the Gibsons Team. He passed away a few years ago and left SC SAR a bequest to go towards our new Hall.

We have had members come and go over the years and we have also had lots stay around. Each of us has our own field of expertise and that is what drew us into SAR to begin with.

I joined because I knew the outdoors, I had survival skills, I knew how to use a compass and read maps, and also because I used to know all the roads and trails on the Coast. We have some members that are very knowledgeable about VHF radios, some that have tracking skills, some with swift water rescue, some that enjoy rope climbing and others with rope rescue training, and others that are trained to use snow mobiles, quads, etc. We have even had a few members that we rescued who were so impressed by our training, expertise, and professionalism that they joined us!

If you are looking for glory like television, radio, or newspaper coverage, you most likely won't find it with us. We don't seek it out like some other groups do. We are a close knit group where we all get along well, egos are left at home, and we don't have any power struggles.

If you enjoy the outdoors, in any type of terrain or weather, if you can provide the time commitment, which really isn't all that onerous, and if you enjoy being called out at 11:00 o'clock on a Sunday night to go on a search, then SC SAR is for you.