



BC SEARCH AND RESCUE ASSOCIATION

Getting Back to the Table -Proposed New Model for BCSARA

Frequently Asked Questions

- 1. Is Jim McAllister hired by EMCR as a special advisor to prepare and lead this concept introduction?**

No, Jim has undertaken the lead on this project on a volunteer basis, with the sole interest of seeing GSAR volunteers receive the recognition and support they deserve.

- 2. When did discussion about this new concept begin?**

Discussions started in late January in a meeting with senior leadership from EMCR and BCSARA. The meeting had been postponed from the previous summer because of availability due to wildfire events. The BCSARA board provided input to their representatives prior to the meeting.

- 3. Why do we need a different concept for BCSARA?**

The BCSARA board has recognized that the current model is not working. Recognizing there are major concerns within the GSAR community regarding a lack of action on major issues which have been brought forward. The proposed new model separates the provincial level funding management from the provision of advice to government. It increases access to the requesting agencies by modifying the provincial advisory committee to add an additional five GSAR members.

- 4. Who has the ownership of Search and Rescue in British Columbia?**

There are multiple partners in the operations of Search and Rescue in British Columbia. Ownership of the program begins with the Province of British Columbia who has the responsibility for Ground Search and Rescue in British Columbia under federal regulation. They have delegated specific responsibilities to requesting agencies follows:

- Police- Lost and missing person searches,
- BCEHS- prehospital care and transportation of injured persons.

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- Office of the Coroner- the recovery of human remains.
- Emergency Management and Climate Readiness (EMCR)- the coordination and support of GSAR volunteers.
- The GSAR groups are in unified command with the requesting agencies on task, and have responsibilities for their membership such as training and health and safety, staffing and equipping recognized capabilities and assets

5. Why is BCSARA only shown on one side of the model?

There are two separate tables shown. BCSARA will continue to manage the funding functions and the GSAR Advisory committee will provide advice to the province. This separation is based on recommendations within the Alternative Support Model (ASM) proposal of 2015 which was supported by all GSAR groups. The recommendations in the ASM were to keep the funding and the advisory functions separate to enhance the effectiveness of both.

6. Will there still be regional directors in the new model?

The 12 regional director roles will be transitioned to Subject Matter Experts from the GSAR volunteer community: 6 on the BCSARA Board, and 6 on the GSAR Advisory Committee. It is envisioned that each of these two tables will be supported by GSAR members with skills and subject matter expertise appropriate for the role. There is also an expectation that the representation will include all regions of the province. The board representatives will be elected based on the current election process in place and the GSAR advisors will be through an expression of interest after receiving support from their own GSAR group. There will also be an executive on the BCSARA board appointed by the board.

7. How broadly was the information about this model shared and what is the timeline for implementation?

The model has been shared through three townhall meetings to date February 26, 27, 28th. Each meeting invited two representatives from each GSAR group to attend to ensure all groups regardless of size would have fair opportunity to provide input. There has been active participation from each of the region. There will be further consultation with the BCSARA board. There is also an opportunity to provide feedback via email to newmodel@bcsara.com. Next steps for consultation and a timeline for implementation will be announced after that.

8. Will the GSAR advisory committee have the power to direct, and will their recommendations be binding?

The role of the GSAR advisory committee will continue to provide advice to the province on all matters concerning GSAR. Having the requesting agencies at the table will increase the ability to resolve some issues at the table, while other issues will need to go back to the requesting agencies so they can ensure it is within their delegated authority and responsibilities for GSAR. The GSAR volunteer representation on the advisory will increase from one to six members which provides a broader voice at the table for GSAR with the requesting agencies and EMCR.

9. Will the requesting agencies include Indigenous Nations at the table?

The new act EDMA does include Indigenous Nations as requesting agencies for local emergencies, not for Search and Rescue. Further discussions will be held with EMCR as to their participation on the GSAR Advisory Committee.

10. Are the GSAR volunteer members on the advisory committee in equal partnership with the requesting agencies and EMCR?

The GSAR volunteer subject matter experts will have a voice as an advisor in the company of senior level personnel from each of the requesting agencies. Like EMCR, each of the requesting agencies has specific responsibilities delegated to them by the province and they will hold the final decisions on changes to policy and procedures in their areas.

11. Under the proposed model is the Advisory committee chaired by EMCR?

Yes, this does not change, the provincial advisory committee is chaired by EMCR. in their role of coordinating and supporting Public Safety Volunteers.

12. What is the difference in meaning between the current BCSARA committees and the proposed new working groups?

Working Groups will be formed under the GSAR Advisory Committee such as Health and Safety, Training, Policy and Legislation, Technical Rescue, Air Support, these will transition from the current committees within BCSARA. It is envisioned that working groups will also include additional SMEs from the GSAR volunteer community and SMEs external to GSAR as needed. Also, additional working groups may be stood up as the need arises to deal with issues and then stood down.

13. How do the parts connect between GSAR Advisory to Finance?

The connection between the GSAR advisory and finance is through ongoing communication linkages between the GSAR community, the GSAR advisory, EMCR and BCSARA. Very similar to the current model, with a change at the highest level with the establishment of a Project Table replacing the current Management and Partnership Committees, this joint EMCR and BCSARA level will ensure critical linkages occur.

14. What is the meaning of EMCR providing oversight of training and safety etc.

EMCR already has staff that review the training and safety programs, one aspect of that is working with GSAR reps on the joint committees.

15. How does this work at ground level? How do SAR members connect with both the advisory and finance tables without regional directors?

The connection from the GSAR volunteer community to the GSAR advisory and it's working groups will be through the subject matter experts from the GSAR community. The connection on financial matters will remain the same as it is now, through the BCSARA board members and or staff depending on the concerns or issue.

16. The slides do not show all the staff functions. Are these being changed?

There will be staff required to continue all the activities at the BCSARA board. There may be some shifts and new supports required depending on workload demands created by the new model.

17. Why are you proposing a new model prior to fixing all of the outstanding issues?

Many of the outstanding issues are long outstanding issues. It has been recognized that one of the reasons issues are not being resolved is that requesting agencies are not at the table with BCSARA and EMCR. This model will strengthen and broaden the voice of the GSAR community at the provincial advisory committee.

18. Will the new model have an impact on funding to the GSAR groups?

The new model will provide for more emphasis on fundraising at the BCSARA level which should benefit GSAR groups over time. There will also be a continued effort to increase funding through the disbursement process directly to GSAR groups.

19. Will this model increase the administrative work to GSAR groups?

No, the model itself should not increase administrative work for GSAR groups. BCSARA continues to try and reduce or streamline the administrative burden and will continue that process.

20. Where would the proposed GSAR advisory exist from a legal and accountability standpoint? Is it considered a part of EMCR or BCSARA, a third party or some kind of joint venture?

The GSAR Advisory Committee does not have a legal standing, its purpose is to provide advice to the provincial agencies that are responsible for GSAR. EMCR is accountable for bringing the committee together and ensuring all the voices are heard and the requesting agencies are accountable for matters that fall within their mandates.

21. Have the requesting agencies committed to the meetings under the new model or are we assuming they will come?

The requesting agencies have already committed to participating, the representatives appointed to date are at a higher level than on previous committees.


22. Have the requesting agencies been surveyed to determine what they consider the challenges/barriers to be, to seek their perspective on proposed solutions?

There have already been meetings of the GSAR Advisory in its current status, but it is important for GSAR volunteers to be there to hear what is being said and to provide their expertise.

23. How will the new model move forward issues that have been stalled at EMCR for years?

EMCR does not have authority to change policies which fall within the mandate of requesting agencies such as the police or BCEHS, although they have discussed the issues with the proper agencies in the past. The way to resolve these issues is for all parties including GSAR volunteers to be at the same table.

24. By what route do the SAR groups raise issues and propose solutions and new initiatives? Where is their voice? The 6SME's are not representatives who are accountable to the SAR community.



Yes, the 6 SMEs on the GSAR Advisory and additional SMEs on the working groups will be accountable to the GSAR Volunteer Community for bringing issues forward and reporting back.

25. Will the 6 SMEs be paid?

No, the SMEs from the GSAR volunteer community on the advisory committee will participate as volunteers and we propose paid committee support.

**26. What is the anticipated start date and what will the benchmarks be?
How do we measure success?**

There is no start date set yet once feedback from the GSAR community is heard and considered there will be further discussions on start dates.

The best measure of success is touch back with the GSAR volunteers to hear how the communications back and forth on both the funding and advisory sides is working, as well as solutions being approved on outstanding issues.