



Mike's history with S&R:

Mike's passion for search and rescue began in 1987 when he attempted to rescue a young boy who had fallen through the ice. After the incident it seemed to Mike that because these types of incidents were relatively few and far between, plans and protocols were often overlooked. Over the next 20 plus years Mike witnessed more and more situations where proper training and procedures could have made for safer and more effective search and rescue operations. Mike has personally been involved in searches for lost individuals in remote areas of the county, where landscape and weather are a predominant factor and proper equipment is a must.

In 1996, Mike (then Sergeant) was assigned as Search & Rescue Coordinator along with his other duties at the Sheriff's office. In this capacity, Mike spoke with many organizations, all of whom responded positively to his ideas of forming an organized S&R program. Unfortunately, the leadership at the Sheriff's office at the time would not move forward on Mike's proposed plans and prevented any further attempts of proactive coordination, training, and procuring equipment.

Presently, the YCSO has a boat for rescue efforts on the river. Dedicated Deputies do what they can using the means available whenever called upon. Mike feels that actual rescue training and equipment is lacking in the river rescue program. Training must not only include the boat operators, but the divers and shore crews as well.

Mike's Plan

- ✓ **Support from the Top.** As Sheriff, I will appoint and support a deputy as the county Search and Rescue coordinator. That deputy will be responsible for contacting and assessing the different organizations, coordinating with community groups, and updating and maintaining records. All of the Yellowstone County Deputies will be encouraged to participate in the program as well.
- ✓ **Teaming up** with community groups. Organizing an effective Search & Rescue Program will take time and effort by those willing to get involved. We must identify all of the available and willing resources available in Yellowstone County. Organizations such as the Civil Air Patrol, volunteer fire departments, rural quick response units, mounted units, experienced hikers & backpackers, mountain bike clubs, scuba divers, canine organizations with search dogs, and off road recreation clubs may hold the valuable resources we will draw from.
- ✓ **Advanced equipment and cutting edge training.** Without up to date equipment and effective training, a Search and Rescue program's effectiveness is limited. I will work to procure search & rescue equipment and vehicles for the Sheriff's Office using available programs provided by manufacturers and various government surplus programs. I will also work to develop the kind of programs that will provide our S & R personnel with the training they will need.
- ✓ **Close coordination** with local fire departments, Fish, Wildlife & Parks, and other entities for training and operations.

Yellowstone County has seen its fair share of lost hunters, stranded motorists, downed aircraft, wildfires and river tragedies. It is time that we prepare for the worst.