

The Team

The Bedford County Wilderness Search Team (BCWST) is a volunteer organization dedicated to saving lives in the outdoor. The mission of the Bedford County Wilderness Search Team is to provide education, mitigation and search and rescue services in regards to lost person and injured person incidents occurring in a wilderness environment. The Bedford County Wilderness Search Team will offer a high degree of service by having dedicated, highly trained and experienced employees using modern equipment and methods in an effective and efficient manner.

All of the members of the BCWST are experienced emergency services members from a varied and diverse background. Members of BCWST come from Fire Departments (both career and volunteer), Emergency Medical Services (EMS), Law Enforcement Agencies, Ski Patrols, other Search and Rescue Teams and Civil Air Patrols.

Responsible Authority

The Bedford County Wilderness Search Team is a specialized resource to assist local law enforcement, fire service, emergency medical services, Department of Conservation and Natural Resource representatives, PA Fish and Boat commission representative and civil air patrol during incidents occurring in a wilderness environment.

The team cannot be dispatched to any search or rescue operation without the consent and/or request of the authority having jurisdiction (JHA). The BCWST is not intended and will not replace any of

the local emergency service organization. The BCWST will not come to a search and rescue detail and attempt to take command of the incident. The members are nothing more than a special resource to assist the JHAs during search and rescue incidents.

Services

The members of the Bedford County Wilderness Search Team are 100% National Association for Search and Rescue (NASAR) certified. All callout certified personnel are at a minimum of a level III Search and Rescue Tech. All Field certified personnel are a minimum of a level II Search and Rescue Tech and certified at a minimum of Wilderness First Aid.

In addition to being a field certified person, all members are also considered a specialist in one of four areas. A member can be a specialist in Search Management. The search management specialist is a graduate of an approved 40-hour search management course. A member can be a specialist in K9 handling. The K9 specialist has a minimum of a K9 SAR Tech III certification from NASAR in addition to having training in K9 first aid. The K9s are also certified in a recognized program in dog obedience.

The third area of specialty that is available is in the area of special transportation. A special transportation specialist is an individual that has specialized training in a field of transportation in addition to specialized training in wilderness evacuation techniques. The final area of specialty is in the area of wilderness rescue. Members that are specialists in wilderness rescue are certified to the minimum of Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), Wilderness EMT, Operations level in Swiftwater

rescue and Technician level in Rope rescue. There are also paramedics on the team.

The individuals from each area are formed into a strike team. There are four strike teams within the BCWST. These strike teams are the Search Management Strike Team, K9 Strike Team, Special Transportation Strike Team and Wilderness Rescue Strike Team. The purpose of the strike teams is to allow special resources of the team to respond to requests from agencies outside of the county or incidents that do not require a full search response from the team.

When strike teams or individuals respond to search details or wilderness rescue incidents the members bring with them a 24-48 or 72 hour search pack, allowing the individual to be self sufficient for a specific amount of time. The individuals also bring additional equipment that the individuals will need to meet their specialty.

Coverage Area

The Bedford County Wilderness Search Team can respond with the entire team or any special resource response anywhere in Bedford County. The BCWST will also respond the entire team or any special resource response to the five surrounding county response areas (Fulton, Huntington, Blair, Cambria and Somerset counties). Outside of these areas, BCWST will respond with a maximum of two strike teams to any area that requests BCWST's assistance. The coverage area includes any location within the Commonwealth

of Pennsylvania, Maryland and West Virginia. BCWST will not respond with the entire team outside of the team's immediate coverage area to prevent a depletion of search resources to the team's home area.

General Information

Bedford County Wilderness Search Team is a non-profit, volunteer organization. BCWST encourages membership without regards to gender, age, religious denomination, sexual orientation, race or disability. Meetings are held the first Tuesday, of every month, at 7:00PM at the Alum Bank Fire Department, Pleasantville, PA. Any individual is welcome to attend any team meeting,

Team training occurs on the monthly basis and varies on topics, date and time from month to month. A training schedule can be obtained from any team member or the BCWST's website. Any non-team individual is welcome to attend training sessions and train with the team. All interested individuals are required to bring a letter of insurance coverage from the individual's emergency service affiliate. The letter must be on organization letterhead and signed by the organizations Chief, Manager or Training officer.

Any interested individual can request an application from any BCWST member. The application must be filled out entirely and submitted with \$20 annual dues. The application is reviewed and voted on in accordance with the BCWST's bylaws and constitution. Once the prospective member is accepted for membership, the new member will be given an employee handbook and team patch. The individual will be required to follow all rules and regulations in regards to

BCWST's bylaws, Constitutions and Standard Operating Procedures. In the event that the individual is not accepted for membership, the individual will be given a letter explaining the reason for denial and the \$20 annual dues will be returned to the individual.

Requesting BCWST

The Bedford County Wilderness Search Team can be requested in Bedford County by dialing 911. Outside of Bedford County, the team can be requested through Bedford County dispatch at (814) 623-1105. When requesting BCWST as a resource or requesting one of the team's strike teams, the caller will be required to provide the following information-

- *How long has the individual been missing?
- *What type of activity was the individual doing?
- *What type of equipment did the subject have?
- *How many people are missing?
- *Age and physical condition of everyone involved?
- *Ability and experience level of those involved?
- *What was the subject's PLS & LKP?
- *What type of terrain is involved?
- *What is the current and predicted weather condition?
- *What team resources are being requested?
- *Where is the incident and staging area?

Contact Information

Bedford County Wilderness Search Team
PO Box 445
New Paris, PA 15554
<http://www.bcwst.org>
Email: bcwst@pahighlander.com

Bedford County Wilderness Search Team



- Member of National Association for Search and Rescue
- Member of the Pennsylvania Search and Rescue Council