

**REPORT & RECOMMENDATIONS FOLLOWING INCIDENT AT
GEORGIA NAVIGATOR CUP 2002
Draft March 15, 2002**

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- 1) Introduction
 - a) GNC 2002 was probably not an unusual meet in many respects
 - i) Typical participants
 - ii) Usual planning for typical meet
 - iii) Good execution
 - b) What wasn't bargained for were complicating factors - weather & poor incident preparation
 - c) "Snowballing" - Ga DNR Mountain Search and Rescue Team (MSRT) coordinator Bob Bolz said "could have turned into (a) major (DNR) response." This is a strong characterization in a parks department that deals routinely with suicides, fallen climbers and lost individuals
 - d) Events that day prompted a review with the intent of developing strategies to avoid future such incidents
 - e) Done with the cooperation of many of the "stakeholders" involved: an USOF (position), on behalf of USOF and the clubs, a senior Ga DNR official, on behalf of land managers and owners, and a SAR operator, on behalf of SAR services providers and club volunteers who have been responsible for SAR and first aid at "A" meets.
 - f) Recognized that report has weaknesses
 - i) Lack of a comprehensive database of "O" incidents nationally affects, and may skew, some of the assumptions that are made
 - ii) By extension, some assumptions or suggestions are based upon anecdotal evidence or empirical observation rather than a collection of data
 - iii) Local clubs may have been given an insufficient voice in its preparation
 - iv) Author is not a USOF member and is unfamiliar with intricacies of USOF administration/affairs
 - g) Nevertheless, the observations are readily verifiable, and the assumptions and suggestions have a sound basis in common sense and the current practice of the arts of emergency management and search and rescue
- 2) GNC 2002
 - a) Circumstances
 - i) Date-early January, 2002
 - ii) Weather

- (1) Relatively extreme - "hypothermia weather"
- (2) Heavy, sustained rain
 - (a) Muddy, steep banks
 - (b) Slick rocks
- (3) Moderate temperatures - range 40's - 50's F
- (4) Wind - 15-20 mph w/ higher gusts
- iii) Participants
 - (1) Meet staff
 - (a) Experienced, regular club volunteers
 - (b) Local ham club for communications
 - (c) Appeared that positions were staffed "thinly" - not a lot of extra volunteers available to deal with extra/unanticipated demands
 - (2) Competitors
 - (a) Many from out of town
 - (b) Large number were teenage JROTC/high school team members, most of which were also from out of town
 - (3) Preparation
 - (a) Well organized for the routine of operating a large "A" meet
 - (b) One SAR-experienced volunteer designated as "SAR person"
 - (c) At last minute, first aid duties shifted from another volunteer to SAR person
 - (d) Emergency & first aid supplies limited to club's small first aid kit, food/hot drinks/heater at meet HQ and personal supplies brought by SAR person
- b) Outcomes
 - i) Hypothermia/chilling--first runners came soaked, teens wearing cotton/poly or all cotton clothing; others also w/ loss of motor coordination
 - ii) Disorientation/illness - at least three were disoriented and suffering from impaired ability to walk; others were "bailing" from the courses and walking roads back to finish
 - iii) While topography of area minimized chances of subject becoming lost, the chances grew very high that an off-track runner would become immobilized by falling (exacerbated by impairment of motor function) and would lie unattended until he/she became moderately or profoundly hypothermic
 - iv) Wandering child - as subjects began to stack up & finish team attempted to deal w/ them w/ limited resources, SAR person found unescorted 5 yr old child wandering in cold, driving rain toward the woods; child abandoned by parents/16 yr old sister @ registration while they competed/neglected to use meet babysitting service
- c) Response
 - i) Finish crew instructed participants to seek clothing/shelter - teens complicated by observation that coaches were unavailable to escort teens to appropriate shelter or to unlock vehicles so they could retrieve

- clothes; SAR person ran out of dry clothing/jackets/headgear after lending personal supplies to teens
- ii) "Sag wagon" to retrieve disoriented or fatigued participants - two meet volunteers and a park ranger began driving the primary park artery & picked up several participants who needed/wanted ride off the course
 - iii) Finish crew treated two serious cases of chilling/mild hypothermia - only equipped with sleeping bag/materials to treat one; coaches appeared reluctant to accept treatment advice or to take to physician; only warming tent by team was inadequate
 - iv) Finish crew escorted child to meet headquarters; identified parents, who were on course, later turned over to meet babysitting team; after meet, determined that this had happened at least once before at another club's meet over a period of years
- 3) Analysis
- a) Weather
 - i) not unreasonable to expect such weather in Georgia during that time range
 - ii) of the # of out of state teams, only one was observed to have made any preparations for dealing w/ cold or wet competitors
 - iii) necessitates use of poly clothing, which "wicks" away moisture from the skin & minimizes body heat loss, instead of cotton/cotton blends, which have opposite effect. Also, head covering to cut heat loss from wet head
 - b) Participants
 - i) Almost all of the most problematic participants were teens - Disregarded instructions to get warm; dry clothing - "macho" particularly males
 - ii) Accompanied by coaches - disregarded instructions to seek treatment; in one case pursued what was counterproductive treatment, seemed reluctant to do anything that would create a negative "paper trail"
 - c) Preparation
 - i) a good "fair weather" to cold weather plan
 - ii) didn't fully account for what was a very reasonable likelihood of extreme weather
 - iii) prepared for the single-subject, single-locus incident; didn't fully account for possibility that one or more persons might simultaneously become in trouble in separate locations when 100's of people are spread out over a lg area
 - iv) no documented resource list for dealing with situation; dropped responsibility on land manager to ensure that serious incidents were resolved and that park staff met the shortcomings of meet resources
- 4) Prevention of future emergencies
- a) R.Shannonhouse
 - i) USOF officer
 - ii) Finish line director--observed first hand much of the problems

- iii) Asked for assistance in developing a plan for clubs to use to avoid future emergencies
 - b) J Greenway.
 - i) Ga. Dept Natural Resources/Parks Volunteer
 - ii) "SAR person" at GNC 2002 Observed/reported events to DNR
 - iii) Asked by RS to assist in developing recommendations
 - iv) Background
 - (1) SAR participant for over 10 years
 - (2) Ga. DNR Parks SAR volunteer @ Ft. Mtn SP; will assisted with DNR Mountain Search and Rescue Team (MSRT) in trng
 - (3) Former deputy director Bartow Co. (GA) EMA - Graduate FEMA Emergency Planning courses, etc.
 - (4) National Association for Search and Rescue (NASAR)
 - (a) Graduate, Managing Lost Person Incident, SAR Plans Section Chief & Advanced SAR courses
 - (b) SARTECH II certification
 - (5) US Air Force Inland SAR Coordinator course
 - (6) Medical First Responder & Wilderness First Aid trained
 - (7) Former police officer and volunteer firefighter
 - c) Ga. Department of Natural Resources - JG discussed extensively GNC 2002 events with Wallace Woods Jr.,
 - i) superintendent of Ga DNR parks in N. & cent. Ga., including the GNC 2002 & 2003 parks
 - ii) member of DNR MSRT
 - iii) JG's former super @ FMSP
 - iv) very interested in promoting development of pre-plans to avoid future potential emergencies for large group events
 - v) authorized JG to participate in the development of the recommendations
- 5) Recommendations
 - a) Categories
 - i) Guidelines for Emergency Plan to be developed for meet directors
 - ii) Proposed elements of Letters of Instruction (LOI) for JROTC/high school teams
 - iii) General suggestions
 - b) Emergency Operating Plan (EOP)
 - i) Standard by which emergency plans are drawn by FEMA, state and local emergency management agencies
 - ii) "plastic" model with flexibility to be adapted to events of any size
 - iii) Cyclical or evolutionary process through time/experience
 - iv) Development Process
 - (1) Identify your situation and working assumptions
 - (2) Evaluate previous EOPs
 - (3) Identify the potential hazards
 - (4) Rank them in terms of likelihood
 - (5) Identify resources for dealing with the hazards

- (6) Secure necessary information for accessing those resources
- (7) Develop functional/hazard-specific annexes to spell out who does what in particular general circumstances
- (8) Outcomes of events are fed back into the national/local planning cycle to improve the plan
- v) Everything is documented in a format accessible to the end user
- vi) Critical to this process is adapting it so that its use is not so onerous that clubs ignore or disregard it
- vii) Applying the process to the Orienteering Event
 - (1) Situation/Working Assumptions
 - (a) Often "boilerplate" for any club
 - (b) Situation
 - (i) Volunteer organization
 - (ii) Conducting a competitive orienteering event
 - 1. Of a given # of participants
 - 2. In an intrinsically hazardous situation (forest, brush, etc. by persons moving at high speed, often off trail and around natural/manmade obstacles)
 - (iii) Not organized or promoted as a provider of emergency services
 - (iv) No one (specifically the club and land owner/manager) can mitigate/eliminate all potential hazards
 - (c) Operating assumptions
 - (i) The club & the land owner/manager are not responsible for mitigating/eliminating all potential hazards
 - (ii) "Informed consent"
 - 1. Participants make an informed decision to participate, given the situation (see above)
 - 2. Legal minors are accompanied by parents or those authorized to operate in loco parentis (in the parents' shoes) & to give "informed consent"
 - 3. Participants (or those acting in their legal capacity) are ultimately responsible for protecting themselves
 - (iii) Club responsibilities
 - 1. Ensuring that participants have been reasonably informed of the
 - a. hazards common to "O"
 - b. responsibilities of participants/club & land manager/owner
 - 2. Guiding participants to take reasonable steps to protect themselves from such hazards
 - 3. Serving as a facilitator for participants to access emergency resources (not as a primary provider of emergency resources) in circumstances in which the needy participant may not be capable of calling upon them him- or herself

4. Taking reasonable steps within the scope of meet officials' training and abilities to assist emergency responders with information and, if available, other resources to resolve an incident
 5. Protecting the fiduciary interests of the club, the USOF and the land manager/owner through reasonable safety practices
- (2) Evaluate previous EOPs
 - (a) Email inquiries of a number of East Coast "o" clubs reveal no real documented preplans for emergencies
 - (b) Everything appears to be informal, undocumented in most clubs
 - (c) Planning is "scaled" to the size of the event; i.e. number of anticipated participants
 - (d) Local land managers/owners should be consulted as to their own EOPs
 - (3) Hazards
 - (a) Assumption is that there are no comprehensive, retrievable local or national database of "O" event emergency incidents
 - (b) Concern that some incidents may "slip through the cracks," ex. impalement to GAOC meet participant after GAOC event was closed
 - (c) General assumptions can be made
 - (i) Environmental - extreme/severe weather, etc.
 - (ii) Medical-people get hurt/sick
 - (iii) SAR-overdue runner, lost runner, lost bystander
 - (iv) Law Enforcement-traffic snarls, "fender benders," car break-in, bystander intrusion
 - (d) Local Sources of hazard information – club records, land manager/owner; local law enforcement; local SAR team, etc.
 - (4) Rank them in terms of likelihood
 - (a) Again, the complicating factors in (3) could skew (4)
 - (b) Reasonable assumptions can be made
 - (i) Medical-injuries followed by environmental related illness & pre-existing illness
 - (ii) Environmental
 - (iii) SAR
 - (iv) Law enforcement
 - (5) Identify resources for dealing with them
 - (a) Compile list of resources
 - (b) Potential resources
 - (i) Land manager/owner-primary; can be facilitator to the identities of others
 - (ii) National Weather Service/local weather reporting-simple forecast/current conditions
 - (iii) Emergency medical sources-ambulance, SAR teams, volunteer fire departments, National Guard, etc.

- (iv) SAR resources - local teams, out of community units; organization legally responsible for SAR in jurisdiction
 - (v) Law enforcement - identities of agencies responsible for typical LE situations encountered (traffic snarls, car break-ins, encounter w/ unruly bystander/vandal, etc.)
- (6) Secure necessary information for accessing those resources - "who ya gonna call?" & the means to contact them
- (a) Land manager/owner - phone number, physical location, radio channels, etc.; under what circumstances/emergencies does he/she want to be notified
 - (b) National Weather Service - copy of local forecast; weather band radio on site
 - (c) Emergency medical services - names/locations of pre-designated meet volunteers who are F/A trained (assigned exclusively to EMS or in add't to other duties); location/contents/currency of first aid kit; phone numbers of local EMS/911; response time to location; "golden hour" estimation; are they aware of "O" meet (in large events); sources of first aiders; location/directions to local hospital/clinic, etc.
 - (d) SAR - name/location pre-designated meet volunteers who are SAR trained/oriented (assigned exclusively to SAR or in add't to other duties) to be "first responder"/reporter; local teams (as appropriate) contact information; written roster of all meet staff (to identify resources in event hasty search/containment is necessary)
 - (e) Law Enforcement - names/locations agencies responsible for handling incidents that might reasonably occur; potential response time; are they aware of "O" meet (in large event)
- (7) Develop functional/hazard specific annexes
- (a) Functional - who will do what when
 - (i) Meet staff-director, etc. - general management, identity of person responsible for recording/reporting emergency incidents
 - (ii) Land manager/owner - under which circumstances will he/she assume control & under which will meet staff be left to their own devices
 - (iii) Emergency medical - first aider, additional on-site resources, local EMS agencies
 - (iv) SAR - responsibilities of meet SAR person, coordination with local authority
 - (v) Law enforcement - which agency handles common issues such as traffic jams, accidents, thefts, problem individuals, etc.
 - (b) Hazard-specific - if a given happens, what will be done by whom
 - (i) Keep it general; an overly specific plan becomes inflexible to an evolving emergency

- (ii) Typical hazards
 1. Weather - if potential for severe/sudden onset weather, who responsible for monitoring (svr thunderstorm, tornado, etc.) & posting warning/notice in common area if necessary; if extreme weather (heat/cold), who responsible for posting notices to out of towners, ensuring appropriate safety supplies (water, warming area, etc.)
 2. Medical - notification process (reporting individual to staff, to first aider/etc. &/or land manager/owner to local EMS; documentation of injuries for recordkeeping/potential litigation; some locally written guidelines on which club will "scale" provision of EMS from F/A trained staff person to designated F/A provider to having personnel w/ higher level of medical training to having ambulance on standby depending on size & other circumstances of event
 3. SAR - PSAR (Preventative SAR) steps (requirement of whistle, etc. of participants), assignment of SAR responsibilities to staff member, designation of SAR person, operation of "overdue runner" stand, notification of responsible agency for SAR, completion of Lost Person Questionnaire, initial response, etc.
- (c) Annexes don't have to be complicated – simple paragraph or “fill in blank” on form to address key issues can be enough
- (8) Feeding incident reports/identification of new hazards back into the national/local EOP process
 - (a) Local reviews of records on at least an annual process & updating of plan
 - (b) Suggestion of forwarding, storing and making available for retrieval the information from incidents nationally
 - (c) Periodic national revision of suggested meet EOP framework
- (9) An end user product
 - (a) Ideal EOP qualities
 - (i) "KISS" - Keep It Simple, Stupid - more likely to be used properly
 - (ii) Adaptable to scale - gives relevant guidance for a meet staffed by two people or a meet attended by hundreds; should act as a 10-minute check sheet for small meets & guidelines that take no more than an hour to compile for large ones
 - (iii) A way to communicate to participants/resources what their roles are in incident response
 - (iv) Documentation - verifies that club took steps to ensure safety; records incidents for future planning
 - (b) Probably the best means is through use of a form (example)
- c) JROTC/High school teams

- i) Had the JROTC or high school teams participants been instead local, adult competitors, the events that came to pass probably wouldn't have happened
 - (1) All but the most dedicated local participants seemed to have bowed out in light of the prevailing cold, wet weather
 - (2) It appeared that most were from out of town
 - (a) Unfamiliar with local short-term weather forecast - some may have expected "southern sunshine" and temps
 - (b) The desire to earn competition points, the distances that their coaches drove and the investments that were made in fees/travel costs may have prompted to participate in inclement, potentially hazardous conditions
 - (3) JROTC participants were ill-dressed for the prevailing conditions
 - (a) Dressed in cotton or cotton/poly t-shirts, shorts or military "BDU" pants in lieu of the all-synthetic "O" suits that would have shed water
 - (b) Almost none had any head cover, gloves, coats, etc.
 - (c) Questions about whether many of them had set aside bags at finish with replacement clothing
 - (4) Supervision
 - (a) Almost no teams had adult supervision at the finish, which is where most problems were observed; unable to turn many at-risk participants over to team reps.; left finish staff tied up so they couldn't deal with other, incoming problems or regular duties
 - (b) When many participants were directed to immediately seek dry clothing, most were unable to locate their adult chaperones; many complained that they were locked out of their team vehicles and dry clothing
 - (c) Question about judgement
 - (i) upon strong recommendation by SAR/medical First Responder trained person that certain ill teens be taken to the hospital for evaluation and clearance, coaches ignored this advice. One coach took a potentially hypothermic female participant to a hotel room where the patient's female friends put her into a tub of hot water. This is not always the ideal protocol to follow. Another coach (presumably Eastern European based upon accent) insisted upon undressing an ill male participant and soaking him with rubbing alcohol. Rubbing alcohol can have a profoundly chilling effect on an already cold patient
 - (ii) A visit to the local clinic or hospital Emergency Department would probably have dictated a great deal of paperwork and, presumably questions about supervision, at the coaches' schools. There is a reasonable question as to whether or not

the coaches risked erring on the side of illness in order to avoid negative paperwork

ii) Resolution

- (1) RS contacted the USOF JROTC/High School coordinator for advice in regard to communicating safe "best practices" at "A" meets to JROTC/High School team
- (2) Learned that the best means for dealing with the JROTC units was to communicate such instructions in the form of the military "Letter of Instruction" (LOI)
 - (a) Used to inform participants in military competitions, etc. of the rules of participation, etc.
 - (b) Most reinforcing means when dealing with JROTC (prior military) chaperones
 - (c) Mailed sufficiently far enough in advance of meet that JROTC chaperones can incorporate the LOI into their local planning
- (3) Objectives of included items are to prevent incidents, to provide information to more quickly resolve incidents, and to collect the information to use in planning for future incidents
- (4) Potential items for inclusion
 - (a) Requirement for clothing appropriate to weather forecast for meet location for event date
 - (b) Requirement for each participant to carry a whistle on the course
 - (c) Chaperone requirements
 - (i) One available in meet HQ or finish at all times to deal with emergencies involving their participants
 - (ii) Ensure that each participant has appropriate clothing for prevailing conditions and that such clothing is immediately available to their charges upon finish
 - (iii) If extreme weather is reasonably foreseeable for the date of the meet, must bring their own supplies for mitigating conditions (shade & water for heat; heater, hot drinks, warming area & heaters for extreme cold/rain)
 - (iv) Will present to meet management a manifest of each of their participants, their descriptions (race, sex, age, height, weight, color/nature of clothing) each morning that they participate
 - (v) Will have, subject to inspection, the basic information necessary to complete a Lost Person Questionnaire for each participant (see iv above plus photo, brief medical history, etc.)
 - (vi) If incident occurs in regard to one of their charges, and the team/charge leave, the chaperone will make a written report back to the club as to the actions taken after leaving the meet and the charge's outcome

iii) Enforcement

- (1) USOF should give clubs the "teeth" to enforce compliance with LOIs
- (2) No compliance = no future participation
- d) General suggestions
 - i) A wide range of observations and suggestions could be made that could improve safety and prevent incidents
 - ii) Some are incredibly simple; others may take time and interest on the part of local meet officials in order to implement
 - iii) Suggestions
 - (1) Minimal equipment
 - (a) WW and the author both strongly recommend that anyone entering the woods should carry the "10 Essentials" for a wilderness emergency
 - (b) Practically speaking, it might be impossible to get USOF or any club to adopt that standard--competitors would claim it too heavy (<1lb) and unwieldy (fit in a small fanny pack)
 - (c) At a very minimum, at least these two items should be carried
 - (i) whistle
 1. After water & suitable clothing, the most critical necessity of life to a lost person is the ability to signal help
 2. Whistle - Lightest, cheapest, least complex means of signaling help
 3. Sound propagates much farther than the human voice
 4. Implement a requirement that each runner has one pinned or tied to their clothing
 - (ii) A garbage bag
 1. Inclement weather is particularly likely during the spring "O" season on the East Coast
 2. Competitors are generally averse to carrying any more weight than absolutely necessary
 3. GNC 2002 demonstrated that extreme weather can occur during an "A" meet
 4. SAR community recognizes that a large plastic garbage bag can be an excellent item from which to improvise either a poncho for a walking "runner" or an emergency shelter for an immobilized one
 5. Can be stuffed into a pocket
 - (d) Again, Wallace Woods Jr., on behalf of Ga DNR, emphasized strongly that this should be a requirement for meets; a message that should be taken to heart by Georgia meet planners
 - (2) Requirement that all clubs keep a supply of Lost Person Questionnaires at meet sites
 - (a) Critical tool in modern search management
 - (b) Summarizes relevant data on the lost subject
 - (c) Would not be truly "completed" by meet staff, but would serve as a tool for gathering key information at the onset of an incident

- (3) Safety video
 - (a) GAOC pursuing video to be seen voluntarily by new participants
 - (b) USOF could look into underwriting
 - (c) Clubs could possibly make a requirement for White course competitors
- (4) Improvements to registration cards for adult competitors
 - (a) Most overdue runner situations could be resolved by simply knowing in which vehicle the runner arrived
 - (b) By verifying that the vehicle is gone from the meet parking area, a reasonable presumption can be made that the runner is no longer in the area
 - (c) If a runner is genuinely overdue or lost, a description is helpful in sorting the runner in question from the flurry of others in the woods
 - (d) Add entry points on the registration card for
 - (i) Make/model/year/color/tag of vehicle
 - (ii) Name(s) of accompanying competitors
 - (iii) Competitor physical description-race, sex, age, height, weight, clothing
- (5) Roster of meet personnel
 - (a) Initial response to any response improved by knowing who is available to assist
 - (b) Having a roster also allows initial gov't responder to gauge how much in-club assistance might be available for SAR, litter/stretchers carry, etc.
- (6) Training - general incident
 - (a) Develop a USOF block on safety issues for meet staff
 - (b) Pieces in USOF literature
 - (c) Talks @ USOF conventions
 - (d) "Traveling roadshow"
 - (e) Class in preparation of Lost Person Questionnaire
- (7) Wilderness First Aid training
 - (a) Meet locations/types of injuries suggest the need for people trained in first aid in backcountry or minimal supply situations
 - (b) Meet directors could be encouraged/required to pursue such training
 - (c) American Red Cross (ARC) has lowered the cost of training by implementing "Wilderness First Aid Basics" course - weekend long
 - (d) Local clubs could look to subsidizing or underwriting training for proven regular meet volunteers
- (8) SAR training
 - (a) While relatively few participants annually may become lost for more than an hour, an orientation to SAR methods for meet directors could help
 - (i) Improve initial response

- (ii) Guide them in collection of initial information necessary to start the search/pass to responsible agency - Lost Person Questionnaire (LPQ)
 - (iii) Aid in meet preplan to take initial steps in confining subject
- (b) NASAR
 - (i) National Association for Search and Rescue
 - (ii) Provides training and certification standards for participants in SAR
 - (iii) ISAR (Introduction to Search and Rescue) course
 1. weekend long class
 2. orientation to wilderness/rural SAR methods for first responder/first line manager
 3. teaches use of the Lost Person Questionnaire
 4. good preparation for regular meet directors or designated meet SAR person
 5. relatively inexpensive
 - (iv) More in depth training available - FUNSAR (FUNdamentals of Search And Rescue), MLPI (Managing the Lost Person Incident) for motivated individuals
- (9) Incident reporting
 - (a) Standardized method of reporting incidents
 - (b) Useful for "lessons learned" as well as documentation of actions taken in event of litigation
- (10) USOF safety "best practices"
 - (a) A tool for all clubs could be the development of safety "best practices" by USOF
 - (b) "Best practices" - actions or habits recognized as the ideal means by which clubs could prevent incidents/emergencies
 - (c) A by-product of the EOP development process as incident reports are reviewed and incorporated into future planning
- (11) USOF repository of "O" emergency incident reports
 - (a) Collects and organizes incident reports from local clubs on weekly/monthly basis
 - (b) Organizes, analyzes and disseminates them to local clubs on biennial/annual basis
 - (c) Could possibly use a web-based format for maximum propagation
 - (d) Redact only that information that is necessary to protect subject privacy
- (12) USOF Safety director/committee
 - (a) Charged with developing USOF safety policies/guidelines/model EOP for clubs
 - (b) Responsible for "best practice" development
 - (c) Consults with stakeholders (major land managers, club representatives, SAR operators, etc.) to improve safety processes

- (d) Coordinates with USOF Insurance director in regard to need for documentation and risk management issues
 - (e) Makes recommendations to USOF BoD in regard to rules changes necessary to implement safety policies
- 6) Summary
- a) GNC 2002 can be compared to the drowsy driver who snaps his car back onto the road after a wheel runs off the shoulder
 - i) A “wake up” call
 - ii) A momentary shot of adrenaline
 - iii) No one was hurt
 - iv) Self-congratulation at an accident avoided
 - v) Possible that driver can still drive unscathed in that condition
 - vi) Assumption that driver makes is that nothing unexpected will happen;
 - (1) No unexpected, gentle curve in the road
 - (2) No animal wanders into his path
 - (3) No blinding set of headlights
 - (4) No even dozing off for a few more seconds
 - vii) the driver could continue quite safely for a long time – until one or two relatively small, quite probable elements change beyond his impaired ability to cope with them
 - viii) Only once when response is impaired can mean the difference between another adrenaline shot and a tragedy for more than just the driver
 - ix) Along the same lines, a club could have a series of undocumented “near misses” while using the same meet plan, only to have a major incident because some minor aspect (weather, participant preparation, etc.) upset the apple cart
 - b) What will define USOF is whether it chooses to continue driving in hope that there are no more than “near misses” or it chooses to take proactive steps
- 7) An additional issue - the abandoned child
- a) Of all of the aspects of the GNC 2002 incident, none seemed to engender more frustration among the SAR operators who discussed it than the unattended five year old
 - b) Child was placed in highly hazardous situation
 - i) Unattended by anyone
 - ii) No one but absent parents were aware child was unattended
 - iii) Wandering in a public park – subject to stranger abduction/assault in an area being frequented by other park visitors/passersby
 - iv) Left alone for a lengthy period of time –
 - (1) given an extended opportunity to wander out of area before he/she would have been noticed absent
 - (2) if had become lost, the theoretically and statistically defined search areas would have grown exponentially with time
 - v) Ill prepared for extended stay in environment
 - (1) Wearing nylon coat but what appeared to be cotton/poly pants

- (2) No separate hat
- (3) Nothing to eat/drink unless independently walked to meet HQ
- c) Investigation
 - i) Child said that her parents/16 yr old sister had left to compete; instructed her to “stay around here” (she wasn’t “here” when she was found) in their absence
 - ii) Determined identities of parents
 - (1) Regular participants in meets on east coast
 - (2) According to emails to RS, had been left unattended on several meets over a period of years (since age 2) at one club (presumably others)
 - (3) Some question as to whether this reflects a cultural difference between meets in Europe and US
 - (a) Conjecture was that at least one parent was from Europe or other than US
 - (i) Mother had either Low Country or Eastern European-sounding first name
 - (ii) When she was first pointed out in middle of registration to author, she appeared to have nonchalantly stripped to her competition jersey and her panties in order to change into dry clothes in middle of crowd @ pavilion rather than going to adjacent restroom
 - (b) Author’s understanding from other European family sports is that family-oriented clubs assume a *crèche* situation in which all children are mutually under the eye of every parent there, unlike US
 - (4) Although parents were well aware of the meet and the means by which to drive from well out of state to Georgia, they neglected to avail themselves of the babysitting service offered by the meet staff
- d) Situation represented a “worst case” scenario for SAR
 - (1) Is child wandering or missing through criminal act? – Enormous potential search area requiring proportionate quantity of search resources
 - (2) High urgency situation
 - (a) Youth
 - (b) Experience
 - (c) Weather conditions
 - (3) In incident in which resources were already fully stretched, this child going lost would have completely exhausted available resources – necessitated large law enforcement/state park SAR response from outside jurisdiction
- e) Recommendations
 - i) Someone close to these parents should investigate this further and, as necessary, counsel them on the gravity of this situation
 - ii) After discussion w/ WW, if placed in a parallel situation again regarding this child, the author is willing to escort the child to a park ranger

instead of meet staff. Author would then recommend that state criminal charges of child abandonment or cruelty to children be filed against the parent

- 8) Appendices
 - a) Outline of EOP process
 - b) Outline of EOP
 - c) Sample EOP form for O meets
 - d) Lost Person Questionnaire
 - e) NASAR brochure
 - f) (?) Bibliography