



Northern Michigan Region

Alpine Proficiency & Training Programs

P&T Program Update

To: Northern Michigan Region Toboggan Instructors
Northern Michigan Region Ski School Instructors

As we get ready for the holidays and the ski season in earnest, I thought that it might be useful to have a quick update on some important issues before we hit the slopes and start training or refreshing our patrollers. Please take a moment to read over these items so that you will be prepared for the season.

First, as just about all of you know, the Central Division organized its annual Ski Trainers Workshop the first weekend in December at Boyne Highlands. Attending from the Northern Michigan Region were several members of the Region's training staff who participated in each of the classes that were offered. Below I have tried to pass on some of the results from those workshops that may be useful to us. In addition, I have added some items that have been discussed at the Region level.

Senior Program

The Central Division staff is making an effort to review, update, and enhance the ski and toboggan evaluation materials that we use with our candidates. Over the course of the weekend, the criteria and language of the current version was reviewed in detail, discussed, and, along with suggestions from P&T trainers at the Ski Trainers Workshop held in November at Wild Mountain, suggestions were made on how to update those materials. For the toboggan handling criteria, the suggestions came from our own experience and the toboggan instruction manual. For the skiing criteria, an effort will be made to incorporate materials from the NSP-C Ski School to reflect our coordination with PSIA terminology and techniques.

Linda Barthel will distribute draft revised materials for us to use and critique during the course of our season. As we use these materials, we should look at their functionality and whether our candidates appreciate some of the terminology that is used. I would expect further suggestions to be made at the end of the season, with revised materials rolled out for next season.

At our Region level, we have discussed the issue of how to make sure that Senior candidates are properly recognized and rewarded when they have completed all of their requirements. Usually, a candidate will pass his or her hill and emergency management evaluations before completing the required elective courses. This has meant that the candidate does not often get the recognition that should go along with these major

accomplishments. To address this, the Region is considering making it a requirement that a Senior candidate complete his or her electives before taking the hill and emergency management evaluations. Upon completion of the last of these evaluations, the candidate can then be recognized and rewarded with the presentation of a Senior patch on the day of that accomplishment.

As this will represent a change, we will begin to announce the change at events this year. Please also communicate to your candidates the proposed change so that they are prepared. Please also reassure them that this process should not cause them any unnecessary delay in getting their Senior patch. There are many electives available during the course of a season, and additional electives are being designed by the Region staff. For example, there is a move to use the summer program as a registered OEC Enhancement Seminar (counting as an elective). Further, our P&T programs through the Region Ski School are registered as Ski Enhancement Seminars and count as an elective. Last year we also offered a Toboggan Enhancement Seminar during the season. Many candidates see these as regular training opportunities, but they also will get credit for an elective.

Also, we have a new Senior Advisor to help coordinate electives and other activities for our candidates. If you have a candidate that has questions about the Senior program, please have them contact Galen Fairchild at (231) 582-3304.

Basic Instruction Techniques

One of the programs at the STW reviewed and emphasized the importance of many basic instruction techniques that we sometimes forget or fail to fully implement in the desire to get out on the slopes and into training. Among these:

- * We must remember to recognize and adapt to the three basic methods by which people learn – auditory, visual and kinesthetic. Good instruction techniques implement all three.

- * We must remember to set up and use the six pack for every training session, and every technique used in that training session. Candidates should be presented with clear goals and understand the stages of their development.

- * We must remember to use the three learning methods in our communications, both with candidates and with each other. With the proliferation and efficiency of email, we often overlook face to face meetings or even telephone calls to convey an important message.

Ski School Membership

In case you have not guessed it, more and more reliance is being placed on PSIA theory, technique and terminology in our ski instruction. Membership in the Region Ski School would help all of us provide more comprehensive, consistent and effective ski instruction.

Joel Epstein and I also have discussed this and we feel that every area should strive to have at least one trainer also be a member of the Region Ski School. We will be approaching hill trainers to help identify or recommend people interested in joining the Region Ski School, and to answer any questions about the benefits that it will convey.

Region Training Clinic

Our own indomitable Jim Parker already has distributed information on the Region Training Clinic for candidates, as well as the pre-clinic assessment form. These should be returned to Mike Taylor along with the pre-registration fee. Please also contact Jim at 231-347-4120 or pmfjim@freeway.n if you have any questions.

See you all on the slopes!!

Aren Fairchild
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Proficiency Programs