

Search and rescue teams complete swiftwater training

Earlier this month Douglas County Search and Rescue hosted a three-day swiftwater rescue technician training event.

The instructor was Rachel Moore from Sierra Rescue. Sierra Rescue is California's premiere Rescue 3 Swift Water Rescue Instruction Company; specializing in hands-on training. In attendance were eight members from DCSAR, one Carson City SAR member and a deputy and sergeant from Alpine County Sheriff's Office.



Sienna Smith-Saeger, Nathan Smith, Rob Ranieri, Anne Thomas, Pat Fried and Instructor Rachel Moore.
Back row (l-r) Tom Mapes, Greg Altringer, Jason Zona, Cary Olson, Jeff Bennett and Ron

Michitarian.

The skills emphasized in the class included self-rescue, throw bag rescue, entrapments, thinking through a rescue, simple rope tricks, and rescue techniques that have been tested and proven successful in real rescues. The instructor played the victim in several scenarios which tested the participant's abilities to plan and execute a swiftwater rescue.

The river portion of the class included defensive and aggressive swimming techniques and accessing eddies. Contact rescues emphasized rescuer safety and taught techniques to counter panic subjects. Participants learned about Live-Bait jackets which allow self-release if caught in a serious situation.

Shallow water crossings both singly and in small groups were practiced.

Entrapment rescues were emphasized and all learned that one NEVER tries to stand up when under downstream momentum—the quickest way to encounter possible foot entrapment.

Strainer drills were practiced as well as rescues involving the use of river boards.

Knots were reviewed and the use of ropes with and without mechanical advantage to aid in rescues were taught and practiced.

Freeing wrapped boats, righting overturned rafts, and the use of ziplines were all skills that were also taught and practiced. The course included a written exam and student skills demonstrations. Successful students received certification as a Swiftwater Rescue Technician.