As in years past, Keith Conover and Don Scelza will coordinate Wilderness EMS Day on a crisp, clear October Saturday. Actually, no, we want rain and sleet as it makes a better exercise. It will take place regardless of the weather: this is a wilderness EMS exercise. **You will be out in the field all day until after dark.**

The prime motivator is to provide required field training for the University of Pittsburgh’s Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Fellowship. An EMS Fellow is a physician who has completed medical school and an emergency medicine residency, and is pursuing additional training in the management of EMS systems. And this curriculum has a requirement for education about Wilderness EMS, including a practical exercise. The Fellows will learn by providing over-the-radio medical advice to your field team as you care for simulated patients in a relatively wild setting.

WEMS Day is also a learning experience for members of emergency medicine, EMS and search and rescue (SAR) organizations. After all, the Fellows need practice dealing with Wilderness EMS providers, and having EMS and SAR personnel there provides this. People of all levels, from wilderness first aid through EMTs of various stripes to field-capable physicians, will be participating.

We meet at Keith Conover’s house at 9 AM (some meet at 8 to prepare for the day), and those practicing incident management brief us and organize us into teams, and move us to Kane Woods, a five-minute drive. We will issue you a gridded map.

Once at Kane Woods, we dispatch teams to various grid locations. You navigate to them, keeping in touch via handheld radios. You will find an instructor and a mock victim. The instructor gives you a patient scenario, which you manage with advice from one of the Fellows. Your team switches locations and scenarios on a schedule. At some inconvenient point when everyone is tired and cold and it’s getting dark, the entire group will have to deal with a complex rescue. Once done, we adjourn back to Keith’s for dinner in front of a roaring fire, and a debrief.

The following organizations usually participate:

- University of Pittsburgh EMS Fellowship
- Appalachian Search and Rescue Conference
- Wilderness EMS Day 2018

- University of Pittsburgh Medical School Wilderness Medical Society Student Section
- University of Pittsburgh Student EMS
- Appalachian Search and Rescue Conference Groups:
  - Allegheny Mountain Rescue Group
  - Mountaineer Area Rescue Group
  - Northwest Pennsylvania K-9 Search and Rescue
  - Maryland Search and Rescue
  - Shenandoah Mountain Rescue Group

Part of SAR (and EMS) is managing larger operations, and this is indeed a larger operation that needs to be managed much like a large lost-person search or a large multi-casualty EMS incident. So this provides an opportunity to exercise incident-management skills as well.


RSVP by email to kconover@pitt.edu and let us know your medical, outdoor and SAR experience.