

Chapter 2

Bylaws of the China Lake Mountain Rescue Group

Abstract: This chapter presents the Bylaws that govern the operation of the China Lake Mountain Rescue Group

Written

February 1967

Revised:

December 1974

January 1995

June 1997

November 2005

June 2009 Transcribed to LyX format and entered into electronic Revision Control System by Nathan Paul Simons

2.1 Introduction

The China Lake Mountain Rescue Group was formed in 1958 in response to a request from local law enforcement agencies and was incorporated under the laws of the State of California in 1967. It is a member of the national Mountain Rescue Association and of the California Region Mountain Rescue Association. It is a volunteer, non-profit, 501(c)(3) public service organization dedicated to saving lives through rescue and public safety education. Its primary operating area is the eastern Sierra Nevada and the nearby desert mountains. It performs rescue operations in any terrain or weather conditions. Its educational functions include teaching wilderness safety to the public, teaching first aid, and instructing members and interested persons in safe climbing and mountaineering practices.



2.2 Bylaws

2.2.1 Article I. Identification

2.2.1.1 Section 1. Name

The name of this organization is the China Lake Mountain Rescue Group (CLMRG-also called the Group). The Group shall be a division of the Kern County Sheriff's Department (KCSO) Search and Rescue (SAR) organization.

2.2.1.2 Section 2. Purpose

The purpose of the Group shall be to maintain an organized group of experienced mountain SAR personnel to assist the KCSO, the Office of Emergency Services (OES) of the State of California (the State), and other governmental agencies as requested in conducting SAR operations. In addition, the Group will offer mountaineering safety classes to the general public and specific mountaineering skill classes as requested by other organizations.

2.2.1.3 Section 3. Authority

All members of the Group shall be subject to these Bylaws. In all matters of conflict, members are subject to all applicable laws and ordinances, KCSO policies, KCSO SAR guidelines, California Region Mountain Rescue Association (CRMRA) practices, and these Bylaws in that order.

2.2.2 Article II Affiliations

2.2.2.1 Section 1. County

The Group shall be affiliated with the Sheriff of the County of Kern (the County) as a team of volunteers to provide SAR services in mountains and as otherwise directed by the Sheriff or his representatives.

2.2.2.2 Section 2. State

The Group shall be affiliated with the OES of the State of California (the State) through the Sheriff to respond to requests for mutual aid within the State. The Group is a member of the CRMRA.

2.2.2.3 Section 3. National

The Group is affiliated with the MRA and may be affiliated with the National Association of Search and Rescue (NASAR) for the benefits of membership and for certification of SAR training programs.

2.2.2.4 Section 4. Uniforms.

The Group shall wear the MRA-approved orange shirt with proper insignia on it including a name plate, CLMRG patch, KCSO patch, and MRA patch located on the shirt in accordance with Group policy and procedures. No non-member shall be able to use the CLMRG patch in any manner.

Only the Group shall specify other uniform requirements.



2.2.3 Article III. Membership

2.2.3.1 Section 1. Members

A person who wants to assist in the Group's SAR functions may request consideration to become a member by contacting a member of the Qualifications Committee (QC). After approval by the QC, the person shall be considered an Applicant and shall begin the process to be certified by the KCSD. At the completion of the KCSD certification and after being sworn in as a special deputy by the KCSD, the Applicant shall be placed in one of six member categories: Technical, Rescue, Support, Trainee, Coordinator, or Special Skills. Qualifications for each category are appended to these Bylaws. Members, except Trainees, may hold office and vote on Group business and are liable for assessments.

2.2.3.2 Section 2. Sustaining Members

All persons who further the aims of the Group by contributing financial or material support become sustaining members. Sustaining members are not liable for assessments and do not vote or hold office. Sustaining members receive copies of *The Talus Pile*, the Group's newsletter. Sustaining memberships are renewable annually at the discretion of the Public Education Committee.

2.2.3.3 Section 3. Honorary Members

The Group's Board of Directors (BOD-also called the Board) may, with approval by the membership, designate any individual as an honorary member in recognition of exceptional past contributions to the aims of the Group. Honorary membership is non-voting, for life, and not subject to dues or assessments. Honorary members receive copies of *The Talus Pile*. Any member may propose candidates for the honorary membership category. The Group will vote via a secret ballot on the acceptance of any individual as an honorary member. The determination of honorary membership shall be decided by a simple majority vote of the members present and voting.

2.2.3.4 Section 4. Liabilities

Group membership shall not place any financial responsibility on the Board, other Group members, or the County of Kern or its elected officials, officers, or employees for personal equipment or property used in the performance of SAR activities.

2.2.3.5 Section 5. Termination of membership

Voluntary resignation, actions in violation of KCSD policies and procedures, actions in violation of the Group's policies and procedures as determined by the QC, or prolonged inactivity shall be reasons for termination of membership. A terminated member must submit a letter of resignation to the KCSD and turn in all materials that belong to the KCSD (patches, identification) and the Group (hut key, pagers). If the terminated member does not submit a letter of resignation within 30 days of termination, the QC shall submit a letter of termination to the KCSD.

2.2.3.6 Section 6. Concealed weapons permits

Membership in the Group shall not be used as justification to obtain a concealed weapons permit.



2.2.4 Article IV. Officers

2.2.4.1 Section 1. Officers

The officers of the Group shall be President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and MRA Representative.

2.2.4.2 Section 2. Nominations

The President shall appoint a nominating committee, which shall make nominations for all offices and report at the November business meeting. Any member prior to the election may make additional nominations.

2.2.4.3 Section 3. Elections

Officers shall be elected annually by written secret ballot at the December business meeting. The election shall be decided by a simple majority vote of the members present and voting. The terms of the officers shall begin immediately following adjournment of the meeting at which they are elected.

2.2.4.4 Section 4. Vacancies

If the office of President becomes vacant, the Vice President shall become President and shall appoint a member to be Vice President for the unexpired term. Other offices that become vacant during the year shall be filled for the unexpired term by a member appointed by the President.

2.2.4.5 Section 5. Duties of the President

The President shall call meetings of the Group and of the Board, preside at meetings of the Group and of the Board, appoint the members of all committees except the QC, and perform all the administrative duties incidental to his office.

2.2.4.6 Section 6. Duties of the Vice President

The Vice President shall chair the Training Schedule Committee and be responsible for other duties assigned by the President. In the absence or incapacity of the President, the Vice President shall perform the duties of the President.

2.2.4.7 Section 7. Duties of the Secretary

The Secretary shall keep minutes of all meetings of the Group and of the Board, attend to necessary correspondence of the Group, and maintain copies of the Articles of Incorporation and the Bylaws. The minutes shall be exhibited to any member at any reasonable time on request.



2.2.4.8 Section 8. Duties of the Treasurer

The Treasurer shall have care and custody of all the Group funds and securities and shall deposit them, except for petty funds, in the name of the Group in such FDIC- or NCUA-insured financial institutions as the Board may direct. The Treasurer shall keep records of income and expenditures and shall exhibit the books and accounts to any member at any reasonable time. The Treasurer shall prepare and submit to the appropriate agency whatever fiscal report or application the Board deems necessary. The Treasurer shall file all county, state, and federal tax and other forms required each year.

2.2.4.9 Section 9. Duties of the Mountain Rescue Association Representative

The MRA Representative shall maintain liaison with the MRA and the CRMRA, represent the interests of the Group at MRA and CRMRA meetings, and disseminate information from these associations to the Group membership.

2.2.4.10 Section 10. Compensation

No officer shall receive any form of salary or stipend as a result of serving as an officer.

2.2.5 Article V. Board of Directors

2.2.5.1 Section 1. Composition

The Board shall comprise the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and MRA Representative.

2.2.5.2 Section 2. Duties

The Board shall be responsible for the administrative affairs of the Group and for policy matters that affect the Group, subject to approval by the membership. Specific duties of the Board shall include the following: determine where funds shall be deposited, determine what and to whom financial reports shall be required, review removal actions against any member, review proposed amendments to these Bylaws, and, with approval by the membership, designate honorary members and levy assessments.

2.2.5.3 Section 3. Quorum

A quorum of the Board shall consist of three officers. All matters shall be decided by a simple majority vote.

2.2.5.4 Section 4. Conduct of Meetings

The Board may adopt such rules and regulations for conducting its meetings and managing the affairs of the Group as it may deem proper, consistent with the laws of the State, the Articles of Incorporation, and these Bylaws.



2.2.5.5 Section 5. Meetings

The Board shall meet prior to the February business meeting and whenever called together by the President.

2.2.5.6 Section 6. Removing a member of the Board

The procedure for removing a Board member shall be as follows:

A letter to the Board signed by three voting members shall state at least one non-performance reason for removal of the officer.

The officer to be removed shall then be given the option to resign from the Board or allow a membership vote on the removal. If a vote is requested, the President shall appoint a member to prepare a secret ballot for the vote. The vote shall take place within 30 days of receipt of the letter or at the next business meeting following the receipt of the letter (whichever period is longer).

If the officer is removed, the President shall appoint a member to fill the position until the end of the elected term.

If the removed officer is the President, the Vice President shall fill the President's office until the end of the elected term and appoint an interim Vice President.

A person who is removed from an office represented on the Board is also removed from the Board.

2.2.6 Article VI. Finances

2.2.6.1 Section 1. Fiscal Year

The fiscal year shall correspond to the calendar year.

2.2.6.2 Section 2. Assessments

The Board, with approval by the membership, shall have the power to levy assessments against members to obtain funds for operating the Group.

2.2.6.3 Section 3. Payments

Payment of the Group's financial obligations may be made by check when the check is signed by any two officers.

2.2.7 Article VII. Permanent Committees

2.2.7.1 Section 1. Committees

The Group shall maintain five permanent committees: Training, First Aid, Qualifications, Equipment, and Public Education. With the exception of the QC, committee members shall serve for the term of the President who appoints them at his discretion.

2.2.7.2 Section 2. Training Committee

The Training Committee shall be responsible for planning and conducting training activities and for maintaining proper safety practices during the training sessions.



2.2.7.3 Section 3. First Aid Committee

The First Aid Committee shall be responsible for scheduling and giving First Aid classes as required in order to keep a member's First Aid and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation certification current. The committee shall be responsible for determining Group First Aid equipment requirements, for securing membership approval for needed items, and for procuring and maintaining them.

2.2.7.4 Section 4. Qualifications Committee (QC)

A. Membership: The QC shall consist of three members elected annually in January by secret ballot. QC members shall belong to one of the voting membership categories. Each Group member may vote for three persons to be QC members. The three persons who receive the highest number of votes shall be elected.

B. Duties: The QC shall be responsible for judging the capabilities of members and placing them in the proper categories. The QC shall remove from the Group any person who no longer satisfies the minimum qualifications for any of the membership categories. The QC shall, with concurrence of the membership, update the membership qualifications listed in the appendix to these Bylaws, always maintaining at least the minimum requirements established by the MRA and CRMRA. The QC shall receive and consider written grievances on personnel matters and take appropriate actions. Any action to remove a member from the Group for reasons other than qualifications shall, with the concurrence of the Board, be brought before the membership.

C. Selection of Leaders. The QC shall select candidates for Leaders from the Technical and Rescue categories. In January, these candidates are ranked by the voting membership (this includes all members except Trainees and those Special Skills members who do not mobilize for operations). The vote may be by electronic mail to ensure the widest possible participation. The QC then validates the Leader order dictated by the membership and defines the cut-off point for the number of Leaders.

D. Meetings: The QC shall meet as often as necessary to fulfill its functions. It shall meet prior to the issuance of each new roster to review the classifications of members and to consider Applicants for membership. The QC shall meet within three weeks of receiving a request from any member or by the QC chairman.

E. Vacancies: A vacancy in the QC shall be filled at the next scheduled business meeting by secret ballot of the membership. Each Group member eligible to vote may vote for one person to fill the vacancy. The person who receives the highest number of votes shall be elected to fill the vacancy.

2.2.7.5 Section 5. Equipment Committee

A. Duties: The Equipment Committee shall be responsible for determining Group equipment requirements, for securing membership approval for needed items, and for procuring them. The committee shall be responsible for maintaining all communications licenses in force and for seeing that operation of all radio equipment is in accordance with FCC regulations.

B. Quartermaster: The President shall designate one member of the Equipment Committee to be the Quartermaster. The Quartermaster shall be responsible for seeing that Group equipment is stored properly and maintained at all times in the best possible condition for SAR operations.



2.2.7.6 Section 6. Public Education Committee

A. The Public Education Committee shall be responsible for building and maintaining sound, productive relations with the local community and with sustaining members.

B. The Public Education Committee shall maintain a current list of sustaining and honorary members and handle correspondence with financial contributors and donors of materials. The committee shall provide a continuing program of public education in all phases of safety in the mountains.

C. The Group shall maintain a presence on the World Wide Web as a means of communication with its members, with other MRA teams, and with the public in general and publish a newsletter, *The Talus Pile*.

2.2.8 Article VIII. Search and Rescue (SAR) Operations

2.2.8.1 Section 1. Response

The Group responds to requests for SAR operations received from responsible agencies with the permissions of the KCSD and with a mission number from the OES. When a request is not initiated directly by such agencies, a Leader shall notify the KCSD cognizant authority at the onset of the operation and proceed only when an OES number is obtained.

2.2.8.2 Section 2. Operation Leaders

A Leader can accept responsibility for any SAR operation and become an Operation Leader (OL). The OL shall direct the Group's portion of an operation and commit authorized Group resources as necessary. The OL shall designate the members on the operation to be the field team leaders that lead special field assignments.

2.2.8.3 Section 3. Operation Procedures

Operations procedures are listed in the Group's Manual. The Leaders shall review and update operations procedures as required to ensure that they conform to the Joint Operations Procedures of the CRMRA.

2.2.8.4 Section 4. Responsibilities

The OL and the field team leaders shall expect and receive the complete cooperation of the Group members throughout an operation. Any member not willing to accept the authority of the leaders involved should so state prior to deployment into the field. The OL shall resolve the difficulty or terminate the member's participation in the operation. This does not preclude members from exercising final authority over matters that concern their personal safety. Spouses, children, and friends of members and other non-members shall not be allowed on any Group operation or training activity but are welcome at meetings and social gatherings. Being under the influence of alcohol or any controlled substances (drugs) precludes a member from participation in any operation.



2.2.8.5 Section 5. Leader-Coordinator meeting

The Leader at the top of the current Call Roster is responsible for scheduling the annual Leader-Coordinator meeting and for preparing the Duty Roster at the meeting. This meeting should take place in early April to discuss items of interest and to assign Leaders for the summer class trips.

2.2.9 Article IX. Group Activity Leadership

On any Group activity, the highest listed field member on the current Call Roster shall be in charge unless other arrangements have been made in advance.

2.2.10 Article X. Meetings

2.2.10.1 Section 1. Business Meetings

Business meetings of the Group shall be held monthly at a time and place set by the President and approved by the membership.

2.2.10.2 Section 2. Special Meetings

Special meetings of the Group may be called by the President or upon request by five members setting forth the reasons for the meeting.

2.2.10.3 Section 3. Quorum

One-third of the membership, one of whom is an officer, shall constitute a quorum to conduct Group business.

2.2.10.4 Section 4. Voting

Proxy and absentee voting shall not be allowed in any matter of Group business.

2.2.10.5 Section 5. Conduct of Meetings

Robert's Rules of Order shall govern the conduct of all meetings.

2.2.11 Article XI. Amendments

These Bylaws may be amended when the proposed amendment is reviewed by the Board, presented to the Group membership at least two weeks before a scheduled meeting, and approved by two-thirds majority vote of the members present and voting at the meeting.



2.3 Appendix to Bylaws

2.3.1 Member Qualifications

An **Applicant** is a prospective member who is not eligible to go on operations but is actively pursuing the KCSO approval requirements (physical examination, background investigation, fingerprinting, swearing into KCSO volunteer services for SAR). Applicants are not members, do not vote, and do not hold office. Applicants who have not been approved by the KCSO within six months from the date they are approved for their physical examination will generally be dropped from consideration for membership in the Group, although that action may be deferred for a good reason.

A **Trainee** is a new member who is not eligible to go on operations but is actively acquiring the necessary equipment and learning the minimum skills for operational participation. Trainees do not vote and do not hold office. Trainees who have not advanced to one of the other membership categories within six months will generally be dropped from the Group, although that action may be deferred for good reason.

A **Support member** must possess proper equipment to camp at a remote base camp and have the physical conditioning to spend a long day in the field. A Support member must have demonstrated the ability to help on non-technical operations. Participation in at least one scheduled Group overnight trip is required before a Trainee can become a Support member. The Rescue Qualifications checklist, consisting of ten skill categories, is provided to guide the progress of Support members working to attain Rescue or Technical status.

A **Rescue member** is a skilled mountaineer who is expected to assist in the field on any operation for which the Group is called. A Rescue member must be competent in roughly half of the first nine skill categories on the Technical Qualifications checklist. The tenth category is winter and is optional for both Rescue and Technical categories. While a considerable variation of the mix of skills is permitted, physical condition, equipment, First Aid, and participation are considered essential.

A **Technical member** is experienced and capable in a broad range of mountaineering and SAR skills. A Technical member must be competent in all the first nine skill categories. In addition to the skills mentioned above for Rescue, technical climbing and rescue, search and tracking, maps and route finding, helicopter techniques, and organization and leadership are required. Although winter is optional, it is strongly encouraged because the Group is expected to accomplish SAR operations in winter conditions.

A **Coordinator** handles the callout and coordination of operations. The Coordinator must understand the Group's operational procedures and interface with the OL, the KCSO, and the requesting agency.

A **Special Skills** member possesses some skill deemed important to the Group by the QC.

The **inactive category** is not a permanent category for Group members. The inactive category allows for interruption of active involvement and immediate return to one of the membership categories for justifiable reasons. The QC determines if and when a member can go into the inactive category and the length of time the member is allowed to remain in the inactive category. Inactive members remain members of the Group.

An annual requalification is conducted to ascertain which members have kept their skills and participation current. The QC can make some allowances, but ultimately, the Call Roster must be an accurate reflection of a member's ability to operate in the field. The ability to climb well and knowledge of the local mountains are of prime importance to the Group. Every member should do some class 4 or 5 rock climbing and several strenuous mountain climbs each year.

Participation on schedule Group trips is particularly encouraged since climbing with other members contributes to an awareness of each other's strengths and limitations and enables more effective cooperation on searches and rescues.



The QC must use subjective judgments as well as their checklist in classifying members.

Basically, the Group needs experienced mountaineers with mature judgement and demonstrated rescue skills.

It can also use people with special skills who do not have the time or interest to become (or remain) competent in all the required skills. Members with questions about their status or training needs should ask any member of the QC for counsel and request needed practices or courses from the Training Committee.

2.3.2 Rosters

The Call Roster lists Group members by category-Leader, Coordinator, Technical, Rescue, Support, Trainee, and Special Skills-and indicates their special qualifications and abilities. It also lists Applicants and Inactive members and indicates how to contact the Group.

The Duty Roster, prepared every year by the Leader the top of the Call Roster (if deemed necessary), assigns duty weekends between Memorial Day and Labor DAY to all the Leaders to ensure that the Group has the appropriate leadership for operations as they arise.