

# MAINE ASSOCIATION FOR SEARCH AND RESCUE

## MASAR Dog Team Certification Overview

In 1993 the Maine Association for Search and Rescue began developing certification standards for dog teams to provide search management in Maine with a method to determine their capabilities. The dog team certification standards and related documents MASAR has created to date are described below:

### **Search Dog Teams**

For evaluation of the capabilities of search dogs and their handlers, MASAR has put into place a **Basic Search Dog Certification Standard**. It defines the requirements for certification and testing of search dog teams and includes the basic tests all dog teams must pass before requesting evaluation of advanced skills. The **Basic Search Dog Certification Test Form** is provided to document testing of the basic obedience and social skills listed in the standard.

The basic dog standard is augmented by eight appendices. The first, **Appendix A - Grandfathering of Dog Teams**, defines the method by which operational dog teams could be certified when the standard was originally accepted without going through the entire initial certification procedure. The balance of the appendices define the requirements and testing methods for certification of dog teams for specific search types. **Appendix B - Air Scent for Wilderness Search** lists the tests which must be passed for a team to be certified for air scent searching in a wilderness environment. To be certified in basic and advanced tracking and trailing abilities, **Appendix C - Basic Tracking & Trailing Tests** and **Appendix D - Advanced Tracking & Trailing Tests** list the required skills. A dog team's skills in water search can be evaluated using **Appendix E - Air Scent Water Search Tests**. Dog teams that wish to be certified in article detection can be evaluated using the tests listed in **Appendix F - Wilderness Article Search & Clue Detection Tests**. To be certified for human remains detection in a non-wilderness environment, **Appendix G - Non-Wilderness Land Human Remains Detection**, defines the skills required and testing methods. **Appendix H - Wilderness Land Human Remains Detection**, lists the requisite skills and tests for that certification.

Note that for each of the testing appendices an evaluation form is provided, i.e. **Appendix B - Search Test Form**, etc.