

March 6, 2013

Lt. Alan Siddoway  
Summit County Sheriff's Office  
Search & Rescue  
6300 N Silvercreek Drive  
Park City, UT 84098

Dear Lt. Siddoway,

Thanks to you and your team, I am alive to write this letter. Please share it with your search and rescue unit. I am sure that your unit has many recreational snowmobilers. I hope none of them are ever in a predicament like we were. However, if they do find themselves in such a place, I hope a team as good as yours responds.

March 2, 2013 – The day began as usual with my best friend, Larry and I going out for what was to be a great snowmobile ride. It had snowed about 6 inches and a fresh layer covered everything. The ride was one that we had taken hundreds of times over the past 45 years. There was fresh powder and no tracks anywhere. It was a warm, sunny day. The snow was deep soft powder and a little challenging for riding, but we had ridden in much worse conditions.

We took off and made it to the top of Table Top which is located on top of Elizabeth. As we normally do, we dropped in and went looking for what we call Cable Gate Road. When you take that road, it brings you out on Elizabeth Road. After about a half hour, we realized that we were in the wrong meadow so we agreed to turn back and get back up on Table Top. After getting stuck a couple of times, something (probably a regulator) malfunctioned on my sled and when I pulled the starter rope, a puff of smoke came out and it would not start. At this point, we were forced to ride double and abandon my sled. Because of the extra weight and soft snow conditions, we kept getting stuck. Eventually, Larry's sled became completely disabled and we were stranded. It was about 5:30 p.m. A sickening feeling came over both of us. We knew the danger of our situation. The temperature was dropping and the wind was blowing. The snow was like sugar and would not pack enough to dig a shelter. We both were imagining all kinds of scenarios and outcomes, including the worst. We needed help. What if we couldn't contact anyone? What if no one missed us? What if . . . .?

We had a radio and so we tried calling friends at numerous cabins in Uintah Lands. We were unable to get any response. Because we are members of the Bountiful Jeep Posse Search and Rescue, our radio had the capability of calling on various frequencies. After several attempts, we were able to contact the Summit County Sheriff dispatch center. I told them that we were stranded near Lizzie Lake – two riders with two sleds down. The dispatcher replied that they would get teams on the move. To save our radio battery, we explained that we were going to turn off the radio and would call back about 30-45 minutes later. We managed to make our way (crawling through the waist-deep powder) about 300 yards to the trees where we dug out what few branches we could find to start a fire. We didn't know how long the wood was going to last.

When we called 45 minutes later, dispatch informed us that the summit county search and rescue was in route. And then we began the waiting game.

At around 8:30 p.m. we turned the radio back on and were able to contact the search team. They were at the Bear River Service parking lot and were getting ready to head up to get us. Wow! That was a fast response time! We turned our radio back off and kept each other company with small talk while we waited. We wondered what kind of riders the team had and what type of equipment they had. We laughed because we have been on a lot of searches, never the object of a search. We both agreed that this team certainly must be better than we were if they were coming to rescue us!

About 40 minutes later, we heard sleds coming up Lizzie Road. Oh man! Was that ever a sweet sound! After two or three radio communications, they found us. The sight of those headlights coming towards us was such a relief! The team members reached us and asked if we were alright. They took Larry to his sled and were able to get it back up and running. They came back and one member (Ronnie?) told me to get on the back of the Scandia. He told me to hang on, he pushed the throttle, and out of the snow we flew.

We got back down to the parking lot around 11:30 p.m. That is where we met up with you, Alan, and were able to give you the information needed for your report.

Larry and I have been members of the Bountiful Jeep Posse Search and Rescue for a long time - Larry since 1963 and me since 1969. We have gone on numerous searches ourselves. We have always wondered what it would be like to be on the other end of a search. Now we know and we have a greater appreciation for what all search and rescue units do. And a better understanding of what those being rescued feel.

Alan, you and your team did one hell of a great job - fast response time and a quick recovery! Larry and I owe you our lives. The situation that we were in could have had a much different outcome and we will be forever grateful that you are all so well trained and equipped.

We know that search and rescue units are made possible by the great volunteers who give of their time, talents, and use of their own equipment. As a thank you, we hope you will accept our small donation to your organization to help enable you to continue what you do. Please thank the team for its efforts, dedication and commitment.

Again, Larry and I are truly indebted to the Summit County Sheriff's Search and Rescue. What a fantastic team!

Sincerely,

  
Steve

  
Larry