



## **Allegany County District IV Fire Departments and NYSDEC Conduct a Missing Person Drill at Phillips Creek State Forest**

November 14, 2005



Members of Alfred Station Fire Company, A.E. Crandall Hook & Ladder, Almond and Andover Fire Departments joined with the DEC to conduct a search and rescue training evolution at Phillips Creek State Forest on Route 244.

Leaders developed a training scenario wherein a search would be conducted to find a reportedly missing hunter who failed to meet his hunting partner at a predetermined place and time. Potential clues as to the whereabouts of the hunter were scattered throughout the search area.

Calling upon the resources of the local fire companies the DEC set up an incident command post at the State Forest parking area. At the IC briefing accountability information was recorded for each participating member, the subject's information and description was disseminated to all personnel and search teams and criteria were defined.

Search and Rescue Teams divided and Crew Bosses led the teams to their respective search quadrants to begin searching for clues and the missing person.

A SAR Team equipped with a thermal imaging camera supplied by the Alfred Station Fire Company initiated a search to find the missing person using the camera's infrared heat sensing technology and, when possible, transmitted data back to the monitor on Alfred Station's Rescue Truck which was manned by Alfred Station Fire Company Chief Gerri VanTreese and District IV Coordinator David Wallace (pictured below).



The missing hunter (a live volunteer from the Alfred Station Fire Company) was located as were the majority of the clues placed to help locate the subject.

SAR personnel performed an on site evaluation of the subjects overall condition and passed that assessment and the subjects location along to a Medical and Extraction Team at the IC.

The subject was uninjured and able to walk out without assistance. Had the subject required treatment the extraction team would have hiked to the victim's location for treatment and extraction.

*Above: When conditions allowed – the Thermal Imaging Camera was able to transmit real-time images from the scene to the IC monitor in Alfred Stations Rescue Truck.*

The drill was considered a great success and these 'real-life' scenarios lend authenticity to the evolution which is invaluable for all personnel involved in these training evolutions. Special thanks to the NYSDEC and SAR Teams as well as all the participating fire companies for their assistance and hard work.

Participating Fire Companies:

Alfred Station Fire Company

A.E. Crandall Hook & Ladder Company

Almond Fire Company

Andover Fire Company