

Fire Department Report  
August 2022

8/3: Lifeflight training, with classroom and setting up landing zone at airport. This was a great refresher for the aged and important training for the newest members. We learned that Lifeflight is now based 30-40 minutes from Madeline Island, compared to the 60-70 minutes it was previously. This alone reasons that we should utilize a landing zone on the island more, especially because the Bayfield landing zone has switched to "the soccer field." I took a journey to field and, in our opinion, if we have a serious call on Madeline with serious injuries or life-threatening issues, calling the helicopter to "the soccer field" would prolong getting patients to the higher level of care. Let's pick on the vehicle extrication earlier this summer: the helicopter would have been at the airport with paramedics happily waiting. If the timing is logical to avoid loading in the ambulance, onto the ferry, then way up the hill in Bayfield to the soccer field, we need to do just that. We have the perfect landing zone at the airport and have always been fully trained for emergency landing zone set-up and safety. The pilots and paramedics share the same thoughts. Superb training event and I really thank everyone who did participate.

We were toned out to 3 false alarm fire calls by smoke alarm companies in the month of August. False alarms are always good response training.

8/7: Fire and EMS toned out for missing swimmer at Big Bay State Park. This was a long and hard call for everyone involved. With many agencies involved, we searched the last know location for a person who jumped from "the eagle's nest," a popular spot for many years for jumping into Lake Superior. On this day, the waves where very tall, making it impossible for divers and for that matter the search boats from many agencies: Coast Guard, parks department, Bayfield auxiliary. When the sun was setting, we made the decision to suspend the search to the following morning. We contacted Tom Crossman and his recovery agency to bring his underwater technology to the search. This paid off, as we recovered the deceased swimmer with minimal people in the water. Friends and family of this person had been set up at the fire hall waiting for updates. When the news came of the recovery, they were both sad and also relieved to have some closure without an extended search.

Our drone program was utilized during this call, and we can see how important technology is to calls of this nature.

Firefighters Zach Montagne, Lucas Montagne, Kyle Kruchten, and Pete Wiggins, led by Zach Montagne, will be the Madeline Island dive crew; they are already in training. For many years, we have been talking about our own emergency response dive team and, thanks to these members, it's becoming a reality. We have lots of work ahead to finalize our near shore rescue program, but we have come leaps and bounds this year.

Be safe,  
Chief Reichkitzer

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