

October 2017

# Meeting Minutes, October 2017

National Smokejumper Association Board of Directors

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NSA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING – October 19-20, 2016  
Residence Inn – Tukwilla, WA

October 19, 2016

- Call to order, introductions, approval of the agenda – Cherry/Sheley  
-Jim kicked off the meeting with brief opening remarks. Agenda was quickly approved. Introductions were made around the room. Chuck gave a little more info on Mike McMillan and Bethany Hannah and their reasons for attendance.
- Approval of previous meeting minutes – Boatner  
-Approved
- Scholarship program update with review of applicant criteria – Egan  
-Six recipients were selected for \$1,000 scholarships in 2016. They were listed in the last Smokejumper magazine. The committee used their scoring matrix for the first time, and it was an effective tool. Terry proposed considering raising the amount of the tuition because of the high costs of tuition. We had a good conversation about whether to weight part-time and full-time students differently, about whether to broaden the applicant pool to include the grandchildren of members, and about how much funding we have. Motion made by Chuck to include grandchildren as immediate family members and therefore eligible for scholarships. Seconded by McDaniel. Last year, we excluded grandchildren so there was debate about changing back so quickly. We also discussed who our constituents are, our members who are mostly older and no longer jumping, or the current jump community. Motion carried 7 to 3. Terry Egan made a motion to change amount of scholarships from \$1000 to \$2000. Seconded and passed. We agreed that we will offer up to 6 \$2,000 scholarships in 2017. Whether we give all 6 or less is left up to the judgement of the scholarship committee.
- Report on 2015 Trails Program - Fred Cooper  
-Fred sent out a report. He was not in attendance. The Trails Committee is meeting in November and will forward their final report when it is complete. The National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance is meeting at the same time in Missoula and Mike Overby is going to attend, if he can, and try to get better information on how to apply for grants for trail work. Mike applied for a grant from this organization and it wasn't successful, so he's trying to figure out how to improve our applications. Another potential source of funding is the PNW USFS Retirees. The "Old Smokeys" give grant money every year for trails work in the PNW.
- The Smokey Generation website and photo gallery – Bethany Hannah  
-Bethany started her website, "The Smokey Generation" as part of her master's thesis, as a way to collect stories and oral history from wildland firefighters. She attended last year's reunion and did some interviews with jumpers in attendance. Bethany showed us her short video about her smokejumper interview project and her photo archive project. Smokejumper photos are separated by decade, but can be called up by jump base, as well. Bethany talked about feedback she's received from viewers and the capability to reach out and pull in historical photos and videos. There are some legalities that need to be observed in posting photos. Mike McMillan talked about the concerns related to private photos taken by

government employees on duty and the arguments about whether those photos are public domain or not. He also talked about the name "The Smokey Generation" and how it resonates more strongly with FS firefighters versus other agencies. We also talked about different formats for submitting photos. One of the barriers to submissions has been the request/desire to have submitters supplement each photo with basic info about who, what, where, when. What does Bethany need from us to keep this going? Key needs are more photo submissions and continued funding support. We paid for a high quality scanner that can do photos or slides. We also funded \$1000 for expenses associated with this project. We all agree that this is a very valuable project and we want to support it. Chuck and Bethany will set up a budget proposal and bring it to the Executive Committee. Mike Overby and Bethany will work on getting an email blast out on the project and the need for submissions.

- Traveling Smokejumper display – Sheley

Our objective is to wave the flag and educate the public about smokejumpers. First location was the Mt Shasta Museum, 17,000 visitors a year. Also the World of Forestry Museum in Portland, OR, 70-80,000 visitors a year. And the High Desert Museum in Bend, 100-200,000 visitors per year. The exhibit has been there since May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016. Chuck is working with Professor Bob Bartlett, Eastern Washington U, who gave the presentation on the 555<sup>th</sup> (the Triple Nickels) at the reunion, to keep the history of smokejumpers and the 555<sup>th</sup> accurate. Chuck and Bob are doing presentations at EWU the week of October 30th about both topics and their links and one of the traveling exhibits will be there for 5 or 6 weeks. Chuck asked Dan Olsen about possible links between NSA and USFS Public Affairs. Dan Olsen spoke about Melvin Brown's grave discovery and clean-up and the ceremony and the impact on Dan and others and the possible link to the Baltimore, MD African American community. Chuck has 3 manikins and 3 exhibits.

- Membership Report – McDaniel

-From 2 days ago: 1462 jumper members of whom 106 are 1 year members, 266 are 2 year members, 414 are 5 year members, 354 are 10 year members and 324 are life members. Some of the life members are deceased. We have 151 Associate members and 21 Pilot members.

B Category: 1433 we have addresses for, but who aren't members

C Category: 2054 we have no info for

Number of members not renewing is climbing. For the quarter ending June 30-41 didn't renew, quarter ending Sept 30-27 didn't renew

- Good Samaritan Fund report – Overby

Current balance is \$32,894. Contributions in last fiscal year totaled \$7525. Donations were made to 4 different recipients totaling \$11,500. Mike believes we have a brand we don't take advantage of to raise funds for the GSF and trails. Mike has raised around \$10,000 for historic cabin restoration on the Santa Fe NF and GSF, at the Angel Fire Oktoberfest, the Fall festival plus 2 grants. He raffled a chainsaw, held a crosscut competition and raised \$1000.

He got a \$2500 donation from the owner of the Taos resort and \$4500 from a nearby molybdenum mine.

- Deputy Director of Fire & Aviation, USFS– Dan Olsen

Dan gave a summary of his history with the USFS and wildland fire, and some of his connections over the years with jumpers including having Grangeville jumpers come to the

Daniel Boone NF for burning, when he was the FMO there. The fact that the NSA is still here, still active, still engaged is impressive and he's impressed at what we are doing now to support smokejumpers.

2016 was a below average fire season, 80% of the current average. Looking forward to 2017, Dan's best estimate based on info he's seen is that it will be similar to this year. Southern California will still be dry and timber mortality in the southern Sierra will continue to be a big factor in fire occurrence. Climate change is getting more attention and fire is a very visual part of that issue. Jim asked about dealing with this issue with Congress and Dan talked about the current environment in the fire world and work on finding a fix for wildland fire funding.

Currently fire spending is 54% of the total FS budget.

Dan shared some general information on USFS smokejumping. McCall and Boise jointly ran spike bases in the Great Basin this past summer. West Yellowstone completed the ram air transition. One jumper chose to remain on a round. Redding staffed Porterfield and jumped the first fire ever on the Cleveland NF.

Future size, staffing, and funding will be static into the future.

Dan Olsen is meeting with the Smokejumper Base Managers in November. It's still important to jump 2 manners in the Bob, but the key is making good decisions on when that is the right thing to do. That decision-making needs to keep improving.

The subject of smokejumpers comes up cyclically-how should they be used, what about expense, is it still a viable program etc.

The trend is from seasonal work to more of a professional workforce. Smokejumping is still viable but needs to keep working on the future mission. Good thinkers, individual thinkers need to be focused organizationally.

Facilities maintenance issues are huge and money is limited. This is impacting smokejumping bases.

The USFS got 15 C-23 Sherpas, 10 being converted to be primarily jumpships and will replace some current contract ships, 1 for parts, 4 being stored for future use. A more unified fleet makes more sense. 7 C-130Hs from Air Force. By 2019, the plan is all 7 will be converted and gated for use as air tankers. Removable tanks, but not MAFFs, to allow for multiple use. Continued opportunity to use smokejumper Type III teams. More of that in the future and out-of-season work doing fuels.

Ram Air transition -Mike Fritzen detailed to a transition position. MSO, GAC, and WYS mostly completed. Jumpers have the choice to remain on rounds. RDD has begun transition, McCall just beginning this year. NCSB and RAC preparing.

Injury data for this year not completed.

Life First-emphasis on risk analysis and mitigation. Some think this may have reduced overall smj use, but the point is to consider risks versus benefits in each situation and make decisions based on that specific analysis.

Planning should be done in advance about how to make rapid decisions on when and where and under what conditions to suppress fires versus some other action.

Why is the smokejumper program managed under Aviation instead of Fire Operations? Dan asked that same question recently and there have been discussions about whether a change should be considered. The history is that the FS Smokejumper Coordinator position was based in Aviation because the position's focus was primarily on aviation platforms and aviation related equipment. The key is that the system is in place that allows daily national and regional operational coordination of smokejumper placement and use. Dan says that the current Smokejumper Coordinator (Roger Staats) works daily with NICC and NMAC to ensure this interaction is happening.

Dan is interested in exploring ways for groups like NSA to help the USFS tell the smokejumper/wildland fire story in order to interest young people in future careers in fire. Mike McMillan brought up his idea of improving the daily smokejumper status report to include more info on what happened on individual fires-size, values at risk, accomplishments, why does it matter. Mike would call this the Smokejumper After Incident Database(SAID). Tom made the comment that Hotshots and Smokejumpers are natural allies in the fire world and should support each other. Spike bases are increasing in use and may be increasingly used in the future as a way to move jumpers to areas of need, but not at the cost of closing home bases.

- **Website Committee update – Lufkin**

-Content on the web page can become obsolete quickly and can't be changed often or easily. Larry gave a brief overview of the current status of the webpage.

- **Budget Report of 2015-16 1<sup>st</sup> quarter Budget – Finance Committee/Russ**

Larry reviewed the Treasurer's report and the balance sheets. Overall, we are healthy, but we don't have a lot of non-discretionary funds. Most of our assets are committed to specific discretionary funds like the GSF, Scholarship Fund, Trails Program, Life Member Fund. We made a profit of \$38,000 on last year's 75<sup>th</sup> reunion. We had some discussion on estimated budget figures to use for next year's budget based on last year's estimates and actuals-like income from memberships, and donations to the GSF, Scholarship, new Life Members, in both income and expense categories. These estimates were plugged into a draft budget. **Motion was made to accept this budget, seconded, and approved.**

- **Hotshot Association – Marshall Brown**

Chuck talked about the new Hotshot Association and his attempts to build a link. Marshall started firefighting in 1972 and retired as the superintendent of the Entiat Hotshots. Marshall agrees that hotshots and smokejumpers are natural allies and that there is a lot of overlap in our membership. A few years ago, a group of ex Region 5 supes started talking about a Hotshot Association. A year ago, they started getting serious about it, got their tax exempt status and elected officers. Stan Stewart is the current President. They have a website: [www.ushotshots.com](http://www.ushotshots.com). Their organizational goals are very similar to ours. Currently, they have 40 or 50 members. Over the next few years, they hope to take small steps forward. **We will continue to look for potential areas to work together and support each other and Jim Cherry offered our support into the future.**

- **Investment Committee report – Packard**

We have now successfully shifted all of our equity investments into the Vanguard Fund, and our percentages between Equity, Fixed Income, and Bond amount are in line with our investment policy, which is a 60-40 split. All of our investment deposits can now be done electronically. Current balances are:

Fixed;	\$415,114	53%
Bond;	\$51,959	6.6%
Equity;	\$317,496	40%

John asked a Vanguard Investment Councilor about future trends and got some information that may be helpful. He also said that after a month or 2, elections historically don't have long-term impacts on the stock market. John talked about impacts that Brexit may have.

- **Merchandise report-future-Sheley**

Reunion years are big merchandise years and in between it slows considerably. It's a tough way to make money and is very labor intensive. The last of the reunion merchandise has been sold and Chuck will have 2 new t-shirt designs available by January.

- **Report on Directors & Officer Liability Insurance – Cherry**

Jim Lindell had previously raised the question of whether we should have a broader liability insurance policy at a previous meeting. We had one to cover the Board's activities, and we need one that covers all of our activities, like fundraising, trails work, and reunions. Jim Cherry finally found a Farmer's Insurance agent who was willing to work with him. We now have a policy from Commercial Insurance, LLC. We now have a commercial general liability policy. Various coverages and levels are detailed in the policy. Total cost is \$667.88 per year. This coverage includes trails projects if we do something and have liability for causing an accident/damage to something or someone. This doesn't cover individual injuries on trails projects, which are covered by either the USFS under our volunteer agreements or by individual insurance coverage.

- **Wildland Firefighters Foundation on museum/interpretive center – Overby**

The future of this museum was based on acquiring land adjacent to the airport, but Burk Minor reports that he has learned that is simply not going to happen. Mike showed the website for the Forest Service Museum planned for Missoula. He also talked to the Executive Director about the current status of that museum. She invited us to hold a Board meeting in Missoula so we could get a briefing from them. They are also planning an interpretive trail from the museum location to the Missoula Jump Base and back. Larry and Chuck talked about some of the history of the NSA with this project which wasn't positive. John Berry talked about some of the history that he knows and says it is still roughly the same group of people. They are still looking for the kind of deep pockets funding they need to proceed. We had a brisk discussion/debate on what the various members of the Board think about whether we should be committed to the idea of pursuing a smokejumper museum. Most Board members don't support the idea. This led to a broader discussion on whether we need to look harder at a long term strategic plan, whether we currently have or have had a strategic plan, and some of the longer term history about the evolution of the Association and the Board. We talked about the accomplishments and growth of the NSA in recent years and new programs that have been started. A strategic plan would require more time than we normally schedule for our meetings. What are our options for pursuing this? Mike proposed sharing a model of how to proceed with strategic planning. From there we will discuss how to proceed. Mike and Terry will provide the leadership for this effort.

- **Policy, practice and accountability for fundraising projects – Board**

If any projects or fundraising are being done under the NSA name, the Board should know about it and maintain appropriate accountability. Any money taken in has to be deposited in the correct account. This is so our required non-profit reporting can be done correctly. Terry Egan wants to contact the Washington Trails Association and look at possibilities for

cooperation. Larry suggested that Terry talk to Fred Cooper and coordinate with the trails program. Terry will pursue this connection.

- Evaluation of our Facebook presence – Chris Sorensen

There is a rogue facebook page out there using our name that has been dormant for many years. Chris manages our facebook page, but most of us aren't familiar with it. Chris sent in a report on activity on our page. That page is National-Smokejumpers-Association. Bethany answered some of our questions about facebook and pulled up our page and we talked about various aspects of using and managing facebook.

October 20, 2016 – reconvene at 7:30 a.m.

- Strategic Planning-Cherry

The Executive Committee (Cherry, Lufkin, Sheley, Boatner) met briefly before 0730 to discuss a plan for addressing some Board member concerns about the need for strategic plan. Jim made a proposal that the EC, Mike Overby and Terry Egan meet one day early in Boise before our next meeting, go through the SWOT process and draft a strategic plan looking out 3 to 5 years. Key areas of emphasis need to include succession, the aging trails program, long term management of finances. This was agreed to. Mike Overby and Terry Egan will provide the leadership for this effort.

- Strategic Planning for history preservation – BOD

Chuck described our current haphazard way of collecting and storing smokejumper historical artifacts-documents, photos, newspapers, letters, and film. Old jumpers or their spouses send miscellaneous artifacts to Chuck. He stores them in a spare bedroom or boxes them up and sends them to the Mansfield Library at the University of Montana. We are not systematically cataloging, preserving or storing anything and that is something we need to work on. We will lose much of this history forever if we don't make a plan and take action now. We don't have a plan on how to accomplish this. Chuck thinks we need to find someone who can tell us how to construct a process for preserving and cataloging artifacts related to our history. Do we need an archivist? Can we get a grad student from U of M to assist? Have we contacted the History Department at the U of M? No. Have we applied for any grants? No. Chuck wants to talk to Charlie Palmer and look at ways to connect with an expert who can help us get more organized and knowledgeable about what we need to do, how we need to do it, and who will do it. In other words, we need a "history architect." He also wants to talk to Bethany about her availability to help us and discuss appropriate compensation for providing that help. Motion made, seconded and passed to have Chuck pursue this area of historical preservation and initiate conversations with Charlie and Bethany.

Scholarship Fund disbursements to date:        around \$30,000

Good Samaritan Fund disbursements to date: \$88,000

- Unfinished business

- New board member approval

**-Brief discussion of Mike McMillan's background and qualifications. Motion made, seconded and passed unanimously to add Mike to the Board.**

**-Fred approached John Berry and asked him if he was interested in being on the Board and after some reflection, John said yes. John started as an ODF firefighter, paid his way through college as a Redmond jumper and graduated with a degree in hydrology from Oregon State University. John worked as an FS hydrologist in Wisconsin and Idaho, then as an Assistant District Ranger and District Ranger in Oregon, and Forest Supervisor on the El Dorado NF in California. Throughout his career, John continued to fight fire, eventually becoming a member of Incident Management Teams qualified as Division Supervisor and Air Attack. John helped develop the process for Large Fire Cost Reviews and participated in many. He participated on fatality and near miss incident investigations. He has been involved in USFS retiree organizations, including being a past President of the Old Smokeys. He has the time and interest to participate actively on the Board. Motion made, seconded and passed to add John to the BOD Jim Cherry talked about focusing on developing new partnerships. Bill Derr and John Berry will focus on this area and begin working on developing partnerships.**

○ **Next meeting**

**In Boise. The Executive Committee, Terry and Mike will meet on March 7<sup>th</sup> 0800-1700, the regular Board meeting will be the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, finish by 0930 on the 9<sup>th</sup>. Chuck will contact the WFFF. The social will be at 1800 on the 8<sup>th</sup> at the WFFF. Possible invitees were discussed and Board members identified to make invitations.**

○ **Evaluation of meeting and travel/lodging vouchers**

**General positive feedback on the quality of the meeting. A few areas for improvement-have regular breaks to allow a stretch and a breather, more upfront summaries by email from presenters, a little tighter discipline on length of discussion about issues and move to motions, votes, and resolution/decision.**

**Boatner will update our NSA briefing paper and distribute to current Base Managers and members of the Board. We need to continue to look at our opportunities to make personal visits to jump bases to brief current jumpers on NSA programs**

○ **Finished meeting and adjourned at 0930.**

**In Attendance: John McDaniel, Mike Overby, Larry Lufkin, Jim Cherry, John Packard, Mike McMillan, Chuck Sheley, Charlotte Larson, Bill Derr, Rich Grandalski, Tony Peiffer, Dan Olsen, Bethany Hannah, John Berry, Terry Egan, Marshall Brown, Tom Boatner**