

March 2014

## Meeting Minutes, March 2014

National Smokejumper Association Board of Directors

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National Smokejumper Association  
Board of Director Meeting Agenda  
March 19-20, 2014  
Meeting location - Wildland Firefighters Foundation  
Boise, Idaho

Call to order/Introductions/ Orientation to site/  
Approval of agenda

Sheley

-Our BOD meeting was held at the Wildland Firefighter Foundation next to the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, ID. We appreciate the WLFF's generosity in hosting our meeting, and in all of their work supporting wildland firefighters. This includes significant support to the jump bases and families of the 2 smokejumpers killed in the line of duty last year.

Minutes of prior meeting and intervening BOD actions Boatner

-Last meeting's minutes were reviewed and approved.

Work on historical materials

Cooper/Driscoll

-Larry Longley retired as the NSA Historian. Fred had expressed an interest in taking over, but was too committed to the trails program. He had feelers out for someone who might be interested and heard John Driscoll's name from Jim Phillips as a potential candidate and they have had some discussions. **There is still no cohesive mission or purpose described anywhere for this historian position.** John, like Fred, has a love of history, and has done previous work recording the oral history of old miners in Butte, MT. What John proposed to the Montana Committee for the Humanities was to make a training video about how to interview old smokejumpers, but he encountered barriers with old jumper's reluctance to talk about CIA stuff. He talked about some of his efforts to do oral history interviews and get them archived at the University of Montana Mansfield Library. He has done 15 video interviews, has 3 more currently in progress, and is planning to do 22 more. He is trying to coordinate with the CIA and there has actually been some interest there in this part of the Agency's history. There are Freedom of Information Act barriers to getting information from the CIA about smokejumpers who worked for the CIA. He brought the film "Storm Soldiers" to our meeting as an example of a possible format to follow. Annie Henshaw is an oral historian in Helena working on her PhD about smokejumping. She has interviewed 9 members of the Triple Nickle. She also wants to interview women smokejumpers. She is considering setting up at this summer's reunion to conduct additional interviews with older jumpers. Conscientious Objectors have done their own video of interviews called "Leap of Faith." John brought a copy. There is possible grant money available from the state of Montana. John is requesting support from the NSA to continue and finish his planned interviews.

**Motion made: 1) BOD endorses and supports John in continuing his planned interviews for the "There I Was" project and 2) BOD approves sufficient funding for these interviews, up to \$1500. 3) At our October meeting, John will come back with an update. This passed unanimously.**

**What is the plan for additional history gathering/oral history interviews at the reunion?  
Fred will check on the status of this with the Reunion Committee and report back to the  
BOD.**

Update on exhibit at the Evergreen Museum

McKean & Marker

-Bob and John visited the museum to check on the status of the smokejumper exhibit. It is not in as prominent a spot as it used to be. Bob felt like it had been shoved out of the way back in a corner. It is showing signs of wear and needs some maintenance and cleaning to spruce it up and make it more eye-catching. There are some issues with Evergreen Aviation's demise and its creditors claiming some museum items may be in play to resolve debts. They weren't able to talk to the gift store manager about selling smokejumper items there. Chuck has historically had no luck dealing with the merchandising people there. The display contains a fully dressed manikin, but no parachute. There is a good video. The original display was primarily set up by Bill Moody and Steve Smith. The museum was dedicated in 2004. NSA donated \$10,000 and Chuck Sheley donated an additional \$6,000. The future of the museum is a little uncertain so there are questions about what our future involvement should be. The museum gets a lot of traffic. **Bob will talk to John and they will make a return visit and ask some questions of the museum curator about cleaning up and improving the exhibit. They will get some details about who is responsible for what work, and costs between the museum and NSA, and come up with a proposed plan for our fall meeting.**

Farm Bill provisions affecting the USFS

Cooper

-Stewardship Contracting- this was a temporary test program to set up contracts with private businesses to accomplish various work on USFS land. The new Farm Bill makes this a permanent program. The bill also limits opportunities for litigation that prevents work on USFS land. There is also new legislation being considered on better ways to fund large fire costs.

Update on request for Database for health research project Sheley

-We gave approval for the use of our database by the USFS Missoula Technology and Development Center (MTDC). So far, the project is still in the planning process.

Status of Trademark Registration

Hurlbutt

-Guy recently completed the process to renew our trademark for another 5 years.

Treasurer's Report/FY 2013-14 Budget Review

Dayton

-the Board approved a new Investment Policy last year and this was followed by opening a Vanguard account and beginning to shift investment funds there. Performance numbers have been very good, primarily because the market has been doing well. John Helmer continues to liquidate previous stock investments, and the proceeds are shifted into Vanguard. Allocation percentages between fixed income and equity are set by the Investment Policy, based on long term risk management and current non-profit practices. We are shifting \$12,500 a month until we meet agreed asset allocations. Current returns on fixed income are extremely

low. The BOD can reconsider allocations and percentages as we see fit, and as our experts on the Investment Committee (IC) council and advise. The IC will keep the BOD updated at our biannual meetings on any changes recommended or required. The current IC is John Packard and Bob Dayton. We need to add another member to the IC to replace John Helmer. **Motion made and passed to add 2 new members to IC: Bob McKean and Gary Baker.**

Our MT Community Foundation Endowment is currently around \$15,000. Another \$15,000 is earmarked in deferred, planned gifts that will eventually become part of our endowment.

The plan between John Helmer and Bob Dayton is to try to move most of the remaining stock investments into Vanguard over the next 6 to 9 months.

We're still looking for some simplification and streamlining of our overall budget reports, and some of the individual categories of funds, i.e., the Good Samaritan Fund, website maintenance and development, and scholarships. **The Trails program made contributions of \$10,000 to the Scholarship fund and \$6,000 to the GSF out of their accumulated funds.** The BOD is extremely grateful for the Trails Program's willingness to make these generous donations. This reflects years of responsible money management on the part of the Trails Program that benefits the entire membership of the NSA and the entire smokejumper community.

For a number of our accounts, Mike Overby suggests that we need more detail on sources of income and sources of expenditures. For instance, for the GSF, identify the 2 or 3 main areas of income-individual checks, fund raisers, etc. and the main receivers of donations. This information needs to be shared at every BOD meeting. **Chuck will forward his monthly report to Mike. He will summarize it for us.**

We also got a recent \$5,000 donation from Vanguard. It's unclear whether this came from an anonymous donor or from the Vanguard Group. **(Vanguard Charitable on recommendation of account advisor who wishes to remain anonymous)**

Bob is still working with Brent to build a proposed budget. Ideally, that will be ready for dissemination to the Board in the next few weeks.

There was some discussion about merchandise income and expenses and differences there, but the end result is that we trust Chuck to manage this program and make money.

### **Magazine/Merchandise Report & Progress report on staff position**

**Sheley**

-Chuck gave an update on some of his merchandising plans for the reunion.

Chuck is working with Davis Perkins, smokejumper artist, on an original painting to be sold at the reunion. He is also planning on t-shirts, caps, knives, and Challenge Coins, as well as Roger Savage's directory of smokejumpers.

The most recent magazine was a memorial to Mark Urban, the Boise jumper killed last fall. Chuck has had great help from Johnnie (JOHNNY)Kirkley in managing photos. The upcoming July issue focuses on the smokejumper-Air America-CIA connection. He will have a flyer on

Patrick Lee's novel, Kickers, in that issue. Chuck described the thumb drive he's selling that has all of the newsletters going back to 1993 and everything the NSA has published.

Wildland Fire Fighters Foundation

Burk Minor

-Burk talked the mission of the WLFF and some of the benefits that firefighters get. For the 19 Yarnell fatalities this past summer, half were City firefighters (receiving lifetime benefits), half were wildland, no benefits. There are big differences between feds, contractors in benefits for fallen firefighters. The Public Safety Officers Benefit for federal firefighters is currently \$318,000. The WLFF is trying to address this legislatively, so that contractors and their families have some support. They also step in to help families in this predicament and to help injured firefighters with Workman's comp problems. WLFF supports every kind of wildland firefighter, no segregation. They use their Website and Facebook to help with education, support, and fundraising. The WLFF is part of the Combined Federal Campaign. Their CFC number is #12544. Their 52 Club encourages people to donate a dollar a week to support the WLFF, or \$52 a year. The 52 Club has a gold list-to-list organization where 75% of better of membership joins. **The BOD agrees to all individually join the 52 club to show our support for the WLFF's mission. We will send checks to Chuck and he will send in one big check to WLFF. He will also contact members of the BOD who weren't at this meeting.**  
**START HERE**

Updates on Current Issues in smokejumper and fire management

Tim DeHaas (USFS) Sean Cross and Todd Johnson (BLM)

-Tim handed out the 2013 USFS National Smokejumper Report as well as the Smokejumper Ram Air transition update briefing paper. The FS had 297 total jumpers last year and that should be about the same this year. The USFS has 7 agency aircraft currently, contracts 5, and shares 1 with BLM, Alaska. The USFS is acquiring 15 C-23B+ aircraft (Sherpas) from DOD this year. There are 2 more years of service left on the remaining DC-3. The Ram Air parachute will continue to be used by 43 Region 1 jumpers. Twelve more R-1 jumpers will be trained this year. The overall ram air injury rate is .05, the round injury rate is .1. This is nationwide, regardless of agency or terrain. The final decision about whether to transition to ram airs has not been made. They sent out a survey to current jumpers about this transition. A slight majority favored transitioning to ram airs. The USFS is doing a comparison of the relative efficiencies and costs of aerial delivered firefighters; helitack, rappel, and smokejumper. This is a 2 year project so far. In regards to the relative costs of smokejumpers versus helitack, smokejumpers are cheaper because fixed wing are cheaper than helicopters, faster, and there are fewer overall platforms needed to service the same amount of geographic area, and serve a larger workforce.

-Todd started with his thanks to the NSA from the Boise base for our support last fall. Hector Madrid has moved to New Mexico as the BLM's State FMO. Jim Raudenbush has replaced him as the Base Manager in Boise. Headcounts for BLM are 76 in Boise and 64 in Alaska. BLM has 3 aircraft up north and 3 in the Great Basin. BLM continues to support the USFS with Ram Air training, but the role is diminishing as the USFS gains experience and takes over. Todd talked about some advanced wireless intercom technology for use by spotters in the back of the airplane. Todd also talked about how the Boise base uses numerous spike bases to increase their mobility, area covered, and service to customers.

-Sean Cross described his job and his oversight responsibility for BLM Fire Operations. Sean thinks the relationship between USFS and BLM smokejumper programs is as strong as he's ever seen it. The ram air issue is politically, practically, and technically complicated. BLM is looking at RADS, rope assisted deployment system, and its potential risks and rewards. Sean talked about the complex environment they are working in, tactically and strategically, and his responsibility to assess and manage risk and help smokejumpers and other firefighters focus on their work. Sean talked about the relative mix of hotshots, helitack, engines, and smokejumpers in the BLM and USFS and some of the efforts to devise effective planning processes to create the most effective overall mix of resources. The smokejumper program supplies a reserve of senior fire leadership for the BLM's fire program and overall has strong support from BLM senior management.

Bob McKean: Is there anything the NSA should be doing that we are not, from your perspective? Sean's answer is that the current work NSA is doing to support smokejumpers and their families seems right on the mark. Share your opinion about current issues, but respect the complicated political world we are operating in and make sure that what you are doing isn't counterproductive. Tim agreed with this assessment.

The BOD expressed its appreciation to Tim, Sean, and Todd for their continued willingness to meet with us and give us current information on how their programs and the larger fire management world are developing.

### **2015 Reunion progress report**

Cooper

-Jim Phillips has his team together. Most of the activities are at the University of Montana, July 17, 18, 19, 2015. This reunion will celebrate the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first fire jump. Friday is a beer and barbecue party on the University Oval with a bluegrass band, Saturday is tours and activities and a banquet at Adams Center, Sunday is a Memorial Service and Brunch. They are setting up hotel/lodging deals. They've applied for an economic grant from the City of Missoula. The registration fee will be in the neighborhood of \$150 which will include all meals. **The target for attendees is 1200 people.** There is a website established. Banquet speakers will be the Regional Forester and John McLean. There will be a silent auction. We asked about requests for donations for the auction and how requests for auction items will be disseminated.

### **Membership Report**

Sheley

-John McDaniel couldn't make this meeting, so Chuck relayed his report. We are holding steady in terms of overall membership numbers. John is working very hard at this, sending multiple cards to members as their renewals come due, and personal letters to people whose membership has lapsed. Chuck's perception is that we are doing well considering the overall numbers.

### **Report on Pilot data collection**

Larson

-Charlotte passed out copies of the accumulated smokejumper pilot data base and asked for any additions or corrections. How can we incorporate this information into our

database? **Roger and Chuck will talk about some ideas about how to do this and coordinate with Charlotte.**

Special recognition

Sheley

-Guy Hurlbutt's last meeting on the Board will be in Seattle. He has been a great Director and we are grateful for all of his work. Guy has generously agreed to continue to provide legal counsel as needed to the Board.

Recess for social evening - Wildland Firefighters Foundation –the NSA organized a pizza and beer social. Approximately 60 people attended including a number of current Boise Smokejumpers.

Trails Program update

Cooper

-Fred introduced Eric Melson of the Selway-Bitterroot Foundation. This Foundation now includes the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness. Since 2005 it has been called the Selway Bitterroot Frank Church Foundation. Our Trails Program has worked with Eric and this Foundation since 2009. The Selway Bitterroot is 1.3 million acres in size and is one of the original 1964 Wilderness areas. So this is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this Wilderness as well as the Wilderness Act. When the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness was added to the Foundations name and responsibility, the area of total wilderness is 4 million acres. The Selway Bitterroot and Frank Church are separated only by the Magruder Road and Corridor. The Foundation has organized \$3 million of in kind labor and volunteer work in the past 6 years. They currently have 1000 people on their mailing list and 300 paying members. Most of their funding comes from Federal RAC (Resource Advisory Council) funds, which are Title 2 funds. This is annual money so its availability and bureaucratic requirements can change from year to year. Additional funding comes from the National Forest Foundation. The Foundation is financially supporting 2 NSA Trails Program this summer, one on the Clearwater River and one at Middle Fork Peak. Their website is [www.selwaybitterroot.org](http://www.selwaybitterroot.org). They could use help from us in identifying people that can help sharpen crosscut saws, look for opportunities for financial support and join the Foundation.

Fred handed out an NSA Trails Program Update and reviewed it with us. Twenty projects are scheduled for 2014 with a mixture of skill and ability levels. Eighteen projects are with the Forest Service and 2 with the National Park Service (Rocky Mountain and Yellowstone). Succession planning is key to the future success and health of the Trails Program. We ask for \$25 per day per volunteer to cover food expense, but we negotiate that rate down when necessary. NSA members are working on a Mann Gulch Historic Preservation Draft Plan with an on sight visit this spring.

Fred also handed out the Smokejumper Trail Volunteer Services Model, a template for others to use in organizing for this kind of volunteer work.

Bob McKean is looking for ideas and ways to recruit new folks from new bases to future trails projects. Mike Overby is working on getting a project going on the Carson National Forest in northern New Mexico for jumpers from Texas and the southwest.

We had some discussion about the fact that some of the projects are pretty exclusive in terms of who can be on them and the dangers and opportunities associated with this kind of exclusivity.

## Scholarship Report

Baker

This year we will award 7 total scholarships:

- Four 1 thousand dollar NSA scholarships plus
- 1 Potter Scholarship-\$1000
- 1 Cherry scholarship-\$500
- 1 Maypole scholarship-\$250

Gary anticipates around a dozen applications. Last year, we had very qualified applicants-nine applicants and 3scholarships were awarded. Gary talked about the support from Major Boddicker in Ft. Collins, CO and George Gowen in New York City in presenting 2 of our scholarships. Our current rules require a college GPA, so high school seniors can't apply. We had some discussion about whether we should change this. After some discussion and debate, we decided to keep the rules the same. An applicant has to have a track record at the college level. Chuck will forward scholarship info to his base manager email list. End of application period is June 15<sup>th</sup>, winners announced by July 15<sup>th</sup>. This program is continuing to grow and we appreciate the hard work of the Scholarship Committee.

## Website Committee Report

Sheley

-The last work sprint accomplished these items:

- 1) Created a "Killed in the Line of Duty" page
- 2) Updated the pdf file on the Lifetime Members page
- 3) Updated the "Become a Smokejumper" package
- 4) Updated the Scholarships page
- 5) Made some technical changes regarding the NSA logo image

There is another Sprint of website work scheduled for this month.

Mike handed out website use stats from the month preceding this meeting. The numbers of visits and visits per day have dropped over the past 2 years. We're not sure why. Gary suggested it could partially be due to website improvements that make the overall site easier and faster to navigate. Mike made a pitch for proceeding with putting key hyper-links on our web page like the NSA Facebook page, the WLFF, the Bob Marshall Foundation, the Selway-Bitterroot Frank Church Foundation, and the individual jump base sites. **The BOD agrees that adding these hyperlinks is a high priority and we want it to be at the top of the Sprint work list.**

## Conflict of Interest Policy

Hurlbutt/BOD

-We discussed the Conflict of Interest policy drafted by Guy. Should we add a specific dollar amount to the word "substantial"? Based on Guy's input that he had followed an IRS improved template, we agreed to leave it as written. All members of the BOD need to sign the Exhibit A indicating we have received and read the Conflict of Interest Policy. Motion made and passed to accept the new policy. We discussed and considered Chuck's potential Conflict of Interest. **A motion was made and passed that the BOD does not consider Chuck's situation to be a Conflict of Interest.**

## Open positions on BOD

Sheley/BOD

**-A Motion is made and passed to add Bob McKean to the Board of Directors. Bob McKean will work with Bob Dayton to transition into filling the Treasurer position.**

Unfinished business

BOD

-Tom and Chuck gave an update on their interactions with the group of Hotshot Superintendents who are looking at forming some sort of group like ours.

-We had a brief discussion on the current status and future of our membership demographics. It is something we need to keep talking about and considering.

Expenses vouchers/evaluation of meeting/

BOD

Next meeting site/date

-Next meeting is October 8 and 9, Wednesday and Thursday, in Seattle, at the same Residence Inn as last year's meeting.

Adjourn meeting

Attendance: Chuck Sheley, Bob Dayton, Bob McKean, John Packard, Roger Savage, Doc Smith, Fred Cooper, Mike Overby, Charlotte Larson, Gary Baker, Tom Boatner, John Driscoll, Eric Melson, Tim DeHaas, Sean Cross, Todd Johnson