

March 2013

Meeting Minutes, March 2013

National Smokejumper Association Board of Directors

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**Meeting location:
Owyhee Plaza Hotel
1109 Main St.
Boise, ID 83702**

- March 20, 1st day of meeting

Daryl Knopps, the CEO of the National Association of Forest Service Retirees (NAFSR) was introduced by John Marker. Daryl is meeting with USFS leadership next week. The minutes of the last BOD meeting and email votes since that meeting were briefly reviewed and then approved.

- USFS & BLM Fire Ops leadership briefing with Q&A opportunity

- Tom Boatner introduced the USFS and BLM leadership staff who was at the meeting. They were Tim De Haas, USFS Aerial Attack Systems Specialist, John Glenn, BLM Chief of Fire Operations, John Gould, BLM Chief of Aviation, Hector Madrid, Boise Smokejumper Base Manager, and Jim Raudenbush, Deputy Base Manager. John Glenn discussed the current issues with sequestration which include significant budget cuts with limitations on everything from travel and training to hiring. A potential sage grouse listing would have huge effects on how rangeland is managed, including fire protection. Hector Madrid thanked the NSA for its support of current smokejumpers through the Good Samaritan Fund and scholarships. He also gave an overview of key smokejumper mission objectives at the Boise base: the initial attack mission, prescribed fire work, participation on Incident Management Teams, filling fire management details at the local, state, and national level and preparing smokejumpers to move on to fire leadership positions in other parts of the BLM and other agencies. Jim Raudenbush gave information on current headcounts and hiring numbers for the coming season. The Alaska jumpers are working this winter with the military on GPS guided paracargo. Jim talked about the interagency injury database and the current low rates of injury for both rounds and ram airs. There was some group discussion about fire management plans and the deployments of smokejumpers according to those plans, and flaws with the whole process leading to big, expensive fires. The current decision-making environment is very complex. Jim showed a couple of short videos, one an explanation of the Boise Smokejumper program and its key elements, and the second, a fire jump shot from a helmet mounted camera. Tim DeHaas reviewed his fire, smokejumper, and military history, and handed out the USFS Smokejumper national report from last year. The first female smokejumper base manager, Sarah Doering, was selected recently and is in place at Grangeville. Tim reviewed Forest Service smokejumper headcounts and described the work of the USFS Base Managers council. One of 2 DC-3s (R-4's) just sold for over \$2 million. Don Sand recently retired as Redding Base Manager and Jon Ueland, base manager of West Yellowstone is retiring soon. Tim discussed the number of ICT3s (Incident Commanders, Type 3) among the jumpers and using them to provide leadership on emerging, complex fires. There are currently 43 FS jumpers using ram airs-out of MSO, WYS, and GAC. Tim completed an analysis of the relative efficiency, safety, training, and potential for innovation of ram airs versus rounds and provided it to senior FS leadership on Dec 1st. A decision is expected soon on what the future use of ram airs and rounds will be for the USFS. At a minimum, the program will continue in its current state. If a transition is decided on, that transition would take up to 10 years. There is a lot of history and passion connected to this issue and Tim is trying to provide an objective view. The BLM continues to jump ram airs exclusively. Currently, 36% of loads out of USFS bases are mixed loads. Training costs are higher for ram

airs and the potential for innovation is also higher. Is there a personal preference from smokejumpers that have used both systems? Tim thinks the majority of current FS jumpers who jump ram airs would look for employment with the BLM if the ram air program was shut down. There is a lot of focus on rappel in the Forest Service. Smokejumpers are not doing as good of a job at educating FS senior leadership as the rappellers are. There were 46 rappel bases, now down to 12, after the fatality of a few years ago. A smokejumper-helitack-rappel relative efficiency analysis is currently being conducted by a contractor called Fire Program Solutions. Rappellers are professional, competent, and have some different capabilities than smokejumpers. John Gould gave an update on current BLM and interagency aviation issues. The BLM has over 40 SEATs (single engine air tankers) on contract, including 2 on floats. The DC-10 is convincing users that in the right conditions it can be a great tool. New LAT (Large Air Tankers) options are being worked on. The Q-400, a twin engine high wing commuter is one possibility. The 747 is still around, but has some unresolved issues.

- Website Committee report
 - Main website report with Q&A– Mike Overby

Mike discussed the 2 new expansion areas on the website, the trails website and a new history site under development. There has been no significant progress on expanding the history site, but Mike discussed some potential links with Ramos at NCSB, and a potential website developer. Mike discussed some website metrics. In the last year, from Jan, 2012 to Feb, 2013, there has been a decrease in total visits, but an increase in number of pages viewed. Mike reviewed additional metrics like pages most viewed and average minutes per page, and sources of visits/referrals. Individual base websites aren't a source of referrals. We should make sure the NSA link is on all of the base sites and vice versa. Email blasts data: 1587 good deliveries, bad email addresses-387, unsubscribed-47. Recommendation made that each board member be assigned 20 names to call by phone to obtain new email addresses prior to next board meeting. No decision made. Larry Lufkin showed the various logo redesigns and talked about the voting so far. The three top designs went out in e-mail blast-lots of passionate response. "If it ain't broke, don't fix it" versus stirring the pot. 80% say stay with the current logo, so that is the decision. The website committee continues to work on the web site. The first step was a survey to see what visitors want on the site. This will be followed by design, and then work to build. We received over 300 responses to the survey-in general: 1) unhappiness with currency of postings. 2) More current news, better access and info retrieval from data base. 3) Repost the picture gallery which was closed down after the hacking incident. Yasmine Raffi is doing the design work on the recommendation of Jon Robinson. The initial \$2000 is spent. **The committee is requesting up to \$2400 for the next steps.** This request was passed unanimously.
 - Trail website report with Q&A– Fred Cooper

Using Word Press, Fred has designed and posted the new Trails website. Fred took a Word Press course and has spent \$410 to date to establish the website. The address is Nsatrails.com. Fred is using a local Missoula web developer and tech support. Fred is posting news info to the NSA trails site. Can he post to NSA website? Yes, he will start doing that. Estimate of time: 18 hour Word Press class plus 2 weeks additional learning and 3 weeks adding content. Fred emphasizes the need for a technical expert to work with. Ron Stoleson commended Cooper, Overby, and Lufkin for all of their work with website issues.
- Annual Meeting commences
 - Welcome and introductions – Jim Cherry

- Treasurer's report – Bob Dayton
Bob gave a summary of our Statement of Condition, as well as explanations of our Balance Sheet, both assets and liabilities, including the limitations on the use of the Good Samaritan Fund and the Montana Community Funds. Bob discussed and explained the various options with the Montana Community Foundation and Planned Giving, and the returns and benefits of the different options. He gave a demonstration of these options using the Deferred Gift Annuity calculator on the MCF website. We also had an update on the Good Samaritan Fund and recent donations to Karen Jeppsen, who lost her home in a wildfire, Tom Roach, whose home was damaged in Hurricane Sandy, and Lane Lamoreaux, who suffered severe injuries in a paragliding accident. **We proposed donating an additional \$1000 to support Lane.** This motion passed. We also discussed possible help to the family of Joe Philpott, a Boise jumper recently killed in an avalanche. Boatner will follow up on this, as well as being involved in scholarship possibilities in Joe's name.
- Membership report – John McDaniel
There has been an improvement in total membership numbers recently. We currently have 1600 total members, with 2 new life members and 1 making payments toward that goal. People are tending to renew for shorter membership terms.
- Election of Board Members
Tom Boatner reviewed the rules for election of board members and the slate of candidates. Jim Cherry asked if there were additional nominations. Charlie Brown and Larry Longley have recently resigned and John Helmer will finish his term and not stand for reelection. Nominees standing for reappointment are Cherry (3 yr), McDaniel (3 yr), Baker (3 yr), and Hurlbutt (for 1 more year). Jim Thompson-(63mso) and Bob McKeen (67-mso) are possible candidates suggested by Mike Overby. Jim Cherry suggested we allow some attrition to occur here as the board has gotten large. **For anyone interested in joining the board, we will invite them to attend a meeting or 2, gauge their interest and the areas of expertise that they can bring, and then make final decisions on whether to add additional Board members. Everyone agreed on this general approach and the slate of candidates, as stated, was nominated and reappointed unanimously.**
- Missoula Jumper Reunion planning for 2013 – Fred Cooper
1500 postcards have been sent out to Missoula jumpers. 135(jumpers and spouses) have responded, so far, that they will attend. The set-up is ongoing, a schedule is set, and the reunion will dovetail with the following week's trail projects. The dates are July 12-13, 2013. McCall Reunion-Leo Cromwell gave an update on current plans and schedule for the McCall reunion which is scheduled for June 7-9, 2013.
- Magazine and merchandising report – Chuck Sheley
Chuck walked us through the current issue of "Smokejumper" magazine to talk about how he considers and selects content to appeal to a cross section of readers and membership. Current merchandising efforts include a color insert in the magazine, shirts, a commemorative painting, and a limited edition painting. Chuck is looking at the possibilities of a Ruana NSA knife. These are well-known, high-quality knives.

- Trail Report – Fred Cooper

The current team is working hard with the help of some new trainees who will be transitioning in, next year. This year's projects are 92% full with 82% jumpers and 18% associates. There are 13 drive-to projects, 10 pack in projects, and 3 in the eastern US-West Virginia, Kentucky, and New York City. New this year, are projects in Yellowstone NP, Rocky Mountain NP, and Gateway NP in New York City. Merchandising efforts have been eliminated from Trails. Primary funding is provided by host agencies and foundations. Sequestration may have impacts on some of this funding. **There was some discussion of trails program financial accounts. We're making money in the trails program and Jim Cherry asked, what are the guiding principles for that pot of money?** What is trails leadership's interpretation and what is the goal for this pot of money? Fred will take these questions back to the Trails team for further discussion. We continue to receive substantial financial assistance from Johnson's Corner in Colorado. They are providing food and cooks for 3 projects this season, plus they have a Smokejumper Day Fundraiser. It raised \$1700 last year. Stan Linnertz continues to be the key to this connection.

- Scholarship Committee report – Gary Baker

There have been a number of recent donations to scholarship funds. In 2011, we had 3 applications. In 2012, we had 6 applicants with 4 awarded, all for ongoing graduate work. For 2013, we only have a single application to date. Information went out to base managers in February from Jim. Information on applying is also on the website. Chuck Sheley will send a reminder e-mail to base managers. Our current commitment is 3 scholarships of \$2000 ea. The end of the application period is June 15th.

- Staffing for NSA needs – Mike Overby/Jim Cherry

The assignment was to consider the pros and cons of hiring an executive director. The task was modified, with Cherry's input, to look at an overall list of duties: what Chuck Sheley is currently doing versus what this new executive director would be tasked to do. Mike split that out by fundraising duties and other duties. He used a job description that Guy Hurlbutt had already put together for the BOD. There followed some discussion about fundraising, grants, and some questions the BOD has been wrestling with. How much fundraising do we want to do? What are we doing it for? How much money do we want and to fund what? What sources are we hoping to tap? Can we continue to do what we do as a volunteer organization or do we need to consider paid help? The BOD's job is visioning and planning for the future. We have a paid accountant and Chuck's payment for all of his work. This is taking a load off of the BOD. Is this necessarily a good thing, because currently the outfit is Board-driven, not executive-driven. We're evolving, but does that need to be more organized? What are our longer term goals? One suggestion by Mike, a "Stake in the ground" would be something like a major award for someone who contributed to firefighter safety or developed a new tool. Could there be a role in more political support for the future of smokejumper programs? Are we doing something with this item right now? This discussion needs to continue at our next meeting and the "Future Financial Roadmap" discussion needs to be integrated into it.

- Investment Review-John Helmer
John gave a review of our portfolio. Our portfolio's current IRR is 8.08%. The S & P IRR for the same portfolio is 6.39%. Other IRRs for index funds passively managed, that try to replicate S & P 500: 6.11% for SPY, VFINX-5.06%, 6.31% for FUSEX, 6.46% for VFIAX. This portfolio is being phased out which means we're sitting on a lot of cash at a time when the market is high and active. We can only handle this by dollar cost averaging over time. Do we want active or passive management? Fees are higher for active management. John and Bob Dayton are leaning towards passive management. How do we reinvest? Bob would prefer a person or 2 to help him forward a suggested course of action versus doing it solo. John's recommendation is dollar cost averaging into VCIAX (Vanguard Admiralty Series). Start right away with some of the \$305,000 in the First Interstate Bank. Also, diversify with CDs, bond funds, and other types of funds. Do we give a green light to Investment Committee to begin passive approach into Index Funds?

Motion-IC is authorized to invest up to \$200,000 from cash assets into passively managed index funds from the Admiral Series of the Vanguard Family. Seconded and passed unanimously. The BOD extended its sincere thanks to John Helmer for all of his hard work for the NSA over the years, particularly his outstanding performance managing our investments.

- Financial future roadmap –BOD/Charlie Brown/Guy Hurlbutt
Due to Charlie's resignation and Guy not in attendance, this is tabled until the fall meeting.
- Report on Good Samaritan Fund guidelines – Guy Hurlbutt/Doc Smith
Jim Cherry summarized the basic guidelines that Guy and Doc have put together. There was some disagreement about the rules requiring a written application. A motion was made to accept the guidelines with a modification about submitting an application versus the BOD discussing and making a decision via e-mail. Seconded and passed.

March 21st Second day of meeting

Bud Filler, author of Two Man Stick, attended the 2nd day of the meeting

- Reimbursement of BOD travel expenses – Cherry/BOD
We had a general discussion of BOD travel costs, the burden for those who travel further because they live farther away from our normal western meeting locations, and a fair way to recognize those costs accumulated over time, and a fair way to compensate BOD members. A number of options were considered and a number of monetary amounts. Final decision: Reimbursement of travel expenses over \$300. This includes mileage at .25 cents/mile, airfare, airport parking, and hotel costs. A motion was made and passed. This new policy starts for this meeting. Jim Cherry will put together a form to be used.
- Clean up any issues not resolved during the prior day's meeting-emblem discussion and impact of the Douglas-fir tree from FS emblem. Boatner mentioned that the NSA logo closely resembles the USFS smokejumper logo with the conifer tree from the USFS shield. This logo, of course, resonates positively and strongly with USFS jumpers, but maybe not as strongly with BLM jumpers. Tom just wanted everyone to be aware of the power, both positive and negative, of various symbols and emblems, and consider that we are representing all current and former smokejumpers regardless of agency affiliation, and even country of origin (Canada and Russia).

- Unofficial NSA Face book page and its removal – Bob Dayton
This is still unresolved. Bob will continue to pursue.
- KING TV use of copyright materials
Drop this issue. King TV leadership has not been responsive, and at this point, it is not worth further effort.
- General discussion of a reunion in 2015 – BOD
2015 will mark the 75th anniversary of the first fire jump. Barry Hicks and Fred Cooper are handling this years' MSO reunion and won't do another one. We discussed where to have this national reunion and agreed it has to be Missoula because of the first jump history and the NSA rotation between Boise-Redding- Missoula. Who is available and willing in MSO? There was some discussion of potential candidates to lead this effort. We will make a call or 2 to gauge interest. Our goal is to identify someone within the next 30 days.
- Suggestions for up-dates from BLM and USFS leadership – BOD
What do we want from this relationship? Why? Who do we want to talk to? Should we consider inviting Congressional people or would they add value? Should we be enlisting NSA folks with some political juice? Gary Baker will contact John McMahon, Jim will contact Darren Belsby, John Marker will contact Jim Hubbard and Tom Harbour.
- Update from Chuck on his discussion at the social with Ivan Smith and Brian Cresto, Boise jumpers, about a possible Joe Philpott Scholarship Fund. We're willing to try it. Boatner will follow up and cc Sheley. We will seek more info on a possible GSF contribution to Joe's family. Also following up on GSF donation to the Helena ski patrolman recently badly injured.
- Set future meeting dates and locations – BOD
Seattle is a good option for minimizing travel costs: October 9-10, 2013.

CFC Update-Boatner talked about requirements to become a charity in the Combined Federal Campaign. There are 2 options: qualify as a national charity, or as a regional charity. **Tom will forward the CFC link describing specific requirements to Bob Dayton.**

- Evaluation of the meeting – BOD
Cherry is managing the meetings well, it was good to tackle the travel cost issue, good facility, good in Boise to be able to meet with agency leadership, BOD comes well prepared. Continue visioning-what are our goals, why?
Next meeting: Discuss a replacement for Longley-historian position.
Tim De Haas gave us information on the Quad A organization, the Army Aviation Association of America, and some of the awards (like the St Michael award) they present, how they organize regionally by chapters. How do we get e-mail addresses of current smokejumpers and other c listers?
Should we be setting up Twitter and Facebook accounts/sites?

Meeting adjourned.

In attendance: Cherry, Helmer, McDaniel, Sheley, Cromwell, Marker, Stoleson, Baker, Cooper, Overby, Lufkin, Larson, Dayton, Savage, Packard, Boatner

Visitors on Wed: Bill Baden, Cory Brown
Visitor on Thurs: Bud Filler
Absent: Doc Smith, Guy Hurlbutt