

March 2012

Meeting Minutes, March 2012

National Smokejumper Association Board of Directors

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National Smokejumper Association Meeting

March 18, 2012

Opened at 8:10 by President John Twiss

Motion made for NSA to pay for lunch and approved

Introductions of those present:

John Twiss
Jim Cherry
Guy Hurlbutt
Ron Stoleson
Chuck Sheley
John Helmer
Gary Baker
Mary Dell Honey
Fred Cooper
Bob Dayton
Mike Overby
John Packard
Jim Hagemeyer
Doc Smih
Tim DeHass
Jim Raudenbush

Board Members Absent:

- John Marker
- John McDaniel
- Larry Longley
- Larry Lufkin
- Tom Boatner
- Charlie Brown
- Leo Cromwell
- Charlotte Larson

John Twiss Comments:

- Agenda focus for this meeting is on improving the organization
- Half of FS budget is in Fire now
- Forest Service is looking at Smokejumper Program for cost effectiveness – potential reductions
- 400 to 450 Jumpers in BLM and FS now
- Role of Jumpers is to change from back country to urban interface to leading of crews
- FS owns 8 Jumper aircraft now and action is in place to eliminate two
- Feeder program for fire leadership positions is being diminished in FS and BLM

- Some Base managers counseling Jumpers to be long term Jumpers – questions if this is the correct direction
- NSA should advocate for minimum of 400 Jumpers in FS and BLM combined
- NSA should advocate for maintaining 2 DC-3's
- John believes the FS should centralize Jumper Program in FS like the BLM does
- NSA should advise Jumpers on minimizing their tenure of years jumping
- Tim DeHass believes NSA has as much or more influence to change Jumper program than the FS does internally.
- FS is moving series for Base Managers from GS-462 to GS-301 Series and BLM is considering GS-301. GS-301 is an administrative occupational series permitting assignment of personnel to Base Managers positions that don't mandate previous experience as Jumpers.

Membership Meeting – Guy Hurlbutt:

- Present By-Laws and Article of Incorporation state we are a member organization and that we have not been following those guidelines. Also, it is not practical to operate in this fashion.
- Board recommended the NSA become a Board Driven Organization
- A vote was put to the Board
- Membership voting --- total number voted was 771; 762 in favor; 9 opposed
- Revised Articles of Incorporation will be filed with Secretary of State
- **Guy asked for a minimal amount of money (about \$300 to \$400) to obtain concurrence of a Montana Attorney to assure we are in compliance with the process of moving from a Member driven organization to a Board driven organization.**
- **Motion made to authorize money spent for this and was unanimously approved.**

No old or new business.

Meeting adjourned as a Member Driven Organization

Tim DeHass on FS Aircraft and Smokejumper Program:

- Tim was a Grangeville Jumper Rookie in 1988
- Retired Colonel from Army
- Pilot experience
- Aerial Supervision Program Manager for FS
- Cooperation with FS and BLM is great now
- The Forest Service and BLM have about 30 Years' experience of mixed Ram Air and Round Chute experience
- Weather trends from last year are forecasted the same for 2012
- Smokejumper Program has become multi-functional and is a good argument for maintaining the organization and its size
- FS National ICS Program is a good program being implemented by other organizations, including the military
- Greatest advantage of Jumper program is range and speed over helitack/rapeller program
- Base Manager for BLM is GS-13 and for FS is GS-12

- What do we believe is the minimum level of Jumper Program that we should advocate for
- NSA should become involved in determining mission statement of Jumper Program

Jim Raudenbush , BLM Base Manager Report:

- Assistant Base Manager at Great Basin
- The BLM Jumpers don't own any of the land, so they put a lot of effort in to getting to know the local managers.
- We need to prove that we are not a bunch of prima donnas.
- Two BLM bases – Boise and Alaska
- Work under an Operating Agreement within BLM
- 78 Jumpers in Great Basin
- 62 Jumpers in Alaska but many of those come from Boise and back to Boise when season is over in Alaska
- Total of 81 Jumpers in BLM
- Twin Otter in Boise plus two under contract
- Three planes under contract in Alaska
- Combined Rookie training starting this year
- Cooperation with FS is good, especially working on Ram Air
- 33 in a class for training FS on Ram Air
- IC Support – 25% of Jumpers on IC support program for various positions
- BLM does not work for a specific Land Manager, rather on call and available for any states on an invitation basis.
- Very centralized operation in BLM
- Jumpers, helitack, engines, and hotshots each have a role in Fire and the Operations Boss at NIFC understands and uses them accordingly. Very good role without a competitive non-productive atmosphere
- BLM Fire Program is funded up front nationally
- BLM para-cargo operation in Alaska is largest civilian cargo operation in the US
- A Jumper can now make a living as a Jumper as opposed to many years ago.
- Average jumper has been jumping for 15 years
- Hired 5 Rookies out of 120 applications last year. Most come out of hot shot program
- Average turnover rate is about 10%
- Jim likes present 15 year average because it makes it more of a professional organization than if the average were a shorter period of time.
- BLM budget is \$25,000 annually per rookie
- BLM budget for a GS-9 is \$50,000 annually
- Average take home pay for a seasonal jumper is about \$35,000 per year
- It is much easier to get permanent appointments in the BLM than the FS.
- You can now make a living as a jumper. Permanent Jumpers are required to work a minimum of six months and one day, which eliminates college students. Getting a permanent position has the advantage of benefits. Average tenure is 15 years. BLM has a very professional Jumper organization.
- Average ratio of personnel on fires in the FS is 69 employees and 49 AD employees. This means that the FS is lacking fire skills in their organization.

Future of NSA – Chuck Sheley:

- 88% of membership is over 60
- 1,455 membership now; same as it was in 2002
- We are looking down the road to lower turnover (rookies per year has slowed way down).
- Tim suggests Base Manager Charter Memberships or similar awards
- Mike suggests a best You-Tube presentation recognition from each Base
- Guy suggests 3 models: 1) WWII model that org will die when the last veteran dies; 2) Could expand and become a general fire membership organization; 3) ???
- One of our short term goals is to determine the need for a paid/volunteer staff support.
- **Mike agreed to lead an effort to have a feasibility study for having a paid Executive Director with a recommendation at the September meeting.**
- Is the problem money or people? Discussion focused more on having people to do the work of the organization than on money. An example is that we now have a paid accountant. Future decisions may be on a paid Web Master, Director, etc.

Jukkala/McBride/NSA Scholarship – John Twiss:

- Combined scholarship proposal prepared by Twiss and Lufkin submitted for Board approval
- **Motion made and approved that the scholarship be available regardless of membership in NSA. Results will read for item number two: “who are members of the National Smokejumper Association (NSA)”**
- **Doc Smith, and Gary Baker agreed to work with Larry Lufkin in reviewing and screening applications in making recommendations to the Board for approval.**

Update-NSA Leadership Awards – Guy Hurlbutt:

- Two Al Dunton travelling leadership awards granted annually – one from FS and one from BLM
- Awarded for 2011 to: Frankie Romero and Gary Baumgartner.
- **Awardees will also receive a plaque similar to Life Membership awardee plaques.**
- **John Twiss to share information with FS Chief and BLM Director for internal announcements of the awards**

Treasurer Report-Budget Update – Bob Dayton:

- Brent Russ recognized for his work and the Board’s support for retaining him
- Balance sheet needs to show scholarship fund and Life Membership fund
- A discrepancy in the Trails Fund of about \$7,500 exists that will be further analyzed, especially with review of bank statements to determine discrepancy.

Investments Report—John Helmer:

- Bob Dayton raises question whether it is appropriate for these types of investments for a non-profit industry such as NSA?
- Bob believes we need to establish an investment policy.

Membership Report – Chuck Sheley:

- 1,455 dues paying members now
- 1,627 peak in 2007
- 267 Life Members now (includes 35 deceased members)
- Review Corporate Sponsorship potential
- Corporate Life Memberships given to Bozeman Watch and Johnson’s Corner
- **Bob Dayton is to provide some bullets/ideas for Corporate Sponsorships**

Dick Eriksson Donation Investment Discussion – Guy Hurlbutt/Jim Cherry:

- Certificate of Deposit is a possibility but not good because of rate of returns now
- Life Membership Fund is a possibility – partially in stock and a CD
- **Tabled till later to determine where to invest**

Planned Giving and Participation in the Montana Community Foundation – John Packard:

- To a donor, an endowment is a money given to charity for the principal to be reserved and only the interest be used
- To an accountant, funds reserved for specific uses
- To an attorney an endowment is restricted
- Life Membership funds are unrestricted charity gifts
- NWtrustee.com is an organization in Spokane that will help NSA in investment policy, investment advice, and other issues important to a non-profit organization.
- Need a vision before we proceed
- If money invested with Montana Community Foundation (MCF) the door is closed for future use of funds designated for them to manage.
- We could use Spokane based Investment Trust Company as advisors for developing investment policy/philosophy, and donation policies.
- **Motion made to have recommended investment policy from Packard, Helmer, and Dayton before proceeding with decision from last meeting to invest \$100,000 with MCF. Recommendation to be made by end of June. Will pay reasonable amount of money for advice and counsel. Motion carried.**

Website Committee Update – Mike Overby:

- Email address cleanup in progress
- **\$200 for mailing expense for update requests approved**
- Jon Robinson resigned effective March 1, 2012 as Administrator of website
- Replacements for Jon being interviewed – it was recommended that we look at who the National FS Museum is using
- Chuck Sheley suggested possible use of WordPress as a means for communication amongst Board Members or others between Board Meetings

- **Motion made and approved for \$600 be provided for compensating Mike for paying FirstGiving annual fee for next two years.**

Merchandising – Chuck Sheley:

- \$7,700 budgeted for merchandising expenditures for July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013.

2012 Forest Service Reunion Donation Request – John Twiss:

- **Motion made and carried that NSA provide \$1,000 to the 2012 FS Reunion Committee.**

NSA Trails Program – Fred Cooper:

- Had 21 one-week projects in eight states last year
- Storage Container purchased, primarily with funds donated by Kim Maynard and Al Chambers for moving tools and supplies from Jon McBride home to Aerial Fire Depot.
- Trails Program is utilizing the ICS system with many volunteers contributing toward maintaining a Trails Program
- Registration is being managed by Jim Cherry
- Steve Carlson has agreed to take on the task of Annual Reporting in the future.
- It is OK for some projects to be experimental in nature in either their mode of operation or type of work performed
- An Interagency MOU is being developed that will include USDA and DOI.
- Future funding by Agencies and foundations may be in question. Need to explore other funding options, including possible location of grants, registration fees, etc.
- If anyone has ideas for future funding, please send them to Fred
- Chuck Sheley gave a briefing on the Gobi – Cave Junction Museum project which is an example of an experimental trials project.

Mann Gulch Historic Site – Jim Hagemeyer:

- The site is in a state of degradation
- It is a designated National Historic Site
- Concern raised about preservation of the site
- **Fred to discuss present status of the situation with Phillips, especially it relates to construction/maintenance of “Willow Creek Trail.” Determine present action planned by FS to be taken to assure preservation and future use of the site is within purview of FS regulations and purposes for use of the site. Determine if construction of the proposed trail is within regulations and will preserve the site. Consult with Jim Hagemeyer to determine if letter from NSA to Forest Supervisor is warranted.**

New NSA Board Members:

- **Doc Smith nominated and approved for appointment to the Board.**
- **Gary Baker nominated and approved for appointment to the Board.**
- **Mike Overby and John Packard are also approved as members to the Board.**

- Per Jim Cherry, there are three needs of individual Board Members: Willingness, Wisdom, and Wealth

Other Business:

- Bob Dayton suggested an audit of the NSA accounts is needed based on recommendation from Charley Brown. **Bob to research alternatives for the audit and make recommendation to the President for audit.**
- Next NSA Reunion is in Missoula June 2013.
- Next NSA Board Meeting Sept .21 and 22 in Redmond, OR. Redmond Reunion is Sept. 22 thru 23.

Jim Cherry Comments for Discussion at next Board Meeting:

- Travel compensation for Board Members
- Asking Larry Longley for directory of historical information for access/sharing with others
- Planning status report for the 2013 National Smokejumper Reunion in Missoula
- Planned Giving decision

Critique:

- Overhead projection is beneficial for presentations. Would be helpful for members to know ahead of time if presentations could be made using this technique.
- More Board Members present would have been beneficial
- Future of Smokejumping advice for FS and BLM will be beneficial for NSA involvement
- Leadership of board should be looking for helpers outside the immediate Board Members
- Very good facilities here in Tucson
- Investment Policy and Planned Giving are two activities high on priorities for action
- Consider using video conferencing or other communication means for meetings besides face to face.
- Examine another board member that would include BLM
- BLM Trail project would be beneficial
- Need Women presence on Board
- Need committee reports shared ahead of meetings so concise decisions can be made at meetings
- Committees need to look outside Board Members for use on their activities, especially beyond smokejumpers.
- Great level of excitement amongst the Board
- Good to have Trails Program integral part of the Board
- Mike taking over email contact list update will have good payoffs
- Base Manager input is important to viability of the Board
- This location has been used in the past so we have perhaps exhausted opportunities for local social interaction.
- Consider San Francisco as a meeting future location
- Consider having an interim meeting as part of the Trails Program social event

- Have succession plan for replacement of Board Members and other key people supporting the NSA Mission including the mentoring of others for these positions
-