

April 2009

## Meeting Minutes, April 2009

National Smokejumper Association Board of Directors

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NSA Board of Directors meeting  
April 3&4 2009  
Meeting Notes

John Twiss called the meeting to order at 0800.

Introductions John Twiss

Attendees: John Helmer, Charlie Brown, Stan Linnertz, Larry Lufkin, Jerry Williams, John Twiss, Chuck Sheley, Carl Gidlund (guest), Jim Cherry, Guy Hurlbutt, John McBride, Ron Stoleson, Hal Howell(guest).

John Twiss: Opening remarks. Tom Boatner expected in an hour or so

Minutes of Last Meeting: Most board members have not read the minutes. Will send them by email and review at the next meeting.

Treasurer's Report: Charlie gave a detailed report.

The Finn Ward fund was discussed in detail. It had about \$8,500 in the fund as of December 2008. Appears to be an ongoing fund and board members indicated a concern about this. Most of our funds are limited in nature. The fund serves a good purpose however the board asked if we are opening the NSA to potential liability with the Finn Ward fund because we really don't control revenues and expenditures for this fund. **Suggestion made that Barry Hicks set up an account through another Missoula individual or organization.** The NSA can accept donations and pass them through to the new organization without accepting liability for the actual operation of the fund. Jim proposed that we establish a time limit for operating these kinds of funds. Jerry asked how we can ensure the books are being maintained properly and determine if our bylaws need changed to address these kinds of issues. We need to have Doug Houston talk to Barry to resolve the fund issue and be sensitive to the various folks involved. John commented that we (NSA) prefer not to be a longterm holder of an ongoing fund for an individual. Ron said that these are private funds and should perhaps be maintained by the families. Charlie's concern is that the FW funds are in a bank in Missoula, he has never met the lady who maintains the fund, and has never been able to review fund documentation. This means he lacks control, as treasurer, over these funds, even though the NSA is the official fund manager.

We have 227 Life Members with a fund of \$264,886, which includes an inflation allowance. Stock investment at cost is \$163,616. Market is about \$107537. \*Note updated 4/29/09

Year to date financials, March 31, 2009:

Income is the same as last year, but have many more 1 and 2 year memberships than before.

Donations received are about \$8,000. One check was \$6,000 from a Mr. Michaelson in memory of his brother. His brother Doug jumped at Missoula in the mid-50s. The donator is an

associate member. Chuck suggested giving the brother a gifted life membership based on donations thus far. Charlie moved to give a life membership to Doug Michaelson and send a plaque to the family. Ron Stoleson seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous to award the life membership. Jim Cherry will handle the plaque.

The 2009-2010 budget was discussed. Charlie will email the updated 2009-10 budget as of March 31, 2009. The donation to Evergreen Museum won't happen until next year. Also, there have been no expenditures for the history costs yet this year. These two will increase our funds by about 3,000. We should get about \$1,400 from Kasmar next fiscal year but this might increase-to be discussed under merchandising. We will pay Sheley \$4,000 for his stipend as editor. Trails gets \$500 again and \$200 will go to the Univ of Montana for archiving our documents. Charlie anticipates good will donations of \$2,000. Need to have Longley contact Steve Smith about progress on his historical film project. The 2010 budget currently shows a deficit of about \$8,500 and board members indicated a concern with this. Most think we should have a balanced budget. Also, a suggestion was made that we create a rainy day fund.

**Sheley moved that we establish a policy to balance the budget each year, Stoleson seconded. The motion passed unanimously.** Charlie suggested that we publish our financial reports in the Magazine to show how the members money is being used. Charlie also thinks we should post our IRS Form 990 on our web site. This would satisfy the requirement that this form be available. Charlie will balance the budget by adding the surplus from this year to the revenue numbers.

**Investments:** Amount invested to date is \$163,616(the board has authorized expenditures up to \$175,000). Current market value is \$107,539. All stocks have gone down in value and Bank of Utica has really tanked. John discussed the company and its refusal to provide details. John recommends we stay with the current investment strategy. The board decides how much to invest while the investment committee decides on which securities to purchase and also decides on who should manage the portfolio. John also recommends that we leave the remaining available investment funds liquid so that he can purchase other securities if appropriate. Current policy is that the investment committee is made up of the President, Vice president, and Treasurer. John is asking that we add a fourth member to the committee (board member Bob Dayton). Jerry Williams moved to add the fourth. Seconded by Helmer. Vote was unanimous to approve the motion.

**Merchandising:** Kasmar generated \$3,109 dollars of profit for the NSA. We may get another \$1,000 from Bozeman Watch. Another source is Left Hand Brewing. Why is Western Heritage selling our DVD – a deal has been worked out with Kasmar that WH will get \$3 for each one they sell. Charlie needs to have the Kasmar payments reviewed by Stan. Big sellers for Kasmar are hats and T Shirts.

John Twiss asked if Doug Houston should work with Stan Linnertz to rejuvenate the NSA merchandising program. Doug might take the NSA side while Stan takes the trails side. Doug has a number of ideas to pursue in this vein. We also might be able to purchase items and sell them through the various base welfare funds. **We need to be sure we follow our agreement with Kasmar.** They have been reluctant to take chances on some items. Also, they do not like

us selling items on the side. McBride thinks the suggested division of merchandising duties would be a good idea. Jerry suggested that Doug work with Stan to develop a comprehensive marketing plan that could define who markets for trails and the NSA. John will discuss this with Doug and have Doug work with Stan on this project. McBride commented that he sees the two marketing programs – trails and the NSA - as two separate and distinct programs. A comprehensive plan should include Kasmar, Left Hand, Bozeman, and any other vendor we deal with. Jerry suggested that we look at selling a new Monte Dolack print that is being marketed by Lowell Hanson.

Membership: We are slowly declining in membership. For the 10-year membership, we give them a Cold Waters DVD and a receiver cover. Don't know if we will have a membership person at the La Grande reunion June 19-21, 2009. Jerry Williams will contact the reunion committee and pass on to them the services the NSA can provide. John voiced a concern about the "C" code jumpers, those for whom we do not have current addresses. Lufkin commented that we should consider including other fire fighters as full voting members, similar to pilots who were brought into the NSA as full members in 2000. This issue will be discussed further in our future planning session Saturday.

Trails: Jon Mc Bride showed the video he created and it was very well received by the board. Jon also commented briefly on the annual report. They had 213 volunteers last year. About 200 have signed up so far for this year with about 8 per week being added to this number. They will have 23-25 projects for 2009 and about 250 will work on those projects. Last year's projects were covered in the Missoulian newspaper. The paper went along on the Beaverhead NF project. Some districts don't seem to care about the projects while others care a lot. Jon said they try to go back to those that want the volunteer projects. The advisory group has voted to widen the project to allow non-jumpers – associates – who will actually work on the project. These folks will need to be carefully selected for experience and capability. More and more jumpers are asking for the drive-to projects as opposed to the backcountry ones. This will continue as the crews grow older each year. The Helena NF will be holding the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Mann Gulch fire and will want jumpers available as interpreters in the area. The forest isn't very interested in a trail project in the Gulch. Big Prairie will have a large project of about 15 people. They will be going in several miles to work on trails. Ron pointed out that we need to be thinking of longterm management (successors) for the trails group. McBride indicated that Fred Cooper has been attending various meetings with him.

Board Liability: Guy reported on his review of board liability.

Item 1- insurance, there are two kinds – 1. Directors & Officers protects individual board members in case of a suit for non performance on the board – 2. comprehensive general liability insurance protects the organization. We have neither. Guy talked to David Atkin about all of the various NSA projects and operations. The feds and most states have laws that protect board members from suits. But these laws don't pay for the defense in getting a suit dismissed. The individual would have to pay these legal costs. There are four ways to pay these costs. First, the NSA can choose to pay these legal costs but this isn't viable because of a lack of money. Second, some states allow the defense to sue for costs but this also isn't viable. Third, home owner's insurance policies can cover defense of such suits but a number of insurance companies

won't pay these costs unless there is a specific provision in the policy. Fourth, we can purchase a D&O policy. David doesn't think we have great potential liability. Specifically, the trails project isn't a big liability because of the volunteer agreement with the FS. The National Smokejumper Center project could be a liability issue because of the work with kids. David believes that this insurance is a close call and up to the board members. He doesn't see a lot of risk for liability but there is some for a need to pay for defense costs. Guy doesn't think David would recommend it because we aren't really involved in risky types of projects. Guy cited several different estimated costs for the D&O insurance. Laws don't protect the NSA from liability.

**Twiss moved to approve the D&O insurance package for board members. Sheley seconded. Vote was unanimous to approve.** Estimated annual cost is \$1000. Guy will evaluate the cost of a similar insurance package for the NSA as an organization. David will charge us a modest bill for his advice on this issue.

Item 2, bonding for the treasurer, is very unusual for our type of organization and David wouldn't recommend it. He does think we need to establish controls for checks and balances. A separate finance committee should examine our books on a regular basis.

Item 3, lobbying, the IRS allows us to spend 20% of revenue on lobbying. This is a change from prior years. Any contacts with members don't count. For the general public there is no responsibility unless there is a call to action. We can educate without invoking IRS violations on lobbying.

National Smokejumper Center Update: Jerry Williams presented current NSC operations. It is a very well received operation. There were over 400 participants in 2008. The old Madison log structure was used. The FS wants to sell the land and building while the NSC wants them saved as does the city of West Yellowstone. Nobody is sure what will happen given the current economic conditions. Jerry stated that Barry made it clear that the NSC is not a part of the NSA. The NSC is a member of the American Camping Association. The NSC may ask for another loan in 2009. The NSC paid back the \$6,000 they were loaned in 2008. Barry also thinks the NSC should be a part of the NSA and that liability issues have been resolved. Jerry will talk to Barry and try to resolve issues surrounding NSC membership in the American Camping Association and a closer relationship with the NSA. Jim Cherry can help Barry with the ACA accreditation.

The board supports the NSC concept and complemented Barry for his efforts. The board indicated a concern about clashing with the FS over the Madison building because the NSA may have other issues of its own to resolve with the FS. The board is also concerned about the NSC's ability to pay back another loan if the FS chooses not to provide another grant to the NSC. Any loan to the NSC has to have the stipulation that it is not intended to fuel a fire with the FS over the Madison building. There is a concern over the NSC's interest in maintaining the current site. Members asked whether the site was the most important part of the NSC or whether the program is most important. Members commented that the NSC needs to more clearly identify its mission and program. Some members think the NSA should not be identified too closely with the NSC. We want to support it but not be totally responsible for its content and operation. Barry will be invited to attend the NSA board meeting to discuss these issues.

The board had further discussion on understanding the mission of the NSC, proper business planning and methods of financing the NSC, prudent use of NSA funds, proper use of grants, and liability and risk when working with youth programs.

Essentially, the NSC program is a day camp for kids. The issue of the ranger station should not interfere with this basic purpose. Once this separation is recognized, the program could be transported to any other smokejumper base or other location to provide educational benefits for kids. In this manner it could become somewhat similar to the trails program which has been transported to several other forests and states. Having the program located solely at the West Yellowstone ranger station may not be the best option. The goal would not be to recruit smokejumpers. Rather it would be to educate kids about forests, fire control, and the outdoors in general.

We have four apparent potential alternatives: If requested by the NSC make a loan after review of an acceptable business plan (subject to the NSC completing a set of steps); Give the NSC a grant of \$1,000 ; the NSA gets involved in the leadership of the NSC and develops it, the NSA steps away totally from the NSC project-no loans or grants. No decision was made.

Next Meeting Date: John said there has been interest in moving the September board meeting date to match the FS reunion in Missoula. It is currently scheduled for Boise for September 11-12. The date of that FS reunion is September 19-21. The third option is October 2-3 in Boise.

**The final choice is October 9-10 in Boise.**

Federal Fire Policy: Jerry Williams discussed fire policy to give the board an insight into current fire fighting policy and theory. There are four fire designations: IA – Initial Attack 95% of all fires; EIA-Extended Initial Attack 3-4% of all fires and 70% of fire line fatalities; **LF-Large fires and MF Mega Fires 1-2 % of all fires-90% of total acreage and 85% of total costs.**

Graph shows that fire decreased in total acreage from 1910 to 1960, then increased again from 1970 to the present. Acres burned have increased dramatically in the past 20 years. This crosses all regions except one, region 8. This is opposed to the theory that acres burned should have decreased gradually since 1960 because of bigger budgets and newer equipment and practices. There has been a huge decrease in the number of crews and equipment available to fight fire in the past 30 years. 1960 marked the start of the overall management of the forests, away from total timber management. Jerry went on to give a detailed history of fire in national forests.

Fire policy is currently being debated. Question is whether the problem is with the policy, procedures used to implement the policy, or performance of the procedures. Another question is whether the problem is a fire issue or a land management issue. By 2005, half of the FS budget was for fire pre-suppression, or over 1 Billion dollars. Jerry thinks that the increase in mega fires is the leading indicator that current policies need to be revisited. In southern California the total amount spent by the FS, state, and counties is over 3 Billion Dollars. For this amount, they have bought ever-increasing wildfires and little preservation of the various forests. The smokejumper program is often perceived by FS management and organizations as a hold over relic of the WWII era. Tom Boatner commented that the government agencies have put up barriers to the effective use of smokejumpers. Jerry said that the government is heading toward a single

national fire policy. Boatner commented that there is no central command that will set priorities. Instead, there are too many turf battles over use of resources. This leaves many high priority fires shorthanded while lower priority fires have excess resources.

Jerry thinks that the smokejumper program needs to rethink its historical role of Initial Attack and consider concentrating more on Extended Initial Attack. This would shift the 300 jumpers and 25 million dollar budget to higher priority fires which would give a bigger bang for the fire buck. John commented that smokejumpers should be used for initial attack and the most critical situations as well.

There are two performance directions that should be followed. First, need to reconsider the forest and land situation. Second, how can some of the laws and current forests be handled. Fire is big business so it isn't just the government that opposes changes in fire policy and procedure. There's profit to be made from big fires.

Overall, the prime question is: who is thinking about the viability of the smokejumper program 5, 10, or 50 years from now. Jerry thinks the NSA needs to be involved in some of this forward thinking and support for the program. Another question is: should the NSA be an open advocate for the smokejumper program?

Mission/Goals/Vision/Strategies: The mission and value statement of the NSA is currently as follows:

#### Mission Statement

The National Smokejumper Association, through a cadre of volunteers and partnerships, is dedicated to preserving the history and lore of smokejumping, maintaining and restoring our nations's forest and grassland resources, responding to special needs of smokejumpers and their families **and advocating for the program's evolution.**

#### Our Values

Comradeship, Education, pride in work well done, Loyalty.

The Board agreed to change the mission statement as revised above. Jim Cherry moved to adopt the new mission statement. Ron Stoleson seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

Using this as a background, we now need to create a vision statement for the NSA and establish goals. Jim will work with John to develop a draft vision statement. John Twiss believes that we can develop a vision statement and develop goals at the same time. Its time to develop short term and long-term goals for the NSA.

Criteria for setting goals is as follows:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Relevant
- Time Dependent

DRAFT GOALS TO BE VOTED ON LATER

Goals – Long Term 5 years

1. Next 5 years –  
Continue to expand the trail maintenance program into other parts of the country. Encourage members to take the lead in developing projects. Reason – limit travel for some volunteers, develops cohesiveness of jumpers in those areas. By 2015, will have 250 volunteer weeks of service rendered in at least 7 total states.
  3. 2014 have a net worth of \$1 Million
- 2014 membership 50% higher than 2009 gives a broader base of support
- 2014 investment fund built up to \$1.4 Million

Goals – Short Term 3 years

2. 2009 develop donation program and policy – if we were to obtain gifts and donations, how would we use it.
4. By 2010 – 267 life members
5. 2011 \$3,000 from gifts and donations
6. 2010 build a comprehensive advocacy plan for the current smokejumper program – establish a positive working relationship with agency leadership, managers, and jumpers Jerry Williams will be lead on this goal.
7. 2010 offer an inter-generational option for

trails – dad/daughters,  
dads and sons, etc. Jim  
Cherry will take the  
lead

8. 2010 trails option for women only
9. 2010 identify 5 people who will take leadership of trails project.
10. 2011 increase membership from BLM by at least 40 jumpers. Tom Boatner will take the lead.
11. 2009 Review Smokejumper Logo
12. 2011 Develop a succession plan for all key NSA positions - determine if we have volunteers who will take over these functions with similar passion

Other: Sheley mentioned that Cave Junction jumpers are putting together a work group to repair the old CJ loft. He would like NSA to sponsor this project. The first year would be a small project to see if it would work as expected. Then in 2010 a full project could be done. McBride thinks they should have a complete volunteer agreement that covers liability, etc with the local government entity. Helmer moved to sponsor the project if CJ jumpers can get a volunteer agreement with Josephine County. Stoleson seconded. Vote was unanimous to approve.

National Smokejumper Reunion 2010 is in Redding. Sheley said the dates are June 11-13, 2010 at the convention center. The board commented that Kasmar should plan to be onsite for this reunion. An NSA membership will be included in the admission cost for non-members. The committee will need \$4,000 seed money at the end of 2009.

Meeting Adjourned at 11:30 AM

