

6-10-2010

Meeting Minutes, June 10th, 2010

National Smokejumper Association Board of Directors

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National Smokejumper Association Board of Directors Meeting , Redding, CA, June 10-11, 2010

June 10th, 0830

Introductions/Agenda Update/Opening Remarks- John Twiss

We began this NSA Board of Directors meeting with a moment of silence in memory of and tribute to Jon McBride. Quick introductions were made, and a few additional agenda items were added. Don Sand, Base Manager of the USFS Smokejumper Base in Redding, CA and Hector Madrid, Base Manager of the BLM Smokejumper Base in Boise, Idaho were in attendance, as was **Scott Curtis, the National Standardization Officer from the USFS National Aviation Office in Boise**. Hector, Don, and Scott made opening comments about the current state of smokejumping, and issues the smokejumping and fire organizations are dealing with. Rough headcounts for the 2010 fire season are as follows: RAC-55, NCSB-30, RDD-40, MSO-70, MYC-70, GAC-30-35, BOI-81, AK,68-70. The first ever fire jump in TX was made in early June in Big Bend National Park, out of Silver City, NM. There are currently 196 smokejumpers in Alaska due to early season dry lightning and even a number of fires that burned through last winter. The Lower 48 jump bases are in various stages of rookie training. **Jon Ueland is the new West Yellowstone base manager**. The North Cascades Smokejumper Base Manager position is currently vacant. John Button retired over the winter. At the Redding base, there is high stability in the workforce. Out of a headcount of 40 jumpers, 26 are permanent full time employees. Four of the five busiest seasons in Redding history have occurred in the last decade.

There was a good discussion of current events and developments regarding fire use, wilderness fire, and overall smokejumper numbers. Don and Hector talked about high numbers of smokejumper UTFs (Unable to Fill). Routinely, there are more requests for smokejumpers than can be met and filled. Both Hector and Don consider one of the biggest issues currently is a lack of overall numbers. For instance, the current number of smokejumpers in Region One of the USFS is 133. In 1968, that number was 201. **Smokejumper mobilization and use is also often hampered by bureaucratic hurdles and obstacles**. Some of this is due to the decentralization of control regarding smokejumper management. Demand to fill holes in other parts of the fire organization, a need to get people out on training assignments for red card qualifications, Incident Management Team commitments, and new and expanding business in areas like the Great Basin and Southern California are all stressing the smokejumper workforce. Smokejumper numbers aren't adequate to meet the current mission. Don feels that now is the golden age of smokejumping with more fire jumps and more single resource assignments. There are just not enough jumpers and too many bureaucratic barriers to their effective movement and use. There have been various Aerial Delivery Firefighter studies (ADFF) in recent years, but there have been no major changes because of these studies. The question was asked and discussed about what the NSA should be doing to address current smokejumper issues.

Decision: Chuck will redistribute to the Board the newsletter article about one of the ADFF studies. (Done by Chuck, 6-18-2010)

Scott Curtis, the USFS National Aviation Standardization Officer gave an update on current efforts to identify and evaluate new smokejumper aircraft. There are very few viable, newer, affordable jumpship possibilities. Two possibilities are the Dehaviland Dash 8-200 and the Casa 235. These aircraft are in the

consideration/evaluation process. Availability, affordability, and suitability of these 2 models is still uncertain. Evaluation has begun on the Pilatus PC-12, which flies at 265 knots and carries a 6 smoke-jumper load. The National Aviation Office is working on improving check rides to deliver proficient flight crews. A new paint scheme for FS aircraft is being used and is based on science to increase visibility in a smoky environment. The most likely new large airtanker model is the C130J. BLM has trained 25 Region One smokejumpers on the Ram Air system that the BLM currently jumps, so they can evaluate it for FS use.

NSA Reunion Schedule of Events

Chuck Sheley briefly ran through the reunion schedule and mentioned the Cave Junction restoration project occurring the following week.

Approval of Minutes of Last Meeting-

Minutes from our last meeting on October 8-9, 2009 in Boise, Idaho **were approved.**

Membership Report-John McDaniel

There are currently 241 life members plus 5 in the process of paying for Life Memberships. John passed out an info sheet on membership trends since last meeting and with the exception of Life Members they continue trending downward. There is a membership decline in recent years and our membership is clearly aging. How do we reverse these trends? We discussed the changing demographics and membership numbers. Chuck Sheley commented on the increasing number of obituaries he's worked on. Associate Members' numbers have also declined. As active smokejumpers stay with the job much longer, the overall number of former and current jumpers in America is growing much more slowly. The Board talked extensively about ways to maintain and increase membership.

We talked about many ideas, but agreed to take action on visiting current bases and describing the activities, programs, and accomplishments of the NSA and to work up a briefing paper that can be used to do that.

Review/Update of short term goals(1-3 years) for the NSA- John Twiss

Short Term Goal #1: Develop a solid working relationship with BLM and USFS smokejumpers and smokejumper leadership by 2010.

Discussion: We have made good progress on this goal, with BLM and USFS smokejumper base managers and agency leadership attending our last two meetings.

Action Item : By 2010 BOD members will visit each base and make a presentation about the NSA at a crew meeting.

Base Visit Assignments:

John Helmer, Chuck Sheley-RDD

Tom Boatner-BOI

Doug Houston-MSO

Larry Longley, Larry Lufkin-NCSB

Leo Cromwell-McCall

Bob Dayton-West Yellowstone

Mark Corbett-RAC

Tom Kovalicky-GAC

Mike McMillan-FAI

Action Item : By 10-2010 finalize and distribute the list of NSA base contacts – Doug Houston.

Action Item : By 10-2010 build a briefing paper listing NSA's programs, activities, and accomplishments to be used to recruit new members and explain who we are and what we do – Tom Boatner

Short Term Goal #2: By 2011, develop a comprehensive donation program and distribution policy.

Discussion: This is on-going, see fund raising discussion later by Bob Dayton. Many program and policy ideas are being explored. Work still needs to be done on how best to expend funds.

Short Term Goal #3: By 2010, increase to 267 Life Members from the current 241.

Action Item : By 10-2010 John McDaniel will send letters to 10 year members encouraging conversion to life membership, with credit for the remainder of years on the 10 year membership. There was a reminder of the commitment for each BOD member to add 2 life members.

Action Item : Jim Cherry made a proposal to award life memberships to people who contribute \$1000 or more to any of NSA's programs or funds and also give a copy of the smokejumper painting from Leo Cromwell's friend to each life member with a letter about other giving possibilities. These proposals were agreed to. Jim Cherry will coordinate.

Short Term Goal #4: By 2010, identify 5 people who can take over the trails program.

Discussion: This is being worked on by the NSA Trails Advisory Committee and will continue as a high priority after Jon McBride's recent unexpected death. The BOD stands ready to assist. See succession planning discussion below.

Short Term Goal #5: By 2011 increase NSA active smokejumper membership by 40 smokejumpers.

Discussion: Membership has increased by approximately 12 jumpers. Base visits by the BOD and implementation of the NSA Scholarship Program (see scholarship decision below) should help meet this goal.

Development/affirming of Long Term Goals(3-5 years) and development of action items- John Twiss

Discussion: NSA's Long Term Goals were developed at our last BOD meeting in Boise. The discussion

revolved around reaffirming those goals and the development of actions to achieve the goals.

Long Term Goal #1: By 2015, double net worth of NSA.

Is it possible? How? Why? If we are going to double our net worth, we should have a common understanding and vision of why that is important. Most agreed that increasing our net worth will allow us to donate more money to smokejumpers and their families in need, ease the work burden on our BOD and member volunteers and better allow us to accomplish other NSA mission objectives.

Many possibilities were discussed for increasing net worth; donations, fund raisers, merchandise sales, investments, memberships-associate and corporate, advertisements on website

Chuck will recreate the Associate Membership "How to be a Smokejumper" product for a 60-40 split of revenue. Passed by vote.

Pursue website advertising possibilities-Chuck will ask our web master about the meaning of website stats that indicate thousands of hits on the NSA website monthly. Larry Longley will research more info on website advertising, and bring more info and proposal to Spokane, Oct8 & 9. Explore any conflicts between non-profit status and ad revenue.

Annual Fund-formalize the annual end-of-year request for donations to fund the Good Samaritan Fund, the Trails Program, scholarships, and other NSA programs.

Hold a Silent Auction at each NSA meeting social. BOD members bring items. John Twiss will organize.

Mike Overby sent information via Jim Cherry on running the NY marathon representing and raising funds for a charity called the Hole in the Wall Gang. Look into NSA doing this and putting info on website. Jim Cherry will report progress at next meeting. There are also possibilities with corporate sponsorship programs and corporate memberships.

Doug Houston will check with Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation on merchandising possibilities. Report back at Oct meeting in Spokane.

Consider bringing non-smokejumpers on trail projects for a fee or pursue corporate sponsorship of trails projects. Ask Jim Cherry and Roger Savage to discuss with Trails Advisory Committee.

Action Items Goal #1:

Recreate Associate membership on website "How to be a Smokejumper" product-Chuck Sheley-by Spokane meeting

Clarify meaning of NSA website numbers with web master-Chuck Sheley- Spokane meeting

Research info on website advertising and draft proposal. Research any conflicts with ad revenue and non-profit status-Larry Longley-Spokane meeting

Formalize Annual Fund process and initiate 2010 year end request-? Bob Dayton- Spokane meeting

Research charitable efforts like Mike Overby reported about-Jim Cherry-Spokane meeting

Check with Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation on NSA merchandising possibilities-Doug Houston-

Spokane meeting

Discuss non-smokejumper participation, corporate sponsorship in Trails Program-Roger Savage and Jim Cherry-Spokane meeting

Long Term Goal #2: By 2015, fully fund production of NSA magazine

See succession planning discussion below.

Long Term Goal #3: By 2015, increase NSA membership by 50%-roughly 780 new members.

No discussion, ran out of time.

Long Term Goal #4: By 2015, increase Life Memberships by 50%--361 members

No discussion, ran out of time

Long Term Goal #5: By 2015, hire an executive director

No discussion, ran out of time. Agreed to discuss LT goals 3-5 at the Spokane meeting.

The Board voted and agreed to give the Lusk family \$2575.00 for help with their son, Jedidiah, who is fighting brain cancer. Jedidiah's parents, Scott and Cynthia were both smokejumpers. John Helmer will deliver. **Note:** This amount was increased to \$3100 since the meeting, by additional donations and has been delivered to the Lusk family by John Helmer and his wife, Jinx.

Day 2, June 11th, 0730

NSA Board of Directors Succession Planning-- Everyone

There are 3 high-priority succession-planning issues that need immediate attention. One is the future of the trails program after the loss of Jon McBride. The second is making a plan to continue publishing the magazine without Chuck Sheley. The third is replacing Charlie Brown as Secretary. We also had a general discussion about succession issues relating to the Board of Directors.

Trails program- Jon was going to bring 5 names to this meeting of potential replacements and he had begun work on preparing others to help with the considerable workload he had been handling. The Trails committee is working through some of these issues. There were 19 people at the Trails Committee meeting in Missoula recently. The main focus right now is to successfully get this year's work done, and then continue with future planning to replace Jon. There are 25 different projects planned for this year. The Board will support and assist the Trails Committee however possible as we all work through the loss of Jon McBride. In the meantime, the Trails Advisory Committee is working hard to make this season a success and all of us on the Board and in the NSA are grateful for their great effort in a tough time.

Magazine- Chuck is not planning to quit, but a plan needs to be in place to continue publishing a high-quality magazine in case something unexpected occurs. The editor needs to make a minimum of a 5-year commitment. The editor needs to be able to work face-to-face with the layout person. Then to the

printer for printing, then for mailing we need a bulk mailer. Chuck gets mailing labels from Larry Lufkin, transfers them electronically to the bulk mailer. Chuck prints 1700 copies per issue and gets back approximately 40 each quarter because of bad addresses. He works hard to get new addresses and forward the returned copies. Chuck estimates his weekly time commitment at 20 hours. His wife, K.G., spends about 10 hours a week on the magazine. Chuck's current assistant is an ex-student of his named Ed Booth. It costs \$5000 per issue for printing and mailing costs. There has been a recent big increase in mailing costs. \$20,000 a year is budgeted for the magazine. **Chuck thinks that needs to be raised to \$22,000 this year. Voted and approved.** Chuck recommended that he discuss taking over editing and overall publication duties with Ed Booth and report back to us at Spokane.

Long Term Goal #2 Magazine Action Item: Chuck Sheley will explore possibilities to keep using his support system in Chico, CA and transitioning to a paid new editor, who is currently his assistant, and will report at the Spokane meeting. The goal is a plan to finance and continue publishing the quarterly magazine into the future after Chuck Sheley's leadership and hard work is ended for whatever reason.

Treasurer- Charlie Brown works 20 plus hours a month at NSA Treasurer work. He would like to transition out of the treasurer's position soon due to other responsibilities. Jim Cherry recommended hiring out the treasurer work with Charlie remaining on the board and overseeing the work. Ron Stoleson suggested giving Charlie a budget to start working on this transition.

Decision: We will hire a bookkeeping/accounting service and Charlie will oversee their work. John Twiss, Charlie, and Doug Houston will check out various possibilities and communicate with each other. The goal is to have something in place or on the way by the Spokane meeting. Charlie has \$5000 in the budget for this purpose.

General succession planning discussion: What does the board need in terms of membership diversity and succession planning? **We talked about adding an Associate Member to the Board, someone from the USFS or BLM retiree community,** and someone from the pilot community, as well as a female smokejumper. We need to look at the current age, gender, race, and skills mix of the board and look at gaps that need filling. Look at the idea of geographic chapters. We need to consider the cost and time commitment to younger members who are still working fulltime.

We can help orient new Board members by developing a manual. Consider assigning a mentor for new board members. Jim Cherry has list of items that should be included in a manual. Identify specific people to get on the board (power, influence, money).

Arlen Cravens, a long-time smokejumper and base manager, and current fire staff on the Shasta-Trinity National Forest attended much of the 2nd day's meeting and recommended that we consider asking current smokejumpers about issues regarding joining the NSA. Maybe they don't know we need them and want them. Look at ways to reconnect with B list jumpers, people who we have no contact or connection with. A number of names of potential board members were mentioned with the idea that we would invite some of them to the Board meeting in Spokane to gauge their interest in joining the Board.

Treasurer's Report

Given by Charlie Brown. No significant issues. Investment performance is down and continues to reflect the general economy. We reaffirmed our principal of maintaining a balanced budget and living within

our means.

Fire/Aviation News and Update, Tom Harbour National Director of Forest Service Fire and Aviation

The USFS fire program is half of the agency budget. There are 10480 firefighters in the USFS. The preparedness budget is over a billion dollars. The suppression budget is a billion and a half dollars, plus an extra half billion in the new Flame Fund and 350 million in fuels. The new Secretary of Agriculture, Tom Vilsack, is very interested in the USFS fire program. He is working with Ken Salazar, Secretary of Interior, on a news conference with the National Association of State Foresters and the International Association of Fire Chiefs about the fire season prognosis in the west. The Forest Service protects 193 million acres of National Forest and Grasslands in 44 states plus 20 million acres of other state and private land. There is fire activity 12 months of the year. The USFS has 1000 engines, 100+ Type I crews, 377 smokejumpers, 663 rappellers. The Flame Fund was established to prevent disruption to other agency programs if suppression accounts are depleted. The fund will replenish suppression accounts if and when needed.

Tom was asked about the status of the one fire agency issue, and he said it is an idea that comes up on a regular basis. The USFS and DOI need to avoid duplications of infrastructure and costs. When DOI and FS are coordinated in planning and presentation to Congress, they look like one program with few issues. Tom believes the Congress is sensitive to differences between agencies and programs, like round and square chutes.

Alaska is busy, the southwest is cranking up and a normal fire season is forecast, but it shouldn't be as quiet as the last 2 years. The aging aircraft fleet is an issue-some air tanker models are approaching the end of their useful life because of rising maintenance costs. The oldest P-2V is from 1947. The C-130J looks like the best replacement option- 4 props, short takeoff and landing (STOL) capability, good density altitude performance. The BA146 is another possibility. It has 4 jet engines, is fast, has good density altitude performance, but has high fuel use. SEATs and scoopers are being used effectively right now. Very Large Air Tankers (VLAT) are currently in limited operation. That fleet consists of 2 DC-10s (Ten Tanker) and 1 Evergreen 747. The idea of DOD running the LAT fleet, reserve or guard, has been discussed. There are 36 or 37 platform possibilities on the list Tom keeps of large air tankers.

The per capita cost of various firefighter types attracts Congressional interest and Tom says jumpers have the highest per capita cost. Jumpers have to live down the legend of the 2-man fire in the Bob Marshall Wilderness and develop new fields of expertise. Why such an expensive resource for low value fire? So they must be highly utilized in other areas-quick reaction, fast moving, experienced overhead on wildland urban interface, and other high-priority fires. Smaller smokejumper platforms are not too exciting to Tom. More interesting are faster, bigger, 20 person capable aircraft. DC-3s also have age, maintenance and cost issues. A C130J can carry 80 jumpers.

There is work being done on the use of unmanned aerial systems in fire management. We need to have social debate on the role of fire. There are 100 million people living in the wildland urban interface. Arlen Cravens discussed the short-term use of smokejumpers on key fires and their value, and his belief that SJ numbers are too low. Doug Houston asked if it was a regional or national decision to change smokejumper numbers. Tom replied that there is a category of assets called National Shared Resources, and smokejumpers are in this category, but that it is a regional decision to change smokejumper numbers. There is an ongoing discussion between the Fire Director and Regional Foresters about the level of standardization and nationalization of various types of fire resources. Through the recent rappeller fatality, they've learned that multiple regional programs don't cut it. They are trying to balance national oversight and standards versus regional autonomy and control. How do we in the NSA and smokejumper community use our wisdom and experience to make a useful contribution to current

fire management? Tom encourages us to share our experience and wisdom, but be careful of positional advocacy-numbers of jumpers and bases.

Fundraising

Bob Dayton handed out and discussed his briefing paper "Fundraising-Ideas and Opportunities" and explained a variety of fundraising and donation ideas. Many ideas such as adding a donation button to the website were discussed. Also explored were credit card donations, annuity trusts, endowments, insurance, stock and land donations. Use of social network mediums such as a Facebook Page to solicit and engage people was highlighted. It is apparent that we must improve our fundraising abilities to meet many of our NSA Long Term Goals. The BOD was asked to look at websites and facebook sites of other non profits to gauge the ease of making donations and the ability to communicate their mission.

Long Term Goal #1 Action Item : Bob Dayton, Doug Houston, Larry Longley will take action on setting up a Facebook page and a donation button on our website with Chuck and the webmaster. Tom Boatner will look into getting added to the Combined Federal Campaign. Report on progress at the Spokane meeting.

Merchandising-Doug Houston

If you have any ideas for merchandising, talk to Doug. Doug has a couple of thousand dollars of miscellaneous inventory. He sold \$650 of t-shirts sold to the Missoula Smokejumper Visitor Center. There is a DC-3 gathering in Oshkosh, Wisconsin the last week in July and it may be worth trying to get someone and stuff back there to sell. The Bozeman Watch Company still owes us \$900, but they plan to pay that when they can and they may do another watch.

Investment Report-John Helmer

The stock market is down and this may be viewed as a buying opportunity.\$175,000 is currently authorized, with \$18,000 currently not invested. John asked for an additional 25,000. **Decision: Not approved.**

Trail Maintenance-Jim Cherry

From May to October, 25 projects are planned. The last 2 weeks in July are smokejumper only projects, but other projects allow for spouses, children, associate members, etc. Jon McBride Memorial dates are July 16th (Friday) and July 24th.

Short Term Goal #5 Action Item: NSA Smokejumper Scholarship - Larry Lufkin

The written proposal was distributed and explained. **Decision: We agreed to add family members of active jumpers ,allow attendance at trade schools, and that applicants don't need to be pursuing a 4 year degree. We agreed to \$2000 in scholarships annually, with a maximum of \$1000 per student per year. Apply by July 1, 2011 for 2011/2012 use.**

History update-Larry Longley

Larry Longley has copies of NSA video interviews, done over the years by Steve Smith and himself. They are unedited and unvarnished. Larry is still trying to catch up on transcripts, but interviews are his top

priority, as older jumpers are passing on. Larry has an idea to work on a video of 1940s jumper stories, photos, and interviews, as he gets time. Larry wants NSA to consider a process of collecting, storing and loaning smokejumper artifacts. **Decision: Develop a plan for collecting, storing, and sharing historical artifacts-Larry Longley-by Spokane meeting.**

Budget-Charley Brown

Charley presented his proposed NSA budget for 2010/2011 and there was a discussion of items and amounts. **Decision: The board agreed to postpone Evergreen Museum spending until next year. Some minor changes in amounts were made based on current year spending and the budget was approved.**

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the NSA BOD is scheduled for October 8 and 9 in Spokane, WA. All NSA members as always are invited to attend. There will be a social the second evening.

List of action items and decisions follows on next 2 pages.

ACTION ITEMS from Redding, CA Meeting

Action Item : Chuck will redistribute to the Board the newsletter article about one of the ADFP studies. (Done by Chuck, 6-18-2010)

Action Item : assign BOD members to visit each base and make a presentation about NSA at a crew

meeting. Base Visit Assignments:

John Helmer, Chuck Sheley-RDD

Tom Boatner-BOI

Doug Houston-MSO

Larry Longley, Larry Lufkin-NCSB

Leo Cromwell-McCall

Bob Dayton-West Yellowstone

Mark Corbett-RAC

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Action Item : Finalize and distribute the list of base contacts – Doug Houston.

Action Item : Build a briefing listing NSAs programs, activities, and accomplishments to be used to recruit new members and explain who we are and what we do – Tom Boatner

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Action Items :

- a) Recreate Associate membership "How to be a Smokejumper" product-Chuck Sheley-NLT Spokane meeting
- b) Clarify meaning of NSA website numbers with webmaster-Chuck Sheley-NLT Spokane meeting
- c) Research info on website advertising and draft proposal. Research any conflicts with ad revenue and non-profit status-Larry Longley-Spokane meeting
- d) Formalize Annual Fund process and initiate 2010 year end request- Bob Dayton Spokane meeting
- e) Research charitable efforts like Mike Overby reported about-Jim Cherry-Spokane meeting
- f) Check with Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation on NSA merchandising possibilities-Doug Houston-NLT Spokane meeting
- g) Discuss non-smokejumper participation, corporate sponsorship in Trails Program-Roger

Savage and Jim Cherry-Spokane meeting

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