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Meeting Minutes, June 13th, 2008

National Smokejumper Association Board of Directors

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National Smokejumper Association

Board of Directors Meeting

June 13, 2008

McCall, Idaho

Chuck Sheley, First Vice President

John Twiss, Second Vice President

Charles Brown, Treasurer

Dave Bennett, Secretary

James Cherry, Director

John Helmer, Director

Guy Hurlbutt, Director

Leo Cromwell, Director

Greg West, Director

Jerry Williams, Director

Introductions -John Twiss

New board members Gregg West and Jerry Williams were introduced and welcomed to the meeting.

Welcome by Frankie Romero-Base Manager MYL

MYL operates with 70 jumpers and 3 aircraft. The crew undergoes approximately 10% attrition per year. A lot of the staff work 6 months per year; only about 10 work summers only. Fire seasons are longer than they were 20 years ago. – don't jump in there very much. Not jumping the Frank Church Wilderness very much because of the good health of the ecosystem. Many of jumps are near roads, out of the wilderness and protection of structures is a big part of the job now. Quick Response, Range, and Payload are still the selling points of the Smokejumper Program.

The round FS 14 parachute is the current main parachute. There is a development program currently to produce an improved parachute system. Commercial parachute manufacturers are developing products for demonstration. Jerry Williams said that the jumper program will likely be focused more on application to large fires and associated conditions. There are eleven Forest Service jumpers training on the BLM ram air parachute system. These people will provide feedback on appropriateness of ram air chutes for Forest Service missions.

Dave Bennett-Minutes of the last meeting

Minutes approved as read.

Treasurer's Report-Charlie Brown

Charlie discussed several handouts that included the Balance Sheet as of March 31, 2008, Current Year Budget, and Proposed 2008-2009 budget.

Balance Sheet as of March 31, 2008:

Total profit from Boise reunion was \$5500 including the silent auction.

Chuck Sheley said that we made much more on the 2000 Redding reunion - \$12,000 clear in merchandise in 2000 as compared to \$5500 total including merchandise at Boise in 2007.

Summary of Assets-we have \$26K cash.

Interest earning accounts-\$57k

Subtotal checking and savings

Total assets-\$390K, Market value \$403K.

Current year budget:

Revenue income from dues will be ~\$30K.

Expenses-\$3000 budgeted for audit, but will not be spent. Probably only \$500 will be required.

We will have a budget surplus this FY of ~ \$17K.

Trails maintenance financial activities are well capitalized. The Trails program now has its own funding and invests it separately with the exception of the Art Jukkala scholarship fund monies that Charlie Brown manages. The Jukkala fund value is \$17k.

The Finn Ward Fund current balance is \$14k. Approx \$80k has been raised. Planned spending is for continued treatments and remodeling their house for handicapped access.

The Profit and Loss sheet for the year through June 5 is provided to give everyone a sense for current financial status.

Proposed budget for July 1, 2008-June 30, 2009:

Following are highlights of the proposed budget.

- Charlie has sent \$3000 to NSC thus far in 2008. We agreed earlier to a \$10k budget for NSC.
- We approved \$200 for Trails Maintenance. Charlie and Jim Cherry suggested an increase to \$500. We will consider the Trails Magazine as a 5th issue of the NSA Magazine. John Helmer moved to increase the Trails Magazine budget from \$200 to \$500. Motion seconded and approved.
- The Chuck Sheley stipend for Magazine production was discussed. John Helmer moved to increase from \$3000 to \$4000. Motion seconded and carried. Chuck donates much of his stipend back to the NSA.
- Chuck is appealing for additional editing support since his editor has passed away.
- Dues income is estimated at \$28k.
- We have \$2000 for donations.
- \$1000 is budgeted for video interview transcriptions.
- We have a President's Fund at \$700.
- John Twiss said that Bill Moody is asking for \$2000 to maintain and upgrade the Evergreen Museum exhibit. Chuck said that maintenance is required; there has been some damage and some things need to be improved. Gregg West volunteered to check out the status at the museum.

John Helmer moved to approve the \$2000 for the Evergreen exhibit. Motion seconded and approved.

Guy Hurlbutt said that lack of liability insurance for the BOD is a serious problem. Chuck said that we have advertised in the magazine for an insurance expert to help in this area. We should budget \$1000, however, no motion was offered. Guy volunteered to pursue insurance with the industry. The NSC in WYS is insured for \$1M liability. We are covered as part of this for NSC-associated activities.

Life Membership-Jim Cherry

In 2005 we had 11 new Life Members. Following is the recent history of Life Memberships

- 2006 -35
- 2007 -32
- 2008 -8 and counting

Total Life Members now is 217.

John Helmer-we Must adjust the fund for inflation; the \$1000 donation should be increased periodically. Ample advance notice of increases should be provided.

The idea of corporate sponsors has died and needs to be revived. Cultivating this idea requires some real skills.

Investment Report - John Helmer

We have no new investments since the last meeting. We approved another \$25k in the March meeting. The total is now \$175k. We have \$26k remaining uncommitted in the authorized amount.

Our internal rate of return is now 8.74%

Trail Maintenance – Jim Cherry

There potentially will be a modest increase in the number of participants this year. This marks 10th straight year of growth. Two new areas are being staffed this year

- Boundary Water Wilderness project.
- Tahoe National forest in Northern California.

John McBride was contacted by the WYS base manager and also the MSO base manager who enquired about the prospects of jumpers jumping into projects to work with our trail crews. Our stipulation is that they must camp and eat one meal a day with us. These will likely be three day projects for the jumpers.

In early April, Jon was invited to speak at UC Berkeley College of Forestry seniors. Jon was amazed at the number of students that wanted to be part of the program. The interest by these students highlights the importance of associate memberships and creating user friendly channels for people to become associate members.

This summer, there will be two projects back to back at Seeley Lake-Double Arrow Lookout, then the second week, restore the old ranger district bunk house. The district is making it available for our use on a year around basis. This raises the opportunity in 2009 a couples-only trails program. Or father-son/grandchild trails program. Forest Service requires CPR and first aid training for all volunteers.

Mann Gulch project-The management plan has been accepted however there will be no project during 2008.

Barry Hicks has arranged for senior forest service personnel to deal with an issue: jumpers have previously cleared deadfall on trails projects, then wildfires have passed through, creating more deadfall. There is some reticence on the part of trails crew going back to repair the damage. These same senior FS personnel will attend the project sendoffs and provide the same discussion as before.

Merchandise Committee Report – Charlie Brown

Chuck Sheley is still marketing the remainder of the inventory from the web store when Chuck was running the store. The Trails Program also sells merchandise to trails project participants. Doug Houston should take the lead in discussing the issue with Pam, Chuck Sheley, and the Trails Program and reaching resolution.

Stan asked if he has spending authority for new products. The consensus of the board is no, unless there is a unique situation that develops.

Audit Committee Membership Selection- Charlie Brown

Charlie said that the logistics of the audit are still being worked out. FY numbers for 2007/08 will be available for the audit by the September board meeting.

John Helmer moved that we appoint Jim Kleperher, Cliff Dalzell and Dean Longanecker to the audit committee. Motion seconded and approved.

We would like to have the audit before the September 13 BOD meeting. Chuck said this will be tight with regard to getting the information to the audit committee.

The protocol should be as follows: Doug will assign and direct the audit committee. The committee will have access to the data but not have the ability to make transfers. There are several accounts that will be audited. These include Chuck's magazine account, the Trails Maintenance Fund, and the Finn Ward account.

Memorial Life Membership Selections – Leo Cromwell

Jim Cherry will present a memorial plaque to Frankie Romero at the reunion banquet. The recipients are pilots and jumpers from McCall. The Boise Reunion Committee felt this gesture would be good for future national reunions as a way to recognize people who have passed away that have contributed to the jumper program.

Also the NSA will present a plaque to Stan Tate as the National Smokejumper Chaplin at the McCall reunion.

Membership Committee – Guy Hurlbutt

The Membership Committee consists of Ron Stoleson, Jim Cherry, Charlie Brown and Guy Hurlbutt (Chairman). Chuck Sheley and John McDaniel were also invited to provide comment. We were asked to have recommendations in place for the NSA Board meeting in McCall, Idaho on June 13, 2008. The thrust of these recommendations is to increase membership and interest in NSA and reduce the administrative burden for tracking and collecting fees.

John McDaniel, Membership Coordinator for NSA, prepared a paper for the March 2008 Board meeting discussing the membership issues and including several recommendations. These recommendations were individually reviewed by the Committee and many of them are included in our report.

Specific Recommendations:

The Committee, after review and deliberation, recommends that the following proposals in John McDaniel's paper be adopted:

1. Require future national reunion committees to include in the registration form a question asking if the respondent is a member of NSA. Those responding "no" will find a membership application in their registration packets.
2. All attendees at national reunions will be asked to furnish a mailing address.
3. There should be a two-tiered fee for national reunions, with a higher fee (by \$15) charged to non-NSA members.
4. Each future national reunion should include membership and life membership coordinators, and these individuals should be available to distribute information from a location that is easily visible and accessible (e.g. next to the main registration desk).
5. The NSA Board should appoint a representative whose job is to attend national reunion committee meetings and assure that the organization's interests are upheld.
6. Contact each Base manager and ask for an opportunity to provide information on NSA to each new crop of jumpers during "rookie week." In a similar vein, appoint a regional representative from NSA to interface with the Bases and Base Managers in telling the story of NSA and why it is important to current and former jumpers. Although not specifically mentioned in the McDaniel Paper, the Committee also recommends that an NSA representative visit with each Base manager to see if that individual would be willing to personally discuss the benefits of NSA membership with all active smokejumpers working in his/her facility.

General Recommendation:

In addition to the above, the Committee also believes that the long-term viability of NSA hinges on the ability to demonstrate that it provides opportunities and services of value to current and former jumpers and other interested stakeholders. Therefore, we recommend that NSA adopt an array of projects, benefits, information and bonding opportunities that will appeal to a diverse group, thereby providing better service to existing members and providing incentives for more members to join. In the final

analysis, we think this will go further toward increasing membership and promoting a viable organization than altering the current dues structure.

Obviously, this is not an easy goal or one which could be sufficiently threshed out in the limited amount of time given to this Committee. However, the need to accomplish these broad objectives was discussed in John McDaniel's Paper as well as in the analysis done by the Committee, chaired by Jim Cherry, charged with developing a vision and mission statement, goals and strategies for NSA. The proposals of this latter Committee will be presented to the NSA Board at the June 13, 2008 meeting for approval.

Adoption of the proposed vision, mission, goals and strategies for NSA will provide a clearer direction for the organization and set the stage for meaningful discussions designed to accomplish the goals in this recommendation. We strongly suggest appointment of a Strategies Committee charged with thorough evaluation of NSA as it currently exists and ways to develop the organization so as to accomplish the vision, mission, goals, and strategies proposed by the Cherry Committee.

In making this recommendation, we are sensitive to the tendency in some organizations to create endless committees which accomplish very little. In this case, though, we think this is a logical "next step" to the proposals of the Membership Committee and, more particularly, Jim Cherry's Vision and Mission Committee.

Proposal Considered But Not Recommended:

Consider giving a fee discount to active smokejumpers.

Comment: This suggestion surfaced in John McDaniel's Paper and other sources. The positive side of this suggestion is that it accommodates those jumpers who may have less means than older, former jumpers to pay full dues. A downside is that it creates an automatic distinction between current and former jumpers at a time when we are trying to build a unified organization.

Further, Chuck Sheley pointed out that the Board has already granted approval to provide a free year membership to all rookies and the opportunity to renew that membership at half-price. The Committee thinks this provides a sufficient economic incentive to new smokejumpers without running the risk of creating separate classes of dues.

Proposals Needing Board Discussion: (Committee could not agree on unanimous recommendation)

1. Encourage 10-year memberships by offering a one-time \$120 offer to all non-members for whom NSA has a current address (referred to as "B" status jumpers) who sign up for ten years.

Comment: The 4-member Committee could not reach unanimity on this proposal. Three of the four members would not recommend it. The 4th thinks it should be adopted. In addition, Chuck Sheley and John McDaniel, who provided input, strongly favor this proposal.

This has been an on-going topic for the Board. To put things in perspective, current dues are:

One year: \$30

Two years: \$50
Five years: \$100
Ten years: \$180
Life: \$1000

One question is whether this temporary reduction in the 10-year membership fee is sufficient incentive to attract more members. The amount of savings appears to be modest. For example, reducing the current \$180 fee to \$120 results in a \$60 savings over the ten-year period (\$6 per year). Those opposing this suggestion do not believe sufficient data has been presented to demonstrate that this reduction in dues will produce the desired effect of significantly increasing 10-year memberships.

Opponents of this proposal also are concerned about the fairness to existing members. Again, a dual dues structure would result through which B-status jumpers would enjoy an opportunity for lower fees not afforded current members. Among other things, this could result in some members canceling their membership in order to attain B-status, thus qualifying them for the lower rate.

On the other side, the proponents argue that it is desirable to encourage long-term membership and also to attempt to reach the substantial number of B-jumpers who, for whatever reason, have not chosen to join NSA. They think that any increase in 10-year membership will be positive and worth the effort and risks (if any) of reducing 10-year dues.

There is also disagreement as to the economic impact this proposal would have on NSA. Chuck Sheley argues that the impact on reducing fees in any category is skewed by the way NSA computes Unit Expense per Member. Chuck states that this figure is determined by only looking at NSA's expenses, divided into the number of members, as opposed to also including income for NSA in order to provide a more complete picture of actual costs per member. Based on this, he believes financial impact will be negligible, if any. On the other side, Charlie Brown prepared a draft analysis for the September 7, 2007 Board meeting. He recently updated and expanded this analysis in an attempt to address Chuck Sheley's concern. Charlie's updated analysis raises some "red flags" which the majority of the Committee think should be weighed before this proposal is adopted.

Given the lack of agreement on this issue, the Committee suggests that this topic needs to be aired through further discussion by the Board with a final decision made once both sides are heard.

2. Reduce the number of one-year and two-year members in favor of longer-term membership.

Comment: Substantial effort is needed to administratively handle short-term membership. Specifically, someone has to be responsible for several mailings a quarter in order to perform this function. Currently, the burden falls on a couple of volunteer Board members.

In addition to the administrative concerns, those favoring this proposal argue that it makes sense to encourage long-term members in order to provide continuity in membership and long-term commitment to the organization.

The concerns expressed by the opponents to this proposal are similar to those addressed in the discussion of lowering 10-year fees. This group's opinion is that the dues structure is reasonable and one which provides a broad array of options extending from one year to life membership. While this group agrees with the suggestion that longer-term membership is a good idea which should be encouraged, it also believes it would be a mistake to abandon one and two-year memberships or make them less attractive.

The Committee is sensitive to the administrative burdens the short-term memberships place on the Board volunteers. It is not reasonable to expect volunteer Board members to shoulder substantial work on a continuing basis. Two suggestions are proposed: (1) authorize hiring of a part-time person or persons to assist in the administrative requirements (such as mailings) and/or (2) encourage other Board members to volunteer in this regard.

Given the lack of unanimity among the Committee on whether this proposal should be adopted, and the similarity with the proposal to reduce 10-year dues, we ask that this proposal be presented to the Board for discussion and decision.

Leo Cromwell said that item 2, "attendees at national reunions will be asked to furnish a mailing address" is basically incorrect for the Boise reunion-essentially all ex jumpers that registered provided their contact information.

Guy moved to adopt items 1 through 6 with the following changes to item 3:

Re item 3: Charlie suggested a \$15 surcharge for non members who register at reunions which includes an automatic one year gift membership.

Motion seconded and approved.

Item number 6 requires additional consideration for implementation: We need to designate a board member for each jumper base to make these contacts.

John Helmer moved that Doug Houston is in charge of item 6 implementation. Motion seconded and approved.

It was agreed that John Helmer will prepare a contract that describes the requirements for national reunions that the NSA representative will take forward during organization of the reunion.

Chuck Sheley moved to institute a one-time only B group 10-year Membership opportunity for \$120. No second, the motion failed.

Jim Cherry suggested that we engage an NSA member that is expert in marketing to develop a marketing piece that will guide us in development of our marketing and incentives.

Vision Statement – Jim Cherry

The NSA Vision, Value, Mission adopted – motion by Jim Cherry. Seconded and passed.

NSA Vision

The National Smokejumper Association will be:

- the connecting link for all generations of smokejumpers
- a participant in the protection and enhancement of our nation's natural resources
- a source of inspiration for future generations
- an advocate for the continued evolution of the smokejumper program

NSA Core Values

Comradeship	Loyalty	Initiative	Education	Stewardship
	Pride in Quality Work		Generosity	

NSA Mission

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 nation's forest and grassland resources, responding to special needs of the smokejumper community, and advocating for the program's future.

NSA Goals

- The history of aerial, wildland firefighters is preserved and understanding of the value of the smokejumper program is advanced.
 - A smokejumper database is maintained
 - A magazine is published
 - Reunions are held periodically
 - Museums, libraries and interpretive centers are provided with accurate information about smokejumpers and aerial firefighter activities
 - The continuing value of the smokejumper program for preservation of our national forests and grasslands is accurately communicated to decision makers
 - The NSA becomes an international organization, embracing smokejumpers past and present, everywhere
 - The value of the organization continues to grow by expanding its programs for both past and present smokejumpers
- Through mentoring today's youth our core values are passed on to new generations.
 - The National Smokejumper Center is endorsed and encouraged by the NSA
 - The NSA Trails Maintenance Program is broadened to include youth and families
- Each life we influence and each place we touch is left better, bringing the greatest good to all for today and tomorrow.
- The NSA Trail Maintenance Program provides a resource of manpower to enhance our natural resources in all regions of the United States.
- The NSA is responsive to special needs of the smokejumper community

Good Samaritan Fund – Jim Cherry

Jim discussed the Good Samaritan Fund proposal.

NSA GOOD SAMARITAN/MEMORIAL FUND

At recent NSA Board meetings there has been expression for a more systematic approach for providing assistance to individuals in need of financial aid. The NSA Mission Statement reads as follows:

*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 nation's forest and grassland resources,
and responding to special needs of smokejumpers and their families.*

The color highlighting has been added to indicate that providing aid is within the scope of our NSA mission and that we do not see our NSA as working alone in meeting the special needs that may arise.

The following is proposed as a starting place for discussion at our upcoming NSA Board meeting:

- For the 2009 fiscal year the NSA budget would include an annual line item titled 'Good Samaritan Fund'. (Perhaps a figure of \$1,000 would be considered appropriate for the first year.)
- The annual budget line item would represent a floor of support for the 'Good Samaritan Fund'.
- The NSA Board would promote the opportunity for individuals to make tax deductible donations to a NSA Memorial Fund. A donation form would be a standard item in the Smokejumper Magazine and all donations would be acknowledged annually in the magazine.
- The 'Good Samaritan Fund' would be supplemented through donations designated to the NSA Memorial Fund.
- An article regarding the establishment of the funds would be included in the next available issue of the Smokejumper Magazine. The article would explain the linkage between the two funds, the tax deductible aspect of contributions to the NSA Memorial Fund, and the purpose of the funds.
- Within the parameters of the resources available in the 'Good Samaritan Fund' the NSA Board could provide assistance as needed/requested.

The following issues need to be discussed by the NSA Board to establish additional parameters for providing aid to those in need:

- ✓ Will aid be provided to all **smokejumpers and their families** or only to those who are members of the NSA?
- ✓ Will aid be provided in all situations of need or will it be limited to those that have been victims of natural disasters and catastrophic illness/injury or some other criteria?
- ✓ How will the NSA work **through a cadre of volunteers and partnerships** to share the role of providing aid?

- ✓ If a pricing differential is established for registration of members vs. non-members at reunions, etc. would it be appropriate/desirable to designate that differential (or a portion thereof) for the 'Good Samaritan Fund'?

Jim Cherry moved to change the budget line item for donations to Good Samaritan Fund established at \$2000 and that we solicit contributions to the fund through an insert annually in the Smokejumper Magazine. Motion seconded and approved. The criteria discussion will be resumed at the Redmond meeting.