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Meeting Minutes, March 8th, 2008

National Smokejumper Association Board of Directors

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National Smokejumper Association

Board of Directors Meeting

March 8, 2008

Missoula, Montana

Attendees:

Doug Houston, President

Chuck Sheley, First Vice President

John Twiss, Second Vice President

Charles Brown, Treasurer

Dave Bennett, Secretary

Bill Moody, Director

James Cherry, Director

John Helmer, Director

Larry Lufkin, Director

Larry Longley, Director

Gary Johnson, Director

John McDaniel, Director

Jon McBride, NSA Trails Coordinator

Guy Hurlbutt, Director

Roland Stoleson, Director

Stan Linnertz, Merchandise Manager

Leo Cromwell, Director

Fred Cooper, Past Membership Coordinator

Roger Savage, Database Manager

Barry Hicks, NSC, Member

Pam Cosgrove, KAS MAR Products

Bob Whaley, Member

Eddy and Finn Ward

Absent:

Mark Corbet, Director

Special Announcement-Jim Cherry

Jim Cherry told the board that Tom McGrath (MSO 57) is very sick and a card was prepared and sent to him.

Minutes of the last meeting-Dave Bennett

The minutes were approved as read.

Treasurer's Report-Charlie Brown

Charlie presented the revised FY 2007 Financials. He incorporated Doug's merchandise activities that he had been recording on a cash basis, and also the Finn Ward Fund.

Charlie has done an inflation adjustment on the Life Member Endowment Fund, and also on monthly Life Member donations. Charlie's calculations show that we are staying up with inflation.

Doug has some DVD inventory from the merchandise program that he is transferring to Stan and Pam.

Charlie reported on the first half of the fiscal year that ended 31 Dec 07. The highlights follow:

- Web site income is zero, compared to last year's \$2300.
- Western Heritage owes the NSA approximately \$2000.
- Membership is still down from last year, with the exception of the 10 year membership, which is up.

The Trails Maintenance Program provided two donations; a \$2000 scholarship to Lesley Ann Mackey and also \$1157 to the Selway-Bitterroot Foundation.

The Boise reunion bank account is being closed out. We made approximately \$5000 on the Boise silent auction. Chuck Sheley said that we are under-exploiting the merchandise opportunities at our reunions.

The Finn Ward fund currently is valued at \$7,445. At one time it was on the order of \$70,000.

Assets: High yield savings- \$59,000 currently. Yield is going down with the Fed rate cuts. We have 4 CDs. Charlie reviews them on a one year basis. These are at ~5%, which is good in the current market.

Profit & Loss as of 31 Dec 07 shows that expenses are up a little based on donations we have been making. We have a little bit of surplus \$11,000.

We still have \$6000 in the Boise reunion fund. This is shown on the P&L sheet.

Charlie provided the secretary a backup of the QuickBooks files for the FY.

The Board considered a proposal for a separate budget for people in need. Chuck said there are a lot of people in need, for instance, we donated to an ex-jumper that was not an NSA member. We need some criteria as a basis for approval of donations.

Jim Cherry suggested a 'Good Samaritan' budget item. We need someone to help draft the criteria for the Good Samaritan fund donation. Charlie will chair a committee that will establish criteria for the Good Samaritan fund. Jim Cherry will assemble a packet of info for the Good Samaritan fund. Ron Stoleson added that there is a factor associated with other charitable organizations taking care of these people. It shouldn't necessarily be the NSA that is the only source of help.

We must send an acknowledgement letter to donors. The secretary will send these letters.

Investments report – John Helmer

John reported that the market is down; our cost basis is \$146k, and the present value is \$155k.

The NSA's net worth is presently \$400k, and approximately 37% of the net worth is in investments.

John asked if we are ok with our investment strategy if we go negative on our earnings for a short time. He says historically, equity investments yield 10% vs. 5% of fixed income investments. Since the market is in a low condition now, strategically it makes sense for us to commit more money now and take advantage of bargain prices. There was considerable discussion on the pros and cons of further investment. Guy Hurlbutt moved that we add \$25,000 to the investment fund and that we continue our strategy in the investment market. Motion carried.

Bob Whaley asked if we have an investment strategy / guidelines-we do, and we will re-visit this strategy to assure that it is adequate.

National Smokejumper Center (NSC)-Barry Hicks

Barry provided an update on the NSC proposal at the historic Ranger station in West Yellowstone. The Forest Service has authority to sell the station to an organization such as the NSC. They will get fair market value at \$300,000 to \$800,000.

The Forest Supervisor wants the NSC to tell them which option is preferred; one is to leave the buildings in tact to preserve the historic value or to move the buildings to a new location. NSC will choose the first option, to leave the buildings at the present location. The city of WYS is solidly behind the NSC.

NSA has loaned \$10,000 seed money, currently there is \$34,000 in the NSC treasury.

There is an opportunity for the Forest Service to give the NSC a use permit for the property on the near term, which would enable a startup very soon.

The NSC program is focused on children age 5 to 12; physical fitness, wildfire awareness, and jumper skills. The three-hour kids' program in 2006 was successful with over 500 kids. The Junior Smokejumper program is free to kids, and a program will be available each day during the summer. The future program will be self-sufficient via a merchandise store on the campus. WYS sees 1.3 million drive-by visitors a year. The NSC is planning on other operations at other locations, such as MSO and RDM.

Ron Stoleson suggested an intercity program for disadvantaged kids. Barry said this is a good idea that will be followed up on.

John Helmer asked if they would lease the property for a short period. The city of WYS might buy the property and then the NSC would lease it from the city.

John Helmer asked if the NSA Trails Program could do some of the maintenance on the property to help offset the cost.

The NSC has a website www.smokejumpercenter.com that provides the mission and vision information.

Jim Cherry asked how the NSC is covered from a liability standpoint. Barry said there is a US Parachute Association safety instructor that is advising on that. NSA should be written in this policy as a contributor to the operation.

National Forest Service Museum-Dave Stack and Dick Bacon

Dave and Dick reported on the museum progress. The site has been acquired, and the old Bungalow ranger residence has been moved to the site. The museum is non-profit operation to be funded by a national capital campaign to acquire \$8M for construction and additional \$2M for initial operations. The museum foundation is soliciting corporations with association with the Forest Service. They have raised approximately \$1.3M to date. Three phases of construction are planned: infrastructure-\$200k, first phase of building starts in July 08, \$2M. Exhibits are pricey-at least \$3M.

The Forest Service may construct a 10,000 sq ft archival building on the property-this building has been included in to the budget.

The museum will tell the story of the USFS, state, and local forest operations. It will encourage people to preserve the history of the Forest Service across the nation. It will include a virtual museum, with extensive website information regarding artifacts and history.

The foundation is presently developing the building design; with 15,000 sq ft forest product development in the construction plus a full basement.

The Museum is one of the co-sponsors of the 2009 FS Reunion in MSO. The Forest Service wants to help recruit an organizing committee. They would like the NSA to help attract people to the reunion. Laird Robinson is on the committee. Dave and Dick encouraged the NSA to become a member of the Museum organization. They are asking for volunteers of all kinds, including construction.

Membership Report-John McDaniel

We have 1632 members, down s from last year by 63 members. John forecasts that our numbers continue to dwindle. He states that we need programs to attract a larger percentage of ex jumpers.

There are 1600 ex-jumpers who have not joined the organization.

John emphasized the following points:

- Reunion committees should specifically ask if registrants are members and to be sure that they provide an address.
- Reunion committees should give priority to the NSA recruiting booth at reunions-provide a prominent location for the booth.
- Different rate structure for members/non-members at reunions.
- Good relations are required with the base managers to facilitate meetings with rookies.
- He recommends that an a committee be formed to attract new members.
- John advocates a reduced dues rate for active jumpers

- A representative should be assigned for each base to recruit active jumpers.

Charlie said he disagrees on a number of points-he agrees on the idea of a committee to generate new ideas to attract members. Charlie said the loss of 63 members per year is probably point data and is invalid for long-term predictions.

Charlie's analysis shows our cost per member is about \$25 per year. Cost of the Magazine is around \$17 per member per year. (Chuck Sheley later said that the magazine cost is approximately \$11 per member; this difference should be reconciled).

Stan Linnertz added that we must "answer the why question" why do people want to join the NSA. Jim Cherry said there is a huge fluctuation in the number of jumpers from each training year. For instance, 28% of the 1958 training group are life members. Jim handed out a listing of issues that people face in joining the NSA.

Jim Cherry suggested that we should ask for additional giving especially from the Life Members, to an organization that touched our hearts.

Chuck said that there is little value in including membership information in the magazine because it goes only to members. It is a significant cost to include membership forms in the magazine.

Chuck Sheley and John McDaniel want to make an offer to B list (former members or never members for whom we have addresses) for \$120 ten year membership. He suggests that getting them engaged would serve to increase our long-term membership.

Larry Lufkin said that thinking outside of the box is necessary for us to stay in business. Larry says that we must try different ideas and find out what works.

Doug said we won't figure out the answer to attract new members today; we need a committee to investigate the options for new membership. Doug doesn't agree with subsidizing people to become members. Suggest that Jim Cherry should work on this committee, Ron Stoleson volunteered. Guy Hurlbutt volunteered to be on the committee. He said that we must identify 'who we are'. For instance, current jumpers may not be interested in the current historical content of the magazine. Doug, Charlie Brown, Jim Cherry, Ron Stoleson, Guy Hurlbutt are committee members. They will provide recommendations by the June Meeting in McCall. The \$120 ten-year offer will be part of the committee's agenda.

Eddie Ward said that contact with rookies is important; also the 'members in need' program and the scholarship program. Talking with legislators is important in keeping the jumper program strong. Forest Service employees cannot do this; the NSA can. There are approximately 80 rookie jumpers training in 2008.

Roger Savage said there are fewer jumpers in R-1 than there were in the 1960s. Technically there should be more; perhaps there is political influence that the NSA can apply.

Trail Maintenance Report and NSA Scholarship Program – Jon McBride

The NSA Trail Maintenance program is well under way for 2008. Another record number of Volunteers are expected with over 20 projects in six states.

Jon said we have been successful in convincing the Helena National Forest to form a management committee to determine the management plan for the Mann Gulch property.

Also the old Seeley Lake RS program is moving forward, wherein the Ranger Station buildings will be renovated for use by the Trails Maintenance Program.

Bob Whaley is the lead for the Trails Maintenance Scholarship Program. Bob talks with the recipients and helps with selection. Bob described several of the current candidates. Scholarships are on the order of \$2000 each. These scholarships are from the Art Jukkala fund.

Merchandise Report-Stan Linnertz/Pam Cosgrove of Kas Mar Productions

Stan has interviews planned regarding the Trails Program that will be aired in the Denver area.

Johnson's Corner in Colorado is selling Trails Maintenance T shirts with all proceeds going to the Trails Maintenance Program.

Pam has invested about \$5k in corporate funds to get the NSA merchandise program going.

Western Heritage inventory – WH would like us to pay them for the NSA inventory. They want retail prices for this inventory. WH owes NSA approx \$2100, but WH wants us to buy the merchandise before they pay us the \$2100. Jim Cherry said we should negotiate to the WH cost. John Twiss said that we need to read the contract and that should guide us in our actions in this regard. John McDaniel said that the inventory will be useful for membership incentives.

John Twiss said we have nearly sold out of the DVD Cold Missouri Waters. It was a very profitable endeavor and we should consider ordering some more. Chuck Sheley said we ordered 300 DVDs but we haven't kept track of the costs and the income. We should exercise more control on our merchandise, further, the \$20 price for a 10 minute video is not a good value. We should reduce the price of this. John Twiss proposed that we not purchase more CMW DVDs until we see how they sell. We can revisit purchasing additional units later. John Helmer moved that we set the CMW price at \$15. Motion seconded and passed.

Redmond Air Center Reunion-Fred Cooper

This will be the first ever reunion at RAC, scheduled for September 19, 20, and 21. Charlie Moseley has agreed to chair the reunion. Fred will write the book on the history of smokejumping at RAC. He will

include the decision on how the RAC came about the history behind who will be in charge and the competition with NCSB and CJ.

Boise Reunion-Leo Cromwell

Leo described the process used for the Boise reunion including registration. Donations helped with the fiscal solvency of the reunion. Guy Hurlbutt helped with that. Leo talked about the registration process.

Ken Perkins donated significantly to the silent auction, including many art pieces.

The bank balance is somewhere between \$800 and \$1000. Total profit on the reunion was ~\$7000.

Leo described the Life time memorial memberships criteria-Leo described the bases for nomination. The criteria follow:

1. Nominee must be deceased (could be in the line of duty but not a requirement) and not a Lifetime Member of NSA at this time.
2. Nominee contributed to the knowledge base of smokejumping to improve its efficiency, effectiveness and to make the profession safer.
3. Nominee worked to contribute to the profession of smokejumping across regional and agency boundaries.
4. Nominee was active and contributed to their communities outside of their professional lives.
5. Nominee was a member of the firefighting and smokejumper communities through most of their adult working careers. (Exceptions could be jumpers/pilots killed in action).

Nominations would be made according to and voting based on these criteria. Nominees would not have to meet all criteria but should meet most of them. Voting would be on a "best meets all criteria" basis by the full Reunion Committee.

A short biography (two or three paragraphs) must be submitted by anyone nominating someone for a Memorial Lifetime Membership. Only those nominees with a biography would be considered in the voting. These biographies would be emailed to all committee members and together with the criteria would guide our voting. As a final step, the selection criteria and the biographies of those honored will be submitted to the NSA Board in support of the idea of Memorial Lifetime Memberships and would form the core of our case in support of our nominees.

Charlie Brown moved to accept Leo's proposal to provide five honorary life members. The motion was seconded and carried.

The Board agreed that we will create a plaque for honorary life members.

History Program-Larry Longley

Larry has his recording equipment with him to record oral histories if the opportunity arises during the social.

Trustees-Larry Lufkin

Larry recommended that we create an “audit committee” rather than trustees to look at the NSA’s books annually. No change to the bylaws would be required as a prerequisite to an audit committee as would be if the trustee concept were adopted. We can appoint an audit committee which might include Jim Kloepfer, Dean Longanecker, and Cliff Dalzell. Charlie moved to create the committee. Seconded and motion carried.

Mission and Vision Statements-Jim Cherry

There was an open discussion on the process to establish a vision statement. Guy Hurlbutt is familiar with a process to establish a vision statement. Dave Bennett has had similar experiences using a professional facilitator in small business startups. Jim Cherry will lead the effort, with Guy and Dave. The committee will make a recommendation on engaging a professional facilitator for the McCall meeting.

Smokejumper Pilot Recognition-Bill Moody

Bill handed out a brief on Dave Russell, an NCSB pilot that should be recognized for outstanding contributions. He suggested that there are likely other pilots that should be recognized, and if so, what criteria should we apply?

Recognition Awards-Jim Cherry

Jim said that recognition is very important to volunteer organizations including the NSA. Jim suggested several categories of performance that should be recognized. For instance, the Trails Maintenance Program and the Magazine award. These awards should be mentioned at reunions and at socials. What should the criteria be for awards? Awards might be named after people: Francis Lufkin pioneering award, Willy Unsoeld award, named pilot award.

The group generally agreed this is a good idea; what we need now is someone to lead the effort to further define the bases of awards in more detail. Jim Cherry is willing to work with Chuck to identify contributions in the magazine and with Jon McBride for contributions in the Trails Maintenance program.

Evergreen Museum Report-Bill Moody

Bill and Larry met with the Evergreen management and determined that the present MOU is adequate. There are some updates to the exhibit required in order to maintain its professional appearance. The museum will cover 50% of the cost to make the improvements.

Bill and Larry also planned to talk with the museum Merchandise Manager but were not able to meet with him.

Video Update-Bill Moody

Steve Smith has about 2/3 of a revised video done that might be used for Discovery. He needs a broadcaster committed so he can tailor it to fit their requirements.

Next Reunion-Doug Houston

Perhaps Redding in 2010.

Board Member Changes:

Gary Johnson has resigned.

Gregg West is a new board member.

Nels Jensen is no longer on the board.