

9-7-2007

## Meeting Minutes, September 7th, 2007

National Smokejumper Association Board of Directors

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**National Smokejumper Association  
September 7, 2007**

**Attendees:**

Doug Houston, President  
John Twiss, Second Vice President  
Charles Brown, Treasurer  
Dave Bennett, Secretary  
Bill Moody, Director  
James Cherry, Director  
Leo Cromwell, Director

**Absent:**

Guy Hurlbutt, Director  
Roland Stoleson, President Emeritus  
Chuck Sheley, First Vice President

**Board of Directors Meeting  
Winthrop, WA**

Jon McBride, NSA Trails Coordinator  
John McDaniel, Director  
Gary Johnson, Director  
Larry Longley, Director  
Larry Lufkin, Director  
John Helmer, Director

Tom Uphill, Director  
Nels Jensen, Director  
Mark Corbet, Director

**NCSB Reunion Update - Bill Moody**

Bill reported that he expects 300 to 400 attendees, with 250+ registered for dinner Saturday night. Larry Longley's NCSB book and DVD are popular items. Bob Derry keynote speaker for the reunion.

**Minutes of the Last Meeting - Dave Bennett**

Minutes of the June meeting were approved as read.

**Treasurer's Report- Charlie Brown**

Total NSA assets are \$398,692, an increase of \$116,982 in the last twelve months.

**Membership income to date is \$33,123, which is slightly less than last year.** Life Membership donations show a 54% increase over last year-over \$36,000. We now have \$224,900 in the Life Member endowment fund.

Donations enjoyed a large increase as well; Bozeman Watch Co. donations included \$5,000 from the auction of the governor's Smokejumper watch.

**Merchandise income was again disappointing, with 64% less than last year.** This is an issue that requires special attention.

**The Boise Reunion financial results through July 31, 2007 show a net profit of \$6,211.** This compares to the MSO reunion returns of approximately \$9,000 in 2004. Larry Lufkin said we need to formalize an agreement with future reunion committees so there are no uncertainties regarding roles and responsibilities.

Our total stock investment is \$154,540 which is over \$68,000 more than the end of the prior fiscal year. During 2007, an additional \$50,000 was authorized by the board for stock investments raising the total approved for new funds to \$150,000. The total book value of our stock investments of \$154,540 is composed of: new funds \$149,776; interest earned on cash at Wedbush Morgan \$27; and realized capital gains \$4,737.

**Donations were made to Floyd Bethke, whose home was destroyed by a fire, and Sarah Brown (through Wild Land Firefighters) who was injured on a fire jump in the Gila National Forest.**

Our book assets have increased to nearly \$400,000 from \$152,000 since 2001. This impressive growth is the result of the dedication and hard work of the NSA leadership (officers, board of directors and other volunteers) in fulfilling our mission.

### **Trustees - Larry Longley**

Larry reported on the values and processes associated with trustees. **Their duties would be responsible for assuring financial accuracy and that the funds are there.** They would meet with the Treasurer annually to review the books. There would likely be three trustees and they would not be members of the BOD in any other capacity. Audits may be accomplished by the trustees or they may subcontract it. John Helmer has a candidate: Jim Kloepfer. Other candidates are Cliff Dalzell, Dean Longanecker, and Tim Aldrich. Trustees would be elected annually, or for some specified time period. Larry Lufkin agrees that trustees would be a viable approach for the NSA accounts. **John Helmer moved to organize a group of three trustees who would review our books annually and provide a report to the board of directors.** John Twiss seconded. The basis for trustees should be in the NSA bylaws. Motion passed.

Bylaws will be modified to include for trustees, the revised bylaws will be reviewed and voted on at the next BOD meeting. Larry Lufkin will take the lead for drafting the bylaw revision. Larry will draft wording and review by email before next meeting.

### **Investments - John Helmer**

The market is currently soft. Rate of return is down now to 19.17%, based on Capital Southwest stock values. Mass Mutual values are also down. John had emailed a request for increasing the investment budget from \$150,000 to \$175,000. Ron Stoleson had voted negative, questioning what fraction of the Life Member endowment fund should be invested. Traditionally, brokers say 75% should be in equities. John is looking for guidance from the BOD. Our market value is currently \$182,000. We are currently ~ \$10,000 over the 75% level based on market value. We will adhere to a 75% fraction; therefore we will maintain the approved level.

### **Life Membership – Jim Cherry**

Jim reported that we now have 200 fully paid Life Members. At least one more is in the works. Jim has records of Life Members sorted on training year, jumper base, and other parameters. More detailed analysis may show us better what we can anticipate in membership in general. Jim reported on the yearly fluctuation in Life Member growth-calendar year 2006 was the best with 35 new Life Members. Perhaps there is a correlation with reunion years. The lowest was 2005 with eleven new members. In 2007, we are at 23 new Life Members and counting. Our best response has been achieved by identifying a specific group and then addressing them with a mailing.

**One of the biggest attractors to prospective Life Members is the Trails Program.**

This program creates an emotional bond with others.

John Twiss added that the “legacy” idea needs to be promoted. What legacy will you leave when you pass on? This approach is financially productive with current tax laws.

We now have mission statement, what we also need is a vision statement. Jim will take the lead in drafting a vision statement and work comments and revisions via email with board members.

John Twiss suggested that we dedicate a good portion of a meeting to strategic planning.

### **Membership Update – John McDaniel**

Quarterly significant events: eight candidate life members making payments, one a female. **Chuck and John developed recruiting packages for the 2007 jumper rookies.** Of 57 rookies that were trained this year, we had 22 new members as of this date.

We are losing members at the rate of 40/60 per year. A 2006 mailing to B coded ex-jumpers achieved only a 2% response.

John has a proposal on the table currently to offer ten year memberships at \$160 to current members only (B Code). In order that the NSA might attract new members from the "B" list of non members (some 1600), John proposed that the BOD reduce the ten-year membership fee from \$200 to \$160. In so doing we would reduce the membership committee work load seeking renewals and hopefully bring on board addition members. It is felt that the reduced cost of a ten year membership would also be attractive to current members.

**Larry Lufkin presented an analysis of cost per member that showed fixed costs at approx. \$13.50 per year.**

Charlie Brown prepared an analysis of the proposal prepared by John for a reduction in the 10-year dues which showed the negative financial effects to the NSA of such a dues reduction. He pointed out that on a value per member basis, the proposed reduced 10 year dues **would not cover the costs** of the basic services provided by the NSA, which are the **magazine, website, and membership expenses**. The average cost of these expenses over the last six years have been **\$17.27 per member** which are more than the proposed 10 year dues rate. John McDaniel said that the NSA had other sources of income and that his goal was to sign up more members in a long-term (10 year) membership resulting in a reduction in work and mailing expenses and also stabilize the membership rolls (which had been showing a decline in the recent past periods).

Jim Cherry suggested that a gift be provided with certain classes of renewals, i.e. Cold Missouri Waters DVD. Offer this for a ten-year membership. The value of the DVD is \$15.00. **John Twiss moved that the price for 10-year membership will be \$180 rather than the current \$200.** This strategy will be implemented in the fourth quarter of 2007. The motion was seconded by Gary Johnson. The motion carried.

### **Trails Program - Jon McBride**

The Trails Program sponsored 23 projects with 202 volunteers; a 12% expansion from the previous year. Jon read a letter of commendation from the Helena National Forest supervisor regarding the Trails Program work in Mann Gulch. Jon has signed an MOU with Region-1 regarding joint responsibilities of the Region 1 and the NSA Trails Program. Jim Cherry is communicating with the Superior National Forest regarding a Trails project in the Boundary Waters Park-potential for 2008.

### **Merchandise Update – Doug Houston**

There has been poor communication with Western Heritage, our incumbent merchandise contractor, and we've determined that the NSA needs to make a change. Kasmar is a good candidate, the same company that handles Life Member merchandise at [www.kasmarpro.com](http://www.kasmarpro.com). Pam Cosgrove is the contact person. **Stan Lynnertz has volunteered to be the Merchandising board member.** John Helmer moved to terminate our relationship with Western Heritage and also to bring Stan on as merchandise manager to negotiate arrangements with Kas Mar.

### **National Smokejumper Center (NSC) Update – Doug Houston**

Barry Hicks is president of the NSC, and Doug Houston is one of the vice presidents. The old Madison Guard Station is potentially available in downtown West Yellowstone; an ideal location for the NSC. The Center is envisioned as a learning venue for children, with focus on the smokejumper program and ecosystem fire management. The Forest Service will offer the property to the NSC at market value; estimated at \$300,000 to \$500,000. There will be a meeting with the Forest Service on the property during the first week of October.

### **Boise Reunion Recommendations – Leo Cromwell**

Committee has recommendations for spending reunion profit: **to give three or four life memberships for people who meet certain criteria.** This would include deceased or people who couldn't afford the life member donation. The board agreed to listen to proposals, contingent on NSA getting the reunion seed money paid back. Jon McBride had drafted a financial guideline for reunions when he was treasurer for a Boise reunion in the late 1990s. Charlie Brown moved that the BOD take into consideration the Boise reunion's proposal for up to four life memberships based on the Boise reunion committee's criteria after reunion advanced funding has been repaid. The motion seconded and approved.

### **Seeley Lake Ranger District Opportunity – Jim Cherry**

Seeley Lake has unused buildings that could be used for Trails Program participants to bunk as part of a trail project and for storing Trails Program tools. A lease arrangement is proposed that would involve forming a special relationship with the Seeley District wherein the NSA would do special projects on the Seeley Districts; an "adopt a District" idea. John Twiss said there is precedent for a Special Use Permit arrangement that would fit our needs. Jon McBride and Jim Cherry will pursue this opportunity under the auspices of the Trails Program.

### **History Program – Larry Longley**

Larry accomplished nine video interviews at the Boise reunion. This makes a total of 55 interviews completed by Larry. Chuck Sheley will use these interviews for magazine articles. **Transcriptions are a big job -Larry checked with legal transcribers who charge \$20 per hour.** The Board agreed that this work is on center line of the NSA mission. Larry would like to have a \$1000 yearly budget for transcription. **John Helmer moved to pay the bill for the transcriptions thus far plus a budget of \$1000 per year.** Motion seconded and passed.

**Smokejumper Video Update – Bill Moody**

There is interest in the new video from The Discovery Channel. Discovery would like to see a sample of the new video before they make a decision.

**NSA Window Decals – Larry Longley**

Decals are available at a cost of 25 – 50 cents each, and can sell for up to \$5.00 each. Larry proposed to give them away with memberships.

**Next year's Meetings**

Silver City – March 8 (Changed to Missoula by email)

McCall – June 20

Grand Junction – September 13 (Changed to Redmond September 19 by email)

**Potential Reunion Locations**

Redmond

Missoula