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Meeting Minutes, October 2019

National Smokejumper Association Board of Directors

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NSA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING—October 15, 2019
Residence Inn, Seattle South/Tukwila—Seattle, WA

In Attendance: Michael Bina, Bob McKean, Bill Derr, Fred Cooper, Charlotte Larson, Patrick McGunagle, John Berry Chuck Sheley, Larry Lufkin, John McDaniel, Denny Breslin, Tony Peifer, Tom Boatner

Call to order, introduction to site, introductions, approval of agenda—McKean

Chuck Sheley introduced Patrick McGunagle. He just completed his rookie smokejumper season at West Yellowstone and became a 10-year member of the NSA. Patrick has agreed to try to resurrect the “Touching All Bases” column for the newsletter. Bob made brief introductory remarks welcoming everyone. He also passed out copies of the agenda. No changes were made to the agenda.

Approval of meeting minutes from March—McKean, Boatner

March minutes approved.

Update on various items-Sheley

\$30,000 has come in to the GSF as a result of the Camp Fire articles. Three former smokejumpers lost their homes in this fire and we gave them financial assistance. We have also arranged for them to get legal support when and if they need it. Since the articles on fire management began, outside people have been asking for copies of the magazine. Chuck has reprinted copies for these folks, people like County Commissioners, journalists, and interested citizens. Chuck talked about his efforts to get the Lolo Peak article printed as an op-ed in the Ravalli County, MT newspaper or the Missoulian. Neither would print it as an op-ed without Chuck naming his sources. One of our members paid to have the article printed in the Ravalli County paper as an op-ed. Chuck gets good cooperation from 3 base managers in response to requests for info: Boise, Alaska, and Redmond. The last magazine contains a summary of all the history preservation work that has been done to date at Eastern Washington University. All of it is available on the internet. NSA has now published three books: North Cascades Base History, Cave Junction Base History, and Smokejumpers and the CIA. Book #4 is in the works. It is a memoir by Lee Gossett, recounting his history working as a smokejumper, a pilot, and a CIA and Air America employee. Damon Tabor is an author working on a book about smokejumpers working for the CIA overseas and Chuck is giving him assistance. A plaque was placed recently in Pendleton, OR honoring the Triple Nickles, the 555th Parachute Regiment. John McDaniel mentioned that there is a plaque honoring the 555th at Fort Leavenworth, KS. Karl Brauneis sent Chuck 3 historic scrapbooks that belonged to Dave Burt (MSO-46). Chuck has taken

excerpts from the 3 scrapbooks to print in the magazine and passed the scrapbooks on to EWU.

Chetco Bar Fire—Derr

Bill talked about the history of the Chetco Bar fire and read an excerpt from a talk Quentin Rhodes gave. Quentin is a lawyer and former MSO jumper (89-94). He represented a Montana rancher who won a 3/4 million dollar settlement for their property loss and damage due to a backfire. Quentin is now representing damaged parties from the Chetco Bar fire. The Chetco Bar fire is under review by GAO and Bill has met with them to provide background information. GAO's report is due out in 2020. The Chetco Bar fire was allowed to burn and had some questionable burnouts.

National Wildfire Institute's "Call to Action" document—Derr

NAFSR: Workforce Capacity Study and Letter to Secretary Perdue—Derr, Cooper, & Berry

Bill talked about the "Call to Action" paper and its call for more aggressive initial attack firefighting. Too many acres are being burned after faulty decision making about letting fires burn. This paper also calls for a significant increase in more active fire management, including prescribed fire, thinning, and timber harvest. Fred talked about NAFSR's Workforce Capacity Study and his briefing paper summarizing the history of USFS Fire Policy. The NAFSR paper expresses deep concerns about the current direction of the USFS. The key recommendation is to hire many new employees and mentor current employees, revamp the current hiring system and increase funding. In recent years, the USFS workforce has changed from 16% fire employees to 55% fire. The paper talks about changing the composition of the USFS workforce to better support more active forest management. Fred talked about changes in fire policy over time trending from full fire control to fire management and let burn as well as the changes in timber management over time and the funds that timber harvesting returned to the USFS. The South Canyon fire led to an increased focus on firefighter and public safety.

John Berry added the historical perspective that the number of employees that the USFS can deploy to fires has decreased significantly.

The appropriate role of the NSA in advocating wildland fire response policies & protocol enhancements/revisions re: the Lolo Peak & similar fires- Group Discussion—Bob, All

Should we take an advocacy position on the current fire situation? If so, what should our position be? Bob talked about how to approach this and reminded us of Tom Harbour's comments a few years back: "You have a voice, you've earned it, use it wisely." Bob talked about the challenge of reaching consensus in how we want to go forward. The three questions he felt we should explore are: Should we engage in advocacy? What are the parameters of engagement? How will the NSA develop positions?

Should we engage in advocacy? Most of our discussion supported engaging in advocacy, but also considered the challenges and pitfalls associated with doing that. Who do we represent? Who do we have a duty to? Mike talked about his efforts to engage NPR. The final reporter he talked to perceived Mike's efforts as an attempt to make sure smokejumpers earned more money. The focus should be on one thing: healthy forests. What can the NSA do that has a reasonable chance of success? There is a consensus among the Board that we should engage in advocacy. Denny talked about his experience with an airline pilots' group that worked on arming pilots in the cockpit after 9/11 and all the work and coordination that required. We had an Extended conversation about Bob's draft policy points/parameters for NSA Advocacy. Various questions and points of view were expressed. Do we have a responsibility to represent our membership and how do we do that? Should we do a survey via the magazine or website. Charlotte says that NSA Positions should be solution oriented. How are we going to determine what issues we will advocate and whether moving forward with advocacy on an issue requires full consensus of the NSA BOD or just a strong majority or simple majority.

Motion made and passed unanimously to use Bob's draft list of potential policy points/parameters for NSA advocacy plus adding a 6th bullet: NSA positions should be solution oriented.

The President shall appoint a wildfire committee to draft advocacy position or positions for the NSA Board to consider. Motion made and seconded. Discussion followed about how this committee should work. Passed unanimously.

Various items, Cooper

Report on Trails Program

15 projects were completed this year, including 2 memorial projects, one for Steve Carlson and one for Margarita Phillips. Ed Ward and Mark Motes were in Patagonia, Chile for a month building a suppression bridge in a Chilean National Park. An additional storage container has been donated to the Trails Program from MTDC (Missoula Technology and Development Center). Fred is working on getting all the previous Annual Trails Reports posted on the NSA website. We need to highlight the Trails program at next year's reunion.

Higgins Ridge Project

This oral history project was organized and conducted by the National Museum of Forest Service History. It was very professionally done. This was the first time this group of smokejumpers have ever gotten together to discuss their experiences on this fire which occurred on August 4, 1961. Articles about the event were distributed from the Montana Historical Quarterly and NMFHS's newsletter.

Miss Montana

Last meeting, we agreed to donate \$5000 to the Miss Montana DC-3 rebuild. This is the Mann Gulch DC-3. It flew to England and participated in the D-Day commemoration jump at Normandy. Seven former and current smokejumpers participated in the jump. The ship has also flown out to and landed at some historic backcountry airstrips, like Big Prairie in the Bob. It will be an exhibit at the Museum of Mountain Flying located at the Missoula airport. It also participated in the Mann Gulch commemoration this past summer. It recently returned from doing humanitarian flights, hauling food and supplies from Florida to the Bahamas. Should we consider having the Miss Montana fly to Boise for the reunion? This comes with a \$10,000 charge and some logistical hurdles, but is worth considering.

1939 Experiment Book

Fred is working on a book to be published by the NSA on the original smokejumper experimental jumps at Winthrop, WA in 1939. His goal is to have it ready for the Boise reunion next June.

Smokejumper collections status at National Museum of Forest Service History

Fred passed out the National Museum of Forest Service History newsletter and talked about the collection of smokejumper documents that are available online at their site at www.forestservicemuseum.org. Fred mentioned a recent \$100,000 grant to the museum from the Public Lands Council. They are still fund raising.

Fred noted the recent passing of Ron Stoleson, long-time NSA BOD member and past President. There is a memorial service for Ron in Missoula on October 26th. Fred and many other Missoula area jumpers will be attending. Fred is talking to Ron's son about the historical preservation of Ron's smokejumper memorabilia.

Annual Giving—Bina

Jim explained that a three-legged stool represents what a nonprofit organization needs to be fiscally sound: 1 leg is the Annual Giving letter and membership income, leg 2 is special appeals (i.e. history preservation, scholarships), and the 3rd leg is planned giving. We have struggled with that 3rd leg. Mike Bina has put together a plan for encouraging planned giving from our membership and handed out copies of the Keep-The-Flame Legacy Jump List plan. This will be a targeted, one-on-one appeal. Chuck has given a list of names of potential donors to Mike. We have previously had people donate to the Montana Community Fund. MCF keeps the principal and we get the

interest that accrues if we want it. Otherwise, accrued interest is reinvested. Mike proposes a committee to solicit this kind of giving. Funds received would be turned over to the Investment Committee. A presentation could be made at the reunion to try to raise interest. Bob asks whether we should have a plan for money that may come in via this program and be able to tell potential donors what kinds of programs we will use these funds on or how they will be invested. Mike wants our approval to try to line up a couple of these type donors/donations.

Motion made to pursue the Keep-the Flame Legacy Jump List program. Motion made, seconded, and passed unanimously.

Facebook update—Berry

Our Facebook page has grown to 3700 followers, an increase of 12% over last year. The closed smokejumper group has grown to about 137 people. This one is limited to smokejumpers and pilots only. Patrick mentioned a smokejumper from Missoula runs an Instagram account that can be accessed at: smokejumpers_on_ig..

Treasurer's Report—Berry (Russ by phone)

We started with a phone briefing from Brent Russ and with financial pages on the screen, he walked us through the current status of our financials.

Investment Committee Report—Packard & Berry

John then walked us through our current investments. Bob Whaley has stepped down from the investment committee and Roger Cox has joined it. The investment committee will be diminishing the money in the international stock fund to cover operating expenses as needed.. The international fund has been consistently underperforming. We talked about restricted vs unrestricted funds and where operations money comes from.

Budget FY 2019-2020—Lufkin

We will need to determine where to get funds to cover the deficit in operations which is predicted at 44,925. This will come out of unrestricted investments. We're cash heavy in unrestricted investments right now, so this year will be covered by cash. In the future, our CD ladders will help us with this operational expense. Covering this operational deficit over time without additional funds coming in is not sustainable over the long term.

Motion made and approved to approve the budget. Passed unanimously.

Scholarship Program—Cherry

Jim went over the scholarship information and criteria that is on our website. Eight scholarships were awarded from 19 applicants. Often, applications are incomplete, and

Jim must chase down missing details. He's developed a new checklist form to help minimize this. There was some discussion about whether Jim should follow up like this rather than just throw them away. The feeling is that the checklist will solve this problem. The plan will remain to award 8 \$2500 scholarships. The current committee is Cherry, Lufkin, McMillan, and Bina.

Website Report—Lufkin

There have been some recent security issues on our website. It's an ongoing problem. We have now 4 separate websites because of security issues-the main site, photo gallery, trails program, and the store. They can all be accessed via the main page. Adding too many links causes security and operational problems for NSA, so additional links are added on a case-by-case basis and avoided most of the time. We need to talk about succession planning because we only have 1 webmaster and if he becomes unavailable for any reason, we are in trouble. This same lack of depth exists with the work Sheley and Lufkin do. Larry plans to document the tasks he and the webmaster are responsible for, so if a hole in the organization develops, someone new can hopefully learn to fill the absence.

Smokejumper Reunion—Sheley, Boatner

The venue is arranged, the Riverside Hotel in Boise. What about event liability insurance? The reunion committee needs to secure it. Meal costs and details are still being worked out. The Saturday evening program will be short, just Bob as NSA president giving a brief overview of what the NSA is doing. Everything will be at one venue. We talked about having a room for miscellaneous presentations like a Triple Nickle talk, planned giving talk, and history preservation talk. This will be relayed to the reunion committee.

Membership Report—McDaniel

Overall, our membership is fairly stable at around 1500, counting jumpers, pilots, and associates. During the last quarter, we have picked up 5 or 6 life members. Some renewals are increasing their term of membership from 1 year to 5 and ten year. We plan to actively try to recruit at the reunion next year. John is completing his 15th year running membership. Chuck and John have done some succession planning.

NSA Policies

Conflict of Interest Policy Recommendation—Berry

John passed out the current draft and pointed out Jim Lindell's suggested changes. We need to make sure it gets signed and old outdated policies are thrown out. We also

need to clarify our processes for maintaining and storing documents and records and who is responsible for that.

Motion made, seconded and passed unanimously to accept this new policy as written and amended.

Life Member Policy Recommendation—McKean

A few years ago, we agreed that an accrual of \$1000 in donations would earn a life membership. A life membership can also be gained by making a one-time \$1000 donation. This accrual would not include previous membership payments. Bob handed out the current draft of our Life Member Policy.

Motion made, seconded and passed to finalize and this policy.

Board Member Make Up—Berry

We reviewed John's position paper and discussed some of the issues he identified. Old by laws said the term was 3 years. We updated those by laws. We need to find the updated by laws. We need to keep working on increasing the diversity of our BOD. How and where should we post Minutes of our Board meetings and basic information on our finances and budget?

Presenters for upcoming meeting, a concept—McKean

Bob wants to draw up a list of potential presenters for future meetings, so if you have names forward them to Bob. A couple of names mentioned were Michael Rains and Quentin Rhodes. We also agree that having BLM and USFS smokejumper leaders brief us yearly in Boise is important.

Presidents Items—McKean

Request for special recognition of Lisa Tate, Executive Director of NMFSH for Higgins Ridge Project

We will present her with a plaque, a pin, and a letter from the President to be presented to her by Fred at the next Board meeting of the National Museum of Forest Service History Board meeting.

Date for March 2020 meeting in Boise (Perhaps we should have it in June prior to the reunion?)

Motion made, seconded and passed to have next meeting in Boise in conjunction with the reunion in June instead of our normal time in March.

Agenda Items for Next Meeting

If you have any items that you know need to be on the next agenda, forward them to Bob now.

What about having our October, 2020 meeting in Portland?

We need to consider relative costs of air travel, hotels, shuttles, and make a decision. This place in Seattle is convenient to the airport, has a shuttle and is inexpensive.