

# **Sawtooth Interpretive and Historical Association (SIHA) Board Meeting – October 24, 2024**

PRESENT: President Stewart Wilder (via Zoom), Vice President Terry Clark, Secretary Roland Miller (via Zoom), Treasurer Liesl Schernthanner, Gary Gadwa (via Zoom); Directors in person: Susan Kim, Dave Pinney; Directors via zoom: Ed Cannady, Bernice Hartz, Paul Hill, Amelia Jones, Jenny MacNicol, Becky Obletz, Caitlin Straubinger; Others in person: Executive Director Lin Gray, Business Manager Erica Cole, Forest Service Liaison Sarin Lomascolo; Others via Zoom:

President Stewart Wilder called the meeting to order at 10:02 am.

Stewart asked if there were additions or questions for the agenda or if there were any additions, corrections to the meeting minutes that went out.

No additions or corrections were submitted. Susan Kim made a motion to approve the agenda and the minutes. It was seconded by Terry Clark. The motion was approved unanimously.

PRESIDENTS REPORT: Stewart Wilder: Stewart pointed out that one of the of the key things for the meeting is discussing the proposed budget. Stewart thanked everyone on the Budget committee working on it for the past few months, especially Liesl and Erica. He noted that the board will also need to discuss the proposed Sho-Ban Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

Stewart gave kudos to Lin, Erica, and the summer crew for getting SIHA through a “pretty brutal season” and being able to adapt to the rapidly evolving situation—referencing the multiple fire closures that occurred and the construction at the Redfish Lake Visitor Center (RLVC) area. He also thanked the board for commitment, not only for their committee work, but also for stepping up to volunteer in the museum and at Redfish (with the early departure of several naturalists), and their work at the Obsidian property. Stewart turned things over to Sarin Lomascolo for the Forest Service Liaison Report.

SNRA LIAISON’S REPORT: Sarin Lomascolo:

Sarin also thanked everyone for dealing with a tough season between the parking lot and access construction at the RLVC and the numerous fires and associated closures. She appreciated everyone being flexible under trying circumstances.

She gave a special thank you to Terry for coming to the regional forester review and presenting about the Center for the Sawtooths (CeSaw) to the group on the bus at the Obsidian property. It went well and it was great to have Terry explain what the Sawtooth National Recreation Area (SNRA) is and what an NRA is in general. Sarin also thanked Lin for the group’s use of the RLVC and for presenting on SIHA.

Sarin said that the budget for non-permanent seasonals (those without permanent appointments and benefits), except in Fire, are non-existent this year, and no one in the temporary class of employees (1039) will be hired in the 2025 summer season. This applies mostly to trail crew, recreation, and fisheries seasonal staff. There also were no extensions for 6 or 9-month permanent seasonals beyond their guaranteed term of work. However, the Stanley Ranger Station will be open this winter with staff on hand. She noted that two employees got new positions at the ranger station, and another is leaving.

Sarin said the Forest Service is still prioritizing their plans based on addressing recovery and infrastructure needs after the fires, and the anticipated short staffing for next summer and how that will affect what can be accomplished.

Sarin said it looked like the construction at RLVC for parking, etc. should be finished by the end of the next week along with the North Shore Picnic project. Meetings have begun to discuss the Redfish Internal Trails project. That includes all the sites with either a bike path or walking path, starting at that first parking lot when you turn into Redfish. The project is being led by Braidy Richins, Sawtooth National Forest Engineer, Kirk Flanigan, and the National Forest Foundation (NFF). Lin is going to be involved in the Redfish Internal Trails project planning. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) has been done for it, but work wouldn't start ground work on it until 2026 at the earliest. They are working with NFF and trying to figure out how to raise funding to begin the project. She said that the Fishhook Creek Trail will be a more long-term project due to the Forest Service's current workload and currently is not included in the internal trails project.

Terry said he and Caitlin Frawley looked at the Fishhook trail recently to see if there is a way to get visitors out to the upstream bridge to observe kokanee spawning, but not to walk the entire trail. Bernie pointed out that the Fishhook Creek Trail is recognized as a National Recreation Trail, and maybe that could be leveraged to source funding of the trail repair. Ed asked if the Forest Service is committed to making sure the Fishhook Creek Nature Trail endures. Lin said she has spoken with Susan James, and the answer is no. Lin believes the Forest Service is willing to look at other options that don't go through the middle of the wetland, with the possibility of a viewing platform that doesn't cross the creek in place of the full trail. The Fishhook Creek boardwalk was not included in any of the NEPA, so that would be the first step in getting something done. Currently the Forest Service is not making it a priority. Ed said that because the trail already exists, it may not require NEPA. Lin said that would need to be determined by the programs involved, and Kirk would need to make it a priority. She noted it is probably not in SIHA's interest to try and get the full trail rebuilt at this point. Again, Terry stated that his and Caitlin's idea is an in-between solution.

CARIBOU/TARGHEE LIASON'S REPORT: Kathy Atchley, Caribou/Targhee Liaison, was not in attendance, and a brief discussion was held regarding the status of outlet sales locations.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Lin thanked everyone for their good efforts during a summer of chaos and challenges due to the RLVC construction, the fires, and short staffing. She began the discussion with the topic of selling SIHA wares through an online portal. Board

members discussed the various possibilities of discounts, shipping, types of items, print-on-demand, etc.

Lin then moved on to the Salmon Fest for 2025. The festival was cancelled this year due to fire activity in the area. She said that for next year, Idaho Rivers United's (IRU) new executive director, Greg McReynolds, would like to make the Salmon Fest IRU's signature event and move it to the Mountain Village lawn. Lin said we want to consider whether we remain as a co-host. If so, will it look like it is IRU's event, and we are just a participant rather than a co-host? Board members discussed the history of the Salmon Fest and the pros and cons of being a co-host versus a participant. Terry commented that, in the past, SIHA did 90% of the work, and he doesn't understand why they want to move to the Mountain Village. Gary said that when we had a booth in previous Salmon Fests, SIHA had minimal sales and exposure. He feels that SIHA should remain a co-host. Susan Kim asked if it would be feasible to have two sites: the Mountain Village lawn and the museum, and could we dictate that essential activities occur at the museum to balance the participation. Lin thought that was reasonable.

Ed said that there are two things to consider. SIHA has long term stability regarding hosting the event, and there is always a chance that IRU could have a new executive director, which could change things regarding IRU's desires. He would hate to see SIHA give up co-ownership of Salmon Fest. Bernie expressed concern that the Mountain Village lawn will look sparse unless additional groups are recruited to participate. Caitlin mentioned that when she worked at IRU, they discussed bringing back the salmon dinner and holding a 5K run as part of Salmon Fest. Amy stated that we should look at what we want to get out of Salmon Fest.

Board members discussed other possible solutions: shuttle buses between locations, hiring an event organizer, adding events at the CeSaw (Obsidian property) when the facilities have been developed. Lin said she would take SIHA board members' concerns to the executive director at IRU and get their response.

Lin moved on to the collaboration with the Sho-Ban tribe to create interpretive signs. They had a ransomware attack which has caused them to move to a manual finance system. She suggests that we create an MOU with the tribe to provide the funds. Lin will move forward with creating an MOU for review by the board.

OUTLETS UPDATE: Erica Cole: Erica indicated she didn't have anything to add unless folks had questions about what was covered in her report.

FINANCE REPORT: Treasurer Liesl Scherthanner: Liesl began by discussing how the sales budget was affected by the fires and construction. She added that the outlets made up some of that shortfall. Stewart asked if there were any questions about the finance report. There were none.

Stewart asked for a motion to approve the finance report. Gary Gadwa made a motion to approve the finance report. It was seconded by Roland Miller. Stewart asked for any further discussion, there was none. The motion was approved unanimously.

Liesl then moved into the 2025 budget review. After an introductory discussion, Paul noted that the budget was aggressive, and Liesl concurred. She noted that one of the board's top priorities was providing more support and a living wage to the staff. After a general discussion of the budget, Stewart said the goal is to have the board approve the budget at the next meeting in December. Several board members expressed concern about the aggressive nature of the budget. Lin said that discussions at the next fundraising committee would explore ways to address these concerns prior to a vote on the budget.

**MEMBERSHIP UPDATE:** Caitlin Straubinger: Caitlin gave a membership accounting update with 44 year-to-date members at almost \$10,000; 112 year-to-date donors at \$33,000; and nine bricks sold at \$1,200. The Beckwith Lodge raffle raised a bit over \$2,000. Amy suggested that due to the discrepancy between members and donors (44 vs 112, respectively), that we make someone a member if they donate over a certain amount. Lin clarified that we do that, but the data Caitlin is looking at doesn't contain that information. Amy also suggested that we could incentivize members to buy merchandise as part of a higher membership level. Lin said it is a good idea, and that it would be a project for 2025.

**CREW UPDATE:** Alicia Lindbom: Alicia sent out a detailed crew report. Alicia is interested in returning next year.

**PRESERVATION COMMITTEE UPDATE:** Susan Kim: Susan thanked everyone who is assisting in creating the oral history videos. She detailed the upcoming history presentations. She would like to upgrade the website experience with the videos during this off-season. Susan would also like to make the history videos available at the museum, which will require upgrading the DVD player and/or the WIFI service at the museum. Gary noted that there is an individual, Harold Watley, getting up in age he would like to get in for a presentation. His video is already complete. Terry suggested that Jeff Bitton be recorded as well.

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE UPDATE:** Terry Clark: Terry detailed the board recruitment committee's efforts in recruiting new board members. He also said that he was hoping to transfer the committee chair to someone so he can begin to concentrate more on the Center for the Sawtooths. He said that Caitlin is tentatively set to take on that role. Terry said that with CeSaw coming online, we need to look at board members who fit this new role and responsibility.

**CENTER FOR THE SAWTOOTHES:** Liesl Schernthanner: Liesl said that things are moving along with a few in kind donations, building supplies ordered, and small projects happening on the Obsidian property to prepare for winter. Terry has completed a first draft of the design narrative: how many rooms, how big, long-range use of the site, etc. One of the main goals is to make housing available for staff. Paul requested that the near-term plan for 2025 be circulated and discussed at the December board meeting. Stewart said Senator Simpson's reached out about two possible federal rural grants that he would like SIHA to apply for the CeSaw project. Dave asked if we could put together a wish list of items for the buildings (blinds, furniture, appliances, etc.) that people could donate. Lin suggested scheduling a CeSaw Fundraising Committee meeting, which will be scheduled next week. Stewart made a point of thanking Michael Powell ,

Dave Pinney, and Joe Lamb for the work they have done on the Obsidian property. Terry acknowledged Wes Wills for the tractor work on the driveway. There were two noxious weed treatments done on the property this fall as well. Amy suggested that we have an open house once we have some firm plans for CeSaw.

ROUND TABLE/OPEN TOPICS: Lin said there are some 2024 Salmon Fest funds left that the Stanley Chamber of Commerce gave SIHA. They said we can use those to promote SIHA's events and programs in 2025. She also noted that the attendance this summer at FLS presentations was very low. She asked the members of the FLS committee to think about ways to increase attendance prior to the January committee meeting.

The next meeting is at 10 am on December 12, 2024.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:48 am.