# Ski for Light, Inc.

# Board of Directors Annual Meeting

# Friday, January 23, 2015

# Granby, Colorado

# Minutes

President, Scott McCall, called the meeting to order at 8:40 A.M. Mountain Standard Time. He welcomed everyone with a special welcome to those directors attending their first annual meeting.

Secretary, Judy Dixon called the roll. Executive Committee members present: Scott McCall, Julie Coppens, Judy Dixon, Brenda Seeger, Cara Barnes, Robert Civiak, and Marion Elmquist. Directors present: Renee Abernathy, Heather Berg, Wendy David, Krista Erickson, David Fisk, Nicole Haley, Robert Hartt, Eivind Heiberg, Ken Leghorn, Leslie Maclin, Tim mcCorcle, Bonnie O'Day, Laura Oftedahl, Lawrence Povinelli, Holly Schmaling, Larry Showalter, and Peter Slatin. Not present: David Sweeny.

Approval of Mid-term Teleconference Meeting Minutes. Peter Slatin moved and Larry Povinelli seconded a motion that the minutes of the mid-term Board teleconference held October 20, 2014 be approved as distributed. The motion passed unanimously.

Review of Mission Statement. Scott McCall asked the Board to reflect on Ski for Light’s mission: “Skiing. Sharing. Learning. The mission of Ski for Light is to enhance the quality of life and independence of visually or mobility-impaired adults through a program of cross-country skiing.” Scott asked that we focus on this mission during our deliberations as we prioritize , set policy, and make decisions about future endeavors.

Event committee report: Cara Barnes, 2015 Event Chair, reported on the planning efforts for this event. A number of unusual situations presented themselves and the planning committee has extended itself to meet these challenges. Because of limited availability of accessible housing at the Inn at Silver Creek, after considerable exploration of alternatives, it became necessary to house some of the mobility-impaired participants and able-bodied support people at Snow Mountain Ranch. In addition, it was recently learned that the Inn was not in a position to provide food service so an alternative catering service was contracted. While these heroic efforts are expected to result in a safe and comfortable Ski for Light week, Cara pointed out that unless circumstances change significantly, the Inn at Silver Creek no longer meets Ski for Light’s needs as a viable future venue.

Expansion of technique and instructional sessions. Ken Leghorn reported on efforts to provide high-quality instructional opportunities to skiers and guides this year. They will be taught by professional ski instructors. His report is attached. Bob Civiak suggested that perhaps the Gibney Foundation would be interested in funding a pre-event refresher training for veteran guides. This topic will be discussed further in the breakout sessions this afternoon.

Treasurer’s report. Brenda Seeger reported that the organization is in good financial shape. Investments are doing well. The balance sheet and income statement for fiscal 2014 are printed in the annual report. It was moved by Larry Showalter and seconded by Peter Slatin that the Treasurer’s report be accepted. The motion passed unanimously.

Understanding financial statements. Nancy McKinney made a brief presentation to the Board describing the various financial statements and encouraging Board members to take an active role in reviewing and understanding these statements.

Budget and finance report. Larry Showalter summarized the budget and finance report which is attached. Kate Scott, our long-time financial advisor, is no longer able to provide the service to SFL because of fiduciary risk. We need to seek a new source of financial advice. A number of options were suggested. It was the general consensus of the Board that a range of options should be explored. Ken Leghorn moved and Eivind Heiberg seconded a motion that the Executive Committee inform the Board about future plans for managing investments before any such plan is implemented. The motion passed unanimously.

Constitution and bylaws. Wendy David presented the report of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee which is attached. A motion was made by Judy Dixon and seconded by Bob Hartt that the last sentence of Article IV Section 10 read as follows: “Lack of participation in three (3) consecutive Regular Meetings shall result in automatic removal from the Board, unless extenuating circumstances exist as recommended to the Board by the Executive Committee.” The motion passed unanimously.

Annual report and program journal. Julie Coppens distributed copies of the annual report and program journal and reviewed the contents of each with the Board. Thanks to Julie for another great job.

Ski for Light Policy Manual. Larry Showalter reported on the status of the SFL policy manual (report attached). It was generally agreed that the document is good to have and worth the effort to maintain. Larry recommended that an ad hoc committee be appointed to thoroughly review its contents for consistency with current practice and draft updates as needed. Scott asked that those interested in serving on such a committee, please let him know of their interest.

Guide and VIP History and Trends. Larry Showalter presented information on the repeat attendance of first-time Guides and VIPs over the past five events, the composition of the 2015 Guide and VIP attendee pools, and the history of steadily declining VIP application numbers (report attached).

Small group discussions. The Board divided into three small discussion groups to brainstorm three topics proposed by Scott: 1. Recruitment and retention of guides and disabled participants; 2. Increasing revenue; and 3. Increasing focus on skiing and outdoor recreational activities. Results will be collected and reviewed by the Executive Committee.

Conflict of interest disclosure. Judy Dixon distributed the Conflict of Interest Disclosure forms. The conflict of interest policy was summarized briefly. Each Board member is asked to review the policy which is posted on the Board page of the SFL web site, then complete and sign the form and return it to Marion.

Improper conduct policy. Scott McCall reminded everyone that this item was discussed last year. In our discussion about whether to apply for sexual misconduct insurance, it was moved that the Board should create an improper conduct policy. An ad hoc committee, chaired by Scott, has drafted such a policy which is attached.

Judy Dixon moved and Renee Abernathy seconded a motion that this policy be adopted as distributed. After a lengthy discussion, the motion passed unanimously. This policy will be posted with other policies on the SFL web site.

New business

SFL Web Site. Judy reported that a first-year guide, Tom Hart, has offered to assist with updating the SFL web site. The primary goal will be to make the site more visually appealing while maintaining accessibility and ease of update. Work has begun but the entire process will take several months.

Old business

Guide Numbers. Bob Civiak expressed concern about the number of excess guides in recent years. Should we consider modifying the guide acceptance process to maintain a pool of highly qualified guides? It was recognized that the issues are complex. Possible options proposed include: inviting some guides to participate in guide training; requiring re-attendance at guide training after a certain number of years; remind guide trainers to ask skiers and guides to share any concerns; add more self-screening information to the guide application; having a few veteran blind skiers evaluate guides; and finding other ways for some guides to help. It was agreed that the Long Term Planning Committee would be asked to review the situation and make recommendations for next year. Julie will coordinate.

Assistance to Blind Participants. Bob Hartt said that he had heard from some skiers that they had difficulty getting assistance when not skiing. He suggested that a question be added to the application where people could indicate if they wanted/needed additional assistance and ask guides if they were willing/interested in providing additional assistance. Bob was thanked for his suggestion. Several suggested that such a practice would not be promoting independence. Dining room greeters and other welcoming gestures might help.

Sexual Misconduct Insurance. Dave Fisk reminded the Board that at our 2014 meeting, we discussed the pros and cons of applying for sexual misconduct insurance. We decided to postpone the decision until after the improper conduct policy was in place. The coverage would cost about $500 and would not require background checks for volunteers. Applying for such insurance does not obligate us to purchase it. Dave Fisk moved and Peter Slatin seconded that Ski for Light apply for sexual misconduct insurance. After considerable discussion, it was moved by Marion Elmquist and seconded by Wendy David that the motion be tabled. The motion to table passed with 21 in favor and 3 opposed. It was agreed that Dave would seek additional information: verify that background checks would not be required, determine if other policies may already provide adequate coverage, what is the extent of our liability—does it extend to the actions of individuals acting on their own? What types of insurance do similar organizations carry? Dave asked that if anyone has a specific question they would like answered, please let him know.

Board Development and Recruitment (report attached). Renee Abernathy asked that those whose terms will be expiring in 2016 and who know they will not be seeking re-election, please let her know.

Other Reports. It was moved by Marion Elmquist and seconded by Renee Abernathy that submitted committee reports not presented today be accepted. The motion carried unanimously. The following reports are attached: Corporate Sponsor Committee, Guide Recruitment Committee, Regional Liaison Committee, Foundations Committee, Social Media Committee, and Visually Impaired Participant Recruitment Committee.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:15 P.M.

REPORT OF THE TECHNIQUE SESSIONS COMMITTEE

Ken Leghorn,

January 17, 2015

After many years of offering various numbers and types of Technique Sessions on an ad-hoc basis, a committee was created by the Event Planning Committee for the 2015 event in Granby, with Ken Leghorn as the chair.

The purpose of the Technique Sessions committee is to provide an ongoing series of instructional classes to improve ski skills for both skiers and guides, and to refine the teaching methods of guides. The overall goal of these sessions is to improve safety and confidence through controlling speed and limiting falls, so that skiers can focus on enjoyment of the sport and the camaraderie and health that it brings.

The following components have been put in place for the 2015 event:

- Five Technique Sessions for skier/guide pairs, similar to the past three years, including an indoor introductory session for beginner skiers, an outdoor novice session, introductory half-plow and snowplow classes, and an intermediate diagonal stride class.

- Two new Ski Instruction Classes for guides, one on downhill techniques and one on diagonal stride, offered in response to interest expressed by guides to improve their own ski skills in order to provide more safe and reliable service as guides. These two classes will be promoted only at the event during guide meetings, and are not listed in the Program Journal schedule. Any non-VIP/MIP volunteers (“Other attendees”) who wish to improve their skiing will also be invited to participate in these classes, but not in the other Technique Sessions.

- One new class in Advanced Guiding Skills, organized by the veteran guide/skier team of Doug and Lynda Boose, aimed at guides who wish to go beyond the basics of guiding visually impaired skiers.

- Technique Sessions will be taught by SFL guides with ski instruction experience, along with four to five local volunteers with considerable ski instruction and/or ski coaching backgrounds. Some of the volunteer instructors will also participate in Guide Training. This team of qualified instructors will allow the increasingly popular and crowded Technique Sessions to divide into small sub-groups. Instructors will also spend time outside of class as “roamers,” helping pairs of skiers as needed along the trails.

- The SFL Guide Handbook that was completely revised in 2012 has been updated for 2015, and is being used as the basis for all Technique Sessions as well as for the Guide Training teams. For the first time, the Guide Handbook is now available on-line as a link from the SFL home page, and its use has been promoted to every guide registered for the 2015 event. A new audio version has also made the handbook fully accessible to all SFL participants; some Regional programs, too, are making use of this resource. This is another way in which the organization is advancing the ski-teaching skills of every guide, along with their communication and guiding abilities.

Next Steps:

1) Solicit feedback from the Guide Trainers and the volunteer instructors about the Technique Sessions and the Guide Handbook;

2) The Technique Sessions committee function should be added to the Event Planning Manual.

3) Continue to improve Guide Handbook, including an updated Appendix for the Cheat Sheet, and perhaps some other changes based on new input. I recommend that each year the revised Guide Handbook continues to be available as a link from the SFL home page, and that hard copies will be mailed to each first-time guide and each Guide Training pair as was done this year.

4) SFL should seek a grant or sponsorship to support the creation of a series of short instructional video clips based on the Guide Handbook, that could be accessed year-round for guide training (as well as guide recruitment, perhaps).

Ski for Light, Inc.

Budget and Finance Committee Report

January 23, 2015

The responsibility of the Budget and Finance Committee is to oversee the financial affairs of Ski for Light, Inc. and to monitor and make recommendations to the Executive Committee regarding the organization's investments. The committee is composed of Larry Showalter (chair), Bob Civiak and Nicole Haley. The Treasurer, Brenda Seeger, is an ex-officio member of the Committee.

Among the B&F responsibilities is the preparation of an annual income and expense budget, for submission to the Executive Committee for approval. This process was led this year by Bob Civiak, and the approved FY2015 budget is on the Board page of the website.

Board members have been kept informed about the financial position of SFL throughout the year by the quarterly reports submitted by the Treasurer. In addition, all Board members were sent the draft FY2014 Compilation Report and draft IRS form 990 for comment prior to their submission. The final version of each of these documents is also on the website.

The committee wishes to provide additional information to the Board regarding:

. Individual Donations and our donor base, and

. the status of our operating reserve.

In addition, the committee needs to update the Board on the status of our Endowment investments, and about some changes in future management of the fund that are pending.

1. Individual Donations and the Donor Base

During FY2014 individuals donated $26.2k to the general and Goodfellow funds. There were 170 such donations, with an average amount of $154.

The amount donated was down slightly from the previous years, but in broad terms the total has been in a fairly tight range for four out of the last five years, with FY2011 being an anomaly.

The FY2014 donor base was slightly higher than the two preceding years, but down substantially from earlier years.

On the other hand, the average donation was down slightly during FY2014 from the previous two years, but above the level of earlier years.

 FY2014 FY2013 FY2012 FY2011 FY2010

General $21.0 $24.6 $22.0 $30.2 $21.0

Goodfellow 5.1 3.8 5.0 2.2 4.0

Total $26.2 $28.4 $27.0 $32.4 $25.1

Number 170 167 158 215 208

Average $154 $170 $171 $151 $120

It is difficult to draw any hard conclusions from these data, aside from the bottom line that support of SFL from individuals has remained strong over the past five years, while the size of the donor base and the amount of the average donation has varied. Clearly, SFL will benefit if the donor base can be increased, and if current donors can be motivated to give more. How to do either of these is an open question.

Note: Individual donations for the first six months of FY2015 were $11.4k, from 83 donations. During the first six months of FY2014 donations were $12.8k, from 97 donations.

2. The Operating Reserve

As reported by the Treasurer in the FY2014 narrative, at the end of FY2014 our operating reserve was $86k, down -$26k from the $111k level at the end of FY2013. FY2013, in tern, experienced a decline of -$16k. So bottom line, during the past two years the SFL operating reserve has declined by about -$42k.

As we discussed during last year's annual meeting, most of the decline during the past two years was planned. Our operating reserve had reached a level of $128k at the end of FY2012, and the decision was made to spend this down to about $90k over the next two years. This was done by withholding higher event fees, even in the face of higher costs, and investment in several new programs.

The actual FY2014 decline of -$26k was a bit more than anticipated. Higher than expected event costs were only partially offset by better results in the "All Other" family. All Other is the net of all fund raising activities and the endowment transfer, off set by the costs of administration and other overhead and the Ridderen team.

As shown below, our net subsidy of the 2014 event was -$62k, versus -$43k the year before. This amounts to a subsidy of about $250 for every Anchorage attendee.

 FY2014 FY2013 FY2012

Total Income $302.5 $295.1 $265.9

Total Expense 328.7 311.7 254.2

net -$26.1 -$16.5 $11.6

Event Income $216.9 $214.3 $181.9

Event Expense 279.3 258.2 209.3

Net -$62.3 -$43.9 -$30.4

A/O Income $85.6 $80.8 $87.0

A/O Expense 49.4 53.5 45.0

Net $36.2 $27.4 $42.0

Looking forward, the FY2015 budget projects an additional loss of about -$10k during FY2015, and if achieved we will end FY2015 with a reserve of about $75k.

3. The Endowment Fund

The value of the Endowment fund stands at about $400k at the moment, in round numbers. The fund has grown to the point that it now contributes a significant portion of the "All Other" revenue needed for our operations. Over the past five years, from FY2010 through FY2014, our withdrawals have totaled $76k.

Since the Endowment fund was created in 1998 the fund has been managed by SFL. In the very beginning, Treasurer Egil Almaas made the investment decisions, with the consent of the Executive Committee. Beginning in 2004, the Budget and Finance committee has made investment decisions, for approval by the Executive Committee, based on the advice and counsel of a former guide and investment professional, Kate Scott.

We have done very well following Kate's advice. Over the past five years the market value of the fund has grown from $251k, at the beginning of FY2010, to $392k, at the end of FY2014. This is an increase of 56%. If deposits and withdrawals are factored out, the increase would be about 75%.

We are going to need to find a new way to manage our investments in the future. Kate has informed us that her firm has been acquired by another, and the new owners are no longer willing to assume the fiduciary risk of providing SFL with investment advice.

We have two basic options for future management of our endowment assets:

1. Continue to manage investments on our own, based on whatever expertise we have or whatever outside assistance we can find.

2. Contract with an investment professional for future advice and management of assets.

Management of assets on our own has worked pretty well historically, but it involves a number of risks that we should be aware of.

1. The board has a fiduciary responsibility and liability related to investment decisions. Many boards get very nervous about this, especially as the size of the assets involved increase.

2. The decisions made by the board can only be as good as the expertise of the board members making the decisions. This can be all over the map, and change as new board members become involved.

3. It is difficult for most non-professionals to stay on top of what is going on in the market, and to make decisions in a timely manner.

We are recommending that SFL no longer manage assets on our own, and instead contract with an investment professional for future advice and management.

We have been in contact with Diane Soucheray of RBC Wealth Management in Boulder, and she has tentatively agreed to become our asset advisor and manager. We chose Diane because she has a 20-year history as an investment professional, because she is very familiar with the needs of a non-profit due to her long history with the Boulder Foundation, and because she knows SFL through her parents, John and Marsha, and is quite anxious to help us and keep our organization flourishing.

We will be meeting with Diane in the near future to develop an investment strategy. We will then evaluate her proposal and recommendation. When we are happy with what she has proposed we will forward a recommendation to the Executive Committee for approval. We hope to get all of this done by the end of March.

Respectfully submitted by Larry Showalter

Ski for Light, Inc.

Constitution and Bylaws Committee Report

January 23, 2015

The Constitution and Bylaws Committee is composed of Wendy David (chair), Renee Abernathy, Marion Elmquist, Larry Showalter and Scott McCall (ex-officio).

The committee remains on call to the Ski for Light President and the Board of Directors throughout the year to ensure that any decisions or actions that may arise do not conflict with the Bylaws of the organization.

In addition, the committee remains available to evaluate suggestions and recommendations for change in the Bylaws by the Board or individual Board members.

The Constitution and Bylaws of Ski for Light, Inc. are available to Board members on the board page of the SFL website at www.sfl.org/board. An online version of the document is linked on that page, or directly accessible at www.sfl.org/board/bylaws13.html. A Microsoft Word version is

also linked on the board page, for viewing or downloading.

The committee has one potential amendment to the Bylaws to present to the Board for consideration. This is a carry-over item from the 2014 annual meeting, where the current provision for the removal of a director for lack of participation was discussed. This situation has occurred twice in recent

years, and resolving it has been problematic given the current Bylaws requirements.

Article IV Board of Directors Section 10 Resignation and Removal of Directors reads as follows in its entirety.

Any Director may resign from the Board by giving notice, in writing, of his/her resignation to a member of the Executive Committee. Any Director may be removed from office, with or without cause, by a two‑thirds (2/3) vote of all Directors present at any Regular or Special Meeting, provided that

fifteen (15) days notice must be given to all Directors, in appropriate format, of the proposed vote. Lack of participation in three (3) consecutive Regular Meetings shall be cause for removal, upon review and recommendation by the Executive Committee, unless extenuating circumstances exist.

It is proposed that the last sentence of Section 10 above be replaced with:

Lack of participation in three (3) consecutive Regular Meetings shall result in automatic removal from the Board, unless extenuating circumstances exist as recommended to the Board by the Executive

Committee.

This change would make removal for lack of participation automatic, without the need for a vote of the Board, while still allowing the Board to exercise discretion and not remove a director if there truly are extenuating factors that should be considered.

The Constitution and Bylaws Committee recommends that this change to the Bylaws be approved by the Board.

Respectfully submitted by Wendy David, chair

SFL Annual Meeting

January 23, 2015

The Ski for Light Policy Manual

The Ski for Light Policy Manual is defined by Bylaw 9 of the SFL Constitution and

Bylaws, as follows:

Bylaw 9. Organizational Policies

Significant organizational policies, in the form of a record of Board motions and

actions, shall be kept in the Ski for Light Policy Manual, to be maintained by a

Board member designated by the President.

The Policy Manual is on the agenda for this meeting because the old 46 page MS Word

version of the document has been replaced with an online html version. Since this

will be the first time that most current Board members have actually seen this document,

we need to discuss what it is and how it can best be managed going forward. Please

be aware that discussion of any of the current 52 policies is not on the agenda for

this meeting.

First a bit of background. The Policy Manual was developed by Bud Keith with the

aid of Brit Peterson. They reviewed all available Board meeting minutes back to the

earliest days of SFL, and captured those Board motions that were important in defining

how SFL should be operated and organized. With the assistance of Judy Dixon and Marion

Elmquist, Bud prepared the original manual of 37 policies, separated into 14 sections.

Bud undertook this task because he felt it important that current and future Board

members have an understanding of past Board actions that defined the most important

elements of the SFL organization. He recognized that policy will change and evolve

over time, but he felt it important that future actions of the Board be made in light

of what had gone before.

Bud first presented the manual to the Board during the 2002 annual meeting. Each

of the original 37 policies was discussed during that very lengthy meeting. Some

policies were amended, some were left unchanged, others were set aside for later

work and attention. Bud came back to the Board again in 2003, 2004 and 2005 with

additional proposed amendments or additions to the manual.

The Board adopted Bylaw 9 toward the end of these discussions. The manual was turned

over to Judy Dixon for maintenance, and I picked it up from her a few years ago.

In attempting to maintain the manual I have always felt hampered by the MS Word format

of the document. Finding anything, let alone updating it, requires a good memory

more than anything else. Moreover, I have always felt that the 14 chapter format

and the inclusion of extraneous material for each policy were a barrier to the easy

use and understanding of the manual.

In an attempt to improve the utility of the manual, following the model of the online

Event Planning Manual, I have created an online html version of the manual, divided

into three sections that I think make the manual more useful.

Section A: International Event, containing 23 policies that define the most important

aspects of how each event is to be organized and conducted.

Section B: Applicants and Attendees, containing 9 policies that define how prospective

attendees are to be selected.

Section C: Corporate and Governance, containing 20 policies that define our corporate

structure, as well as the governance policies that have been adopted in recent years.

I have also simplified each policy by eliminating what I feel to be extraneous material,

organizational responsibility and related documents.

Now that you have the background, please take a look at the manual. You will find

it at:

www.sfl.org/board/policy

You will note that there is some overlap with the Event Planning Manual. The Board

chose to leave this overlap because those items in the Policy Manual were felt to

be important enough that they should not be altered without

discussion by any given planning committee. Policy always governs.

Now that the manual is more accessible and usable, we need to decide what to do with

it.

First, does the Board continue to feel that a Policy Manual is a useful tool that

should be maintained?

If so, I think that there are several things that need to be done to make the manual

even easier to use, and to make it more current. I would propose that the President

appoint a small ad-hoc committee to do the following over the next year:

1. Make editorial changes where appropriate to clarify those policies that are currently

poorly written, overly verbose, or not clear.

2. Review recent Board meeting minutes and make sure that any Board actions effecting

any policy are incorporated into the manual.

3. Identify which, if any, current policies should be withdrawn.

4. Identify which policies no longer accurately reflect how SFL is operated. Prepare

suggested amendments to any such policies. The Board would have the choice of changing

policy to reflect current practice, or changing current practice to bring it back

into line with policy.

5. Identify any additional policies that should be added, and prepare recommended

language.

The ad-hoc committee will be asked to report their recommendations to the President

in advance of next year's annual meeting, after which the most appropriate next steps

will be agreed upon and followed.

Note that at some point in the process the Event Planning Manual will also need to

be edited to bring it into line with the Policy Manual.

I would also propose that our general operating procedure regarding policy revisions,

going forward, be that proposed policy amendments or proposed new policies be submitted

to the President, and that after discussion the proposed amendment or new policy

be submitted to Board members prior to the meeting at which it is to be discussed.

This is how we deal with Bylaw amendments, and we should deal with Policy amendments

in the same way.

Last, since signing the annual Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement is on the

agenda for the meeting, you will first need to read the Conflict of Interest Policy.

The old Word version is still linked on the Board page of the website, but you may

find it easier to read the online version of the policy. You will find it directly

at:

www.sfl.org/board/policy/pc17.html.

The actual disclosure form remains a Word document since each Board member must sign

and return the form to the Secretary. Judy will have a copy for you to complete and

sign during the meeting.

Larry Showalter

Guide and VIP History and Trends

I. First-Time Guides and VIPs Repeat Attendance

From 2010 to 2014 105 first‑time guides attended SFL. Of these, 39 returned to at least one subsequent event, and 27 will be attending SFL 2015.

 From 2010 to 2014 114 first‑time VIPs attended SFL. Of these, 49 returned to at least one subsequent event, and 26 will be attending SFL 2015.

The above numbers equate to a 37% return rate for first‑time guides, and 43% for first‑time VIPs.

Results by year are contained on the following two pages.

II. Composition of the Guide and VIP Pools for the 2015 Event

We have 128 guides and 96 VIPs in Granby. Breaking each down into primary components gives us:

 Guides VIPs

Foreign 19 13

US New 19 14

US Veterans 90 69

Total 128 96

If we then look at U.S. veterans by how many SFL events they have attended, including 2015, we find the following:

 Guides VIPs

Yr 2‑9 42 44

Yr 10‑19 28 15

Yr 20+ 20 10

Total 90 69

On average, U.S. veteran guides will be attending their 12.7th event in 2015, while U.S. veteran VIPs will be attending their 9.6th event.

The above says that veteran Guides stay with SFL longer than VIPs. As the 20+ year Guide group gets older and falls away, the other data suggests that the Guide pool will shrink. Especially if more first‑timers cannot be recruited and their return rate increased.

III. VIP Applications and Attendance

The number of VIPs applying for SFL has been steadily decreasing, which is a harbinger of a steadily decreasing VIP pool. The 2015 result of 110 total applicants, 14 of whom cancelled, is the lowest in at least 20 years. It was 113 for the prior two events, after consistently being in the 130 to 160 range for most of the previous decade. Total VIP applicants numbered 162 in 2003, 150 in 2005, and 137 as recently as 2011.

Gone are the days of an extensive wait list for VIPs, and of having to turn away some applicants. Gone are the days when veteran VIPs knew that they would need to get involved in the work of SFL lest they be wait listed after their first two events. In recent years we have pretty much had to accept every warm VIP body, and to do so as soon as possible.

Clearly this is a major issue for the SFL program, and it is perhaps the biggest Guide or VIP issue facing us. If we can't attract enough VIPs to form a solid base, it does not matter in the long term how many Guides we attract.

Guide History and Trends

I. First-Time Guides From 2010 Through 2014

Over the five events held from 2010 to 2014:

. There were 575 total guides in attendance.

. A total of 105 first-time guides attended, or 18% of total guides.

. Of the 105 new guides, 39 returned to at least one subsequent event. That is a return rate of 37%.

. Of the 105 new guides, 27 will be attending SFL 2015. That is a return rate of 26%.

The 27 returning new guides in 2015 represent 21% of all 2015 guides.

Results by year are shown below.

Year 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014

Total 104 133 104 114 120

New 17 27 21 15 25

Returned 9 15 6 6 3

@2015 3 13 4 4 3

II. Composition of the 2015 Guide Pool

The 128 guides attending SFL 2015 can be categorized as follows:

. 19 or 15% are foreign, mostly Norwegians.

. 19 or 15% are U.S. first-timers

. 42 or 33% are U.S. veterans attending their 2nd to 9th event

. 28 or 22% are U.S. veterans attending their 10th through 19th event

. 20 or 16 % are U.S. veterans attending their 20th event or more

The 90 veteran U.S. guides will be attending, on average their 12.7th event in 2015.

VIP History and Trends

I. First-Time VIPs From 2010 Through 2014

Over the five events held from 2010 to 2014:

. There were 469 total VIPs in attendance.

. A total of 114 first-time VIPs attended, or 24% of total VIPs.

. Of the 114 new VIPs, 49 returned to at least one subsequent event. That is a return rate of 43%.

. Of the 114 new VIPs, 26 will be attending SFL 2015. That is a return rate of 23%.

The 26 returning new VIPs in 2015 represent 27% of all 2015 VIPs.

Results by year are shown below.

Year 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014

Total 89 112 82 96 90

New 18 33 24 15 24

Returned 11 15 9 8 6

@2015 1 7 8 4 6

II. Composition of the 2015 VIP Pool

The 96 VIPs attending SFL 2015 can be categorized as follows:

. 13 or 14% are foreign.

. 14 or 15% are U.S. first-timers

. 44 or 46 percent are U.S. veterans attending their 2nd through 9th event

. 15 or 16% are U.S. veterans attending their 10th through 19th event

. 10 or 10% are U.S. veterans attending their 20th event or more

The 69 U.S. veterans will be attending, on average, their 9.6th event in 2015.

Ski for Light, Inc.

Improper Conduct Policy

Ski for Light, Inc. seeks to establish and maintain a safe and healthy environment for all participants. This includes volunteer guides, disabled participants, and other volunteers or guests attending any Ski for Light function.

Any individual attending a Ski for Light function has an obligation to conduct him or herself in accordance with the highest standards of integrity and ethics, and in compliance with federal, state, and local laws. Examples of improper conduct may include but are not limited to bullying, endangerment, unwelcome verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, abusive language, and behavior detrimental to the best interests of Ski for Light.

This improper conduct policy is intended to encourage and enable any person involved with the Ski for Light organization and/or program to raise serious concerns internally so that Ski for Light can address and correct inappropriate conduct and actions.

It is the responsibility of all persons involved with the Ski for Light organization and/or program to promptly report a suspected incident of improper conduct in writing to the Ski for Light Vice President, who shall be the Compliance Officer for the organization, unless the report is related to that person. In such a situation, the report may be submitted to any member of the Ski for Light Executive Committee, and that person shall be the Compliance Officer for the complaint.

It is the responsibility of the Compliance Officer to fully investigate the complaint. The Compliance Officer may involve such other persons who are not related to the complaint, including the Ski for Light President and outside resources, as appropriate and necessary to conduct a full investigation. The investigation shall be conducted in a confidential manner. The identity of the person filing the complaint shall be kept confidential if so requested, and if practical given the details of the complaint.

If the incident being reported is a violation of law, the compliance officer should contact the appropriate authority and strongly encourage the victim to immediately file a report with the appropriate authority.

When the Compliance Officer has completed the investigation, he/she shall submit a report to the Executive Committee. The report shall include an assessment of the validity of the submitted complaint, and a recommendation as to any corrective actions that are appropriate. The Executive Committee shall endorse or modify the conclusions and recommendations of the report, and take appropriate action. In cases where the alleged improper conduct is not a violation of law, the action of the Executive Committee shall be final.

Ski for Light, Inc.

Board Development and Elections Committee Report

January 8, 2015

The Board Development and Elections Committee consists of Renee Abernathy, Marion Elmquist and Heather Berg

The responsibility of this committee is to assess the leadership and skill needs of the Ski for Light Board, to identify candidates for Board membership who possess the skills and qualities that will be needed on the Board for the future, to encourage such candidates to seek election to the Board, and to manage the entire process of election Board members as proscribed in Article IV, Section 5.

This year, 2015 is not an election year. The authorized size of the Board is 25 members. The Board currently has 25 members. Thirteen members of the Board have terms that will expire in 2016. Our committee would appreciate any suggestions that you have for potential candidates for board service.

Term Expires 2016: Cara Barnes, Bob Civiak, Julie Coppens, Wendy David, David Fisk, Leslie Macklin, Scott McCall, Laura Oftedahl, Lawrence Povinelli, Holly Schmalling, Brenda Seeger, Larry Showalter and Peter Slatin.

Term Expires 2018: Renee Abernathy, Judith Dixon, Marion Elmquist, Robert Hartt, Eivind Heiberg, Bonnie O’Day, Heather Berg, Krista Erickson, Nicole Haley, Ken Leghorn and David Sweeny

While current members whose terms are expiring have until January 13, 2016 to make known their decision about seeking re-election, the Committee would appreciate knowing of your decision as soon as you are sure of it.

Respectfully submitted,

Renee Abernathy

**2014 Event (Anchorage) Corporate Sponsor Committee Report** January 14, 2015

The Corporate Sponsorship Committee (CSC) is chaired by Holly Schmaling.

The CSC solicits donations of merchandise from companies for the Ski for Light store, the silent and live auctions, and the raffle. We solicit donations from the majority of these companies by attending the Outdoor Retailer Show, a trade show at which companies that manufacture outdoor recreational goods show/sell their new lines to the retailers that sell them. Our sale of these donated items produces most but not all of the income from these four fundraising activities, as revenue also includes the sales of items donated by individuals and others for the silent auction, as well as the sales of chocolate and pins in the store, which are purchased for re-sale.

Many thanks to Marion Elmquist, who once again accompanied me to the Outdoor Retailer Show in Salt Lake City this last August and assisted in soliciting product donations to support Ski For Light. The event seems to get bigger every year, with more and more vendors. One of the best parts of the event is that it gives us an opportunity to personally thank our sponsors for their support, make face-to-face connections, the importance of which I cannot stress enough. Thanks also for Marion’s help with post-show follow-up work. Thanks also to Marie Huston, who has been our official receiving department for donations and has been keeping us apprised of packages received, and to Mary Kozy, who researched adaptive equipment companies to solicit for donations.

During the 2014 event each attendee spent, on average, $61.14 in the store, auctions or raffle. This per-person expenditure was the lowest of the last five years. As I was not able to attend that event, I have no insight as to why this is the case.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Year | Income | People | Per-Person |
| 2014 | $15,284.00 | 250 | $61.14 |
| 2013 | $18,145.00 | 252 | $72.00 |
| 2012 | $14,051.00 | 206 | $68.21 |
| 2011 | $19,410.00 | 289 | $67.16 |
| 2010 | $15,476.20 | 242 | $63.95 |

Gross revenue was divided between the store, silent auction and raffle as follows, with comparisons also shown for the previous four years.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 2014  | 2013 | 2012 | 2011 | 2010 |
| Store | $7,242.00 | $10,579.00  |  $8,086.00 | $11,544.00 | $6,782.25 |
| Auction | $5,272.00 |  $5,342.00 |  $4,840.00 | $ 6,276.00 | $6,998.95 |
| Raffle | $2,770.00 |  $2,225.00 |  $1,125.00 | $ 1,590.00 | $1,695.00 |
| Total | $15,284.00 | $18,145.00 | $14,051.00 | $19,410.00 | $15,476.20 |

As compared to other years and as a percentage of the total income for store/auction/raffle in 2014, the raffle was unusually successful. Again, as I was not at the event I do not know why this would be the case. Was the raffle item a particularly high-value item? I would be interested in knowing.

A total of 22 corporations donated products for the 2014 event, down quite a bit from the previous year’s total of 40. I believe this was in part due to the fact that vendors did not want to pay shipping to Alaska. We are currently taking inventory of the donated items received this year for the 2015 event. To date, for this year’s event we have received donations from 33 sponsors, with fingers crossed for several long-term sponsors we have not yet heard from.

As usual, we were quite well received at the Outdoor Retailer Show. As I did last year, I preempted our trip by sending out emails to our established vendors to let them know we would be stopping by, and also introducing us to some we had not spoken to before (I peruse the vendor list and see who might be a good candidate in terms of product). I received several enthusiastic replies, and I believe this helps grease the wheels a bit with new vendors. As always, however, cold-calling is a large part of the event.

 As I stated last year, a trend that continues in regards to acquiring donations is that increasingly more companies are going to online forms for donation/sponsorship requests. We frequently hear, “There is a form for that on our website.” This unfortunately eliminates the advantage of face-to-face meetings, and I am finding more and more often that when we do visit a vendor, there is really no one available to “pitch” to, who has anything to do with the decision making behind the company’s charitable giving. That is not to say that companies are not giving. On the contrary, I find that most all of them have an ethic of charitable giving and community service. But without that face-to-face connection with so many non-profits vying for donations, it is easier to get lost in the crowd

I’m just beginning to keep track of different metrics when looking at the show. One group of vendors that I question the value of visiting is brand new companies, which at the OR Show are set up in outside pavilions. Of the 13 we visited, we received 4 donations, which I actually think is pretty good, but these companies are often small, and as they are new they do not often have the budget for donations. The other group is the cold call, and of 16 we visited, 6 donated merchandise. This confirms that boots on the ground, face-to-face, is a good thing. Plus the fact that we most often make contact because we literally walk right in front of their booths makes this a no-brainer. In contrast, for the first time I contacted adaptive equipment companies through email cold calls, using a target list compiled by Mary Kozy. Of the 12 companies I contacted, we received one donation. There’s that face-to-face value again.

On an exciting note, last year Patagonia expressed an interest in getting involved on a bigger level. After a great meeting at the OR Show and much work on Marion’s part, Patagonia donated four (quite expensive) jackets for our Ridderrenn team! We hope to continue this relationship. In addition, Borton Overseas has donated four round-trip airline tickets to Oslo for our Ridderrenn team. We have been debating creating special designations for these sponsors, including Jansport, in terms of how they are acknowledged on our website and Facebook, etc., and though this may unnecessarily complicate things, I do believe it is worth further discussion. Perhaps something as simple as “levels” of sponsorship, based on retail value.

Lastly, there has been a question of the cost effectiveness of sending a team to the OR Show every year. We normally send three people, two sighted and one visually impaired, paying for airfare, one hotel room, and usually one or two meals. This year there were only two of us as Heather Berg had a family emergency and could not attend. This year we will make an effort to determine just how much return came from that investment in terms of sales between the three categories, specifically items donated from OR Show contacts.

However, regardless of the outcome of this study, I would hesitate to eliminate this activity to be replaced by email correspondence only. I am fairly certain that our donations would drop off as our familiarity with our sponsors faded. Also, though it might not be a significant net gain financially, I think having the large variety of quality new products to offer for sale and auction enhances the week for everyone.

Thank you,

Holly Schmaling – Chair Corporate Sponsorship Committee

**REPORT OF THE GUIDE RECRUITMENT COMMITTEE**

**TO THE SFL BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Jan 16, 2015

The Guide Recruitment Committee is composed of Bob Civiak (chair), Leslie Maclin, and Chris Radel.

The traditional means of recruiting guides to SFL is through word of mouth. This year, the Guide Recruitment Committee was successful in motivating our community to do so. We will have about 21 new guides in Colorado and, for the first time in recent memory, we turned away some new guide applicants, who did not meet the application deadline, because we had too many guides.

The Guide Recruitment Committee is attempting to broaden the base of our guide population to attract better skiers and ski instructors by reaching out to the general community of cross-country skiers through print and online media. We had tangible results from our advertising efforts this year. One new guide (Michael Evelo), who will be in Colorado, first heard of SFL through an ad that we ran in *Cross Country Skier* magazine two years ago. This demonstrates that advertising is a long-term endeavor and we should not judge the results on the response to a single year of advertising. Another new guide, who will be in Colorado, (Sheila Tucker) said she heard about SFL through an internet search. In addition, a new guide, who came to the New England Regional this year (Will Wright), found out about SFL when an ad appeared on his Facebook page.

This year, the SFL Executive Committee severely reduced the budget for paid advertising. We placed the only print ad we could afford in the “Birch Scroll,” which is sent to the mailing list of the American Birkebiener citizens ski race. We also continued to advertise for both skiers and guides through Google “Adwords.” We believe that Adwords is how Sheila Tucker and Will Wright found out about SFL. If you do a Google search on any number of terms relating to cross-country skiing or blindness, you may see one of our ads. Those ads have tag-lines such as, “Help blind and disabled adults enjoy cross country skiing,” with links to our website. In the past 12 months, our ads appeared on about 1.6 million searches. About 3,500 people clicked through to our website, at a cost to SFL of about $1,000 or $0.28/click. In response to the budget cutback, we modified the parameters of our ads and reduced spending to less than $300 over the most recent six months. This still produced 1,400 visits to our webpage at a reduced cost of only $0.21/click.

The Committee also reached out to several national and regional skiing organizations for free publicity to support guide recruitment. FasterSkier.com, the premier website for ski racers in the United States, ran an article and a banner ad about SFL. We will have two very accomplished new guides in Colorado who heard about us through FasterSkier – Alex Kochon, the managing editor of FasterSkier and her mother, Wendy Matthews -- both of whom were collegiate ski racers.

Other organizations that publicized our search for new guides include:

* The Alaska Nordic Skier, the newsletter for the Nordic Skiing Association of Anchorage, which is distributed to more than 15,000 people, including the mailing list for the Tour of Anchorage;
* The newsletter of the New England Nordic Skiing Association (NENSA);
* The U.S. Association of Blind Athletes (USABA), which ran an article about SFL needing guides on the USABA webpage; and
* The Craftsbury Marathon, which plans to include advertising inserts for SFL guides in the race packets of their participants.

With the help of Eivind Heiberg, we have also had discussions with the organizers of the City of Lakes Loppet, one of the largest cross-country ski races in the U.S. They have offered us an opportunity to set up a recruitment table at their race next year and at other activities, their organization conducts.

We are optimistic that this publicity will pay off with new guide applications in the future.

We are also working to retain younger guides, who have attended recent events. Chris Radel called a number of recent guides to urge them to return. Unfortunately, we have only seven second-year guides returning. Many of the younger guides cited financial constraints as the reason they could not return. Paradoxically, there were significant funds left over this year from the amount budgeted for guide stipends. Perhaps we need to better publicize the availability of stipends for guides.

While not really focused on guide recruitment, the Committee also submitted an article on Ski for Light to Wikipedia, which is now up and running and provides general information about our organization.

In sum, our guide recruitment efforts were very successful this year. It appears we will have more than enough guides for the number of skiers. If that positive trend continues, we might need to look at limiting whom we accept as guides. I would like the Board to discuss whether we might accept only the best guides and ski instructors immediately, while placing others on a waiting list or accepting them only as assistant guides.

Respectfully submitted,

Bob Civiak

**REPORT OF THE REGIONAL LIAISON COMMITTEE**

**TO THE SFL BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Jan 16, 2015

The Regional Liaison Committee is composed of Bob Civiak (chair) and Larry Showalter.

The responsibility of the Regional Liaison Committee is to share information about the activities of Ski for Light, Inc. with each regional program, to gather information about the various regional activities and events for dissemination within the Ski for Light community, and to act as a facilitator of communication flow amongst the various regional programs.

A key activity of the Committee is to maintain the “Regional Roundup” page on the SFL website with up to date information on regional skiing and other events. We continue to do this.

This year, for the first time in many years, the chair of the Regional Liaison Committee spoke separately with the President or another leader of each of the nine regional organizations. Those individual phone calls went very well. We mostly discussed our similar challenges in fund raising and in attracting new guides and skiers. Everyone I spoke with felt that relations were good between their region and SFL Inc. However, at least two regional representatives requested that the event coordinators for international events contact them as soon as they know there will be an international in their region and work with them as plans develop.

During the individual calls, several regions expressed an interest in a conference call to share our experiences in fund raising and recruiting. We followed up with such a conference call in October 2014, with Bob Civiak and Scott McCall representing SFL, Inc and seven of the nine regions participating. In addition to exchanging ideas on fund raising and recruiting, we agreed to post the dates for future ski events as soon as possible, so we can avoid conflicting with each other.

This year, the Regional Liaison Committee also played a lead role in securing a grant from the Gibney Family Foundation to help support new guides and skiers who SFL regional organizations nominate for financial assistance. Three participants applied for and received the $600 Gibney Grants this year:

* Lynee Forsyth, a guide nominated by the Puget Sound regional;
* Cameron Karaschin, a VIP nominated by the Michigan regional; and
* Michael Mooney, a VIP nominated by the Montana regional.

We hope that the Foundation will allow us to offer the remaining five grants next year.

Finally, we informed all of the regions about the availability of the new guide-training manual and encouraged them to use it. The Black Hills region has said that they will use the manual in their training program and others might as well.

Respectfully submitted,

Bob Civiak

**Ski for Light Foundation Report**

**January 18, 2015**

The purpose of the Foundations Committee is to solicit funds from foundations to support the activities of Ski for Light. Each year, we also submit grant reports to foundations that have provided funding to Ski for Light during the past year. The reports summarize our activities and explain how the funds were spent. Below is a summary of gifts for the 2015 event.

Grants Received: In 2014 we have received donations from the following organizations, for a total of $23,000. These funds are for the 2015 SFL international event. This compares to $14,000 we received from foundations last year and is due to a $10,000 grant from a new foundation. Foundations largely funded guide training and participant stipends.

* 1. Sedona Foundation: $2,000. We received equivalent funds from the Thistle Foundation last year. Sedona Foundation is operated by the same person. The donation is the result of a personal contact. This gift was promised but not yet received.
	2. TJX $5,000. TJX has funded SFL for many years. The TJX Foundation increased their donation by $1,500 in 2013 and they maintained this higher funding level in 2014.
	3. Harmon Foundation $2500. This donation was from a new donor to SFL in 2012, made through a personal contact. In 2013, the Foundation gave us $3,500 so the donation dropped by $1,000.
	4. Delta Gamma Foundation $3,500. Delta has funded SFL for many years. I apply in December and the donation is received in April each year. The funds are designated for the next year’s event. The April 2014 donation is designated for the 2015 event. I applied for funds for the 2016 event in December. I believe we could obtain a higher grant from them with the right approach.

Other notes and comments:

* 1. The Gibney Foundation provided $4800 in funds for 8 new participants and guides that meet certain criteria. They must be nominated by a regional SFL, must be under 50, and have not attended an event or not attended one in the last five years. Scholarships from this fund were awarded to three individuals.
	2. Foundations tend to want to designate their funds for specific activities and it is harder to raise funds for general purposes. If we continue to increase our foundation grants, we should think about other activities foundations may wish to fund. Options include transportation to the ski venue, the race rally, or trail fees.
	3. The Foundation Committee should focus its efforts in two areas. First, we should continue to solicit funds from past donors. We should explore ways to increase the amount of funds we receive from these foundations. Second, we should continue to survey our membership to uncover any personal contacts with foundations our members may have. We have been most successful in bringing in new foundations through personal contacts. We need to explore other ways to reach out to the membership to solicit their contacts.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bonnie O’Day

**Committee Report for: Social Media 1/20/15**

**Respectfully submitted by: Leslie Maclin**

**(*Abbreviation notes: SFL = Ski for Light, FB = Facebook)***

**The objectives of SFL Social Media activities are:**

* Communicate, promote & network w/both current and potential SFL constituents;
	+ skiers, guides, associates & sponsors
* Provide relevant and engaging content via;
	+ SFL news, SFL activities, events, members and sponsors
* Maintain a regular frequency of content to communicate that SFL is an active organization.
* Monitor SFL social media sites for appropriate comments
* Social media is in addition to and alignment with the bulletin, web site, and e-mail communications
* Monitor and evaluate emerging social media vehicles for utilization

**Social Media Vehicles:**

Two Primary Social Media Vehicles:

* Facebook; SFL Page and YouTube

Additional Social Media vehicles:

* Linked-In & Twitter; low priority basis FB prioritization
* Monitor & Evaluate emerging social media vehicles for utilization, i.e. Instagram, Tumblr

**New Social Media Committee Members:**

* Heather Berg, Renee Abernathy, and actively seeking others

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**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/SkiforLight>

We have a dynamic FB page, w/almost 600 “likes” (up from 212 in 2013)

* More “likes” via Content, frequency and linkage to other sites maximizes engagement
* Frequency consistently maintained;
	+ Annually: ~1-2 x weekly
	+ Pre-reg. period: ~2 x week
	+ Pre-event & during event: ~1-2 x daily.
* Content has consistently focused on:
	+ SFL events, event registration, activities, guide, skier and sponsor retention & recruitment
	+ SFL member news, relevant content and achievements
	+ The SFL community also posts relevant content and events, in addition to those by the administrators of the page, and are encouraged to continue to do so!
* Sponsors; All current sponsors are listed on the SFL page “about” tab. For all sponsors who have FB pages that allow it, we have “liked” their page, and post “thank you’s.” Holly Schmaling is also a FB page administrator, and her sponsor postings have boosted sponsor engagement.
* Recruiting; annually post recruiting flyer and info. on Facebook pages for Nordic Centers and Nordic Ski clubs. SFL members are encouraged to do this for their local ski areas and clubs.
* FB Insight statistics:
	+ For the last ~12 month period, Jan. 2014 to Jan 2015
	+ Source: FB Insight Statistics
	+ Measure five key areas: Likes, Reach, Visits, Posts & People
	+ **LIKES- Thumbs up for our page**
		- Page; 567, up from 394 last year
		- Next goal: 750
	+ **REACH- The number of unique people who have seen your post. Top reaching posts:**
		- 1-“Big News” Gibney Family Foundation Guide Grant- reached 1500+ people
		- 2-“Countdown to Anchorage” pre-event news
		- 3-“Another Perfect Day on the Trails” Jerry & Kent on the trails in Anchorage
		- 4-“Shuttle Bus Fun” Anchorage event photo’s
		- 5-“Share the Sport you love” Guide recruitment flyer
		- 6-“No Moose Were Harmed in the Filming of this Video” Anchorage Trail shenanigans
		- 7-“Congrat’s new SFL Officers” Photo of new 2014 SFL officers
	+ **VISITS- new- where on internet people are coming from to get to page**
		- Not enough data this year to measure, indicating that folks are primarily coming directly thru FB, versus the SFL Web site, Google or Bing
	+ **POSTS number of unique people who have created a story with your page post. Stories are created when someone likes, comments or shares your post, answers a question you posted, or shares your event.**
		- Similar results to Reach, see above
	+ **PEOPLE**
		- Gender usage remains very similar to prior years: ~63% female/37% male
			* For reference, ALL of FB is: 46% female, 54 % male
		- 25 countries (up from 11 in 2012) & 15 languages (up from 7 in 2012)
	+ Reaching these age groups in this rank order:
		- * 45-54 yr. olds
			* 35-44 yr. olds
			* 25-34 yr. olds
			* 55-64 yr. olds
			* 65+ yr. olds (increased over prior years)
		- Bottom two age groups reached:
			* 13-17, 18-24 yr. olds



**YouTube**

* No new videos posted by SFL in 2014
* There are several dozen SFL related videos on YouTube, including news coverage clips, SFL Regional events (i.e. Michigan posts an event video annually), participant videos, and a brand new video from the Japan SFL event

**Plans & Notes for 2015+:**

* New Social Media Committee Members: Renee Abernathy, Heather Berg and actively seeking others
	+ Plan is to divide content type among members (i.e. SFL news, Recruiting VIP’s & Guides, Sponsors, SFL Member news, etc.) and also identify future Social Media chair
* Maintain and continue content, frequency and activities, etc.
* Explore cost and viability of Facebook advertising for recruiting, both skiers and guides, i.e. $30 can boost a specific post to approx. 1300 people.
* Recommend any major marketing materials, i.e. new videos, be dist. late spring/early summer to maximize usage for recruiting
* Consider updating and contemporizing referral vehicles: SFL Web page, SFL phone number

Visually impaired Participant Recruitment Committee Report

January 19, 2015

The purpose of the Visually Impaired Participant Recruitment Committee is to recruit new visually impaired participants for each Ski for Light event. Over the past year notices about the 2015 event and other recruitment efforts have been directed to:

* the American Council of the Blind and the National Federation of the Blind (Braille Forum and Braille Monitor magazines, as well as a Sports and Recreation division).
* Winter Park National Sports Center for the Disabled
* National Industries for the Blind and its 66 affiliated agencies.
* Colorado Center for the Blind.
* Colorado Talking Book Library.
* Association for Blind Citizens (internet radio interview with Boston based association).
* American Foundation for the Blind (Vision Aware Program article by Mary Hiland & blog posting by Bob Hartt).
* SFL Announce (reminder to inform friends who are blind about SFL).
* First time VIP attendees at 2014 event (telephone survey to obtain feedback).

The SFL Board Policy Manual gives us a goal of having 25% of our total VIP skiers as first timers each year. This year 14 out of 96 VIP attendees, or 14.6%, will be first time participants. This is a decrease from last year in Anchorage, when the percentage of VIP participants who were first timers amounted to 26%. When comparing to the prior year’s participation rate at Shanty Creek, Michigan, which was a little over 14%, the 2015 participation rate is almost the same.

It should also be noted that the cancelation rate for first time applicants in 2015 was 26.9%, which is roughly the same as experienced in Michigan, and it is an improvement over the cancelation rate of 35% in Anchorage. As noted in prior years, the cancelation rate for veteran VIP skiers is always lower, and this year it is 6.9%.

A more extensive analysis of a long term downward trend in participation by new visually impaired participants has been prepared by Larry Showalter. This will be discussed as part of the Board’s agenda on January 23.

Efforts were also made to improve retention of new visually impaired skiers through 1) continuation and expansion of the volunteer VIP network for welcoming new VIP skiers, and 2) a phone survey of 13 new VIP skiers who attended in 2014. A summary of the results of the phone survey was sent to the Board prior to the October Board meeting. Sixteen experienced VIP skiers volunteered to participate in the mentor network this year, and it was expanded to include some second year returning skiers. Both initiatives have been well received, and it is recommended they be continued.

Special thanks go to Bonnie O’Day, Tim McCorcle, Lynda Boose, Mary Hiland and all the mentor/welcoming network volunteers who supported the work of the VIP Recruitment Committee this year.

Respectfully submitted,

Bob Hartt

Chairman