

GETTING TO KNOW NSP'S NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: MEEGAN MOSZYNSKI

THIS SUMMER THE National Ski Patrol (NSP) hired a new executive director, Meegan Moszynski. A seasoned professional in leadership development, Moszynski also is a lifelong skier, inveterate volunteer, and the first woman to serve as NSP's executive director.

Before joining the NSP team Moszynski was the president of Quarterly Forum, a Colorado-based membership organization focused on community leadership, and executive director of The Leaders Initiative, a nonprofit group that develops leadership talent for the public sector. She has worked in different industries all over the world, and has collaborated on clean energy initiatives in China, educational and vocational training programs for women and children in Pakistan, agricultural economic development projects in Chile, and rural economic development projects in Cambodia.

Moszynski has a master's degree in international trade, investment, and development policy studies from the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey, Calif., and a bachelor's degree in international studies with a concentration in European studies and history of art and architecture, as well as a minor in Italian, from Middlebury College, Vt.

The *Journal* reached out to Moszynski to discuss her ideas about how to address challenges facing the NSP and how she plans to make a difference as the association's new executive director.

NJ: NSP has a lot to grapple with—an aging NSP membership base, dwindling volunteerism, resort belt-tightening, and resorts' desire to reduce liability exposure, among other considerations. How do you think NSP will need to address these factors in the coming years in order to secure the role of volunteer patrollers in the industry?

MM: Working directly with resorts and listening to their concerns will ensure the viability of the NSP. The ski industry has seen significant growth and change over the past few decades, and many resorts are shifting to a year-round focus that goes beyond just winter sports. With this new scope, the needs of many resorts are expanding, and the NSP will need to modernize alongside that expansion. The recent launch of NSP's membership category for bike patrollers is one way we have started to address the challenges of today's

outdoor recreation industry. I'm sure that a variety of other challenges and appropriate solutions will arise during my time at the NSP. I'm ready—and excited!

We want to engage our key partners and stakeholders in ongoing conversations about how we can help support their needs. Those conversations help us execute programs and provide support for our members. In the end, we're here to ensure the safety of people enjoying the outdoors, and with that expansion going beyond snowsports, our ability to remain flexible and adaptable will continue to enable us to grow alongside those whom we aim to serve.

NJ: Volunteerism throughout our society seems to be diminishing as people become more strapped for time. How will NSP deal with the challenge of recruiting new volunteers?

MM: In a lot of ways, volunteerism is not diminishing; in fact, we're seeing that many people increasingly want to engage, learn, and contribute to their communities. People want to learn how they can help other people, and younger generations tend to be more interested in donating their time (and money) than previous generations. Will that translate into the ski industry? We hope so.

We need to work on elevating the profile of our members—patrollers—and bring them more to the forefront of who we are as an organization. Let's show the community what it means to be a patroller. Patrollers are tough, dedicated, compassionate, and passionate people who want to help others enjoy the environment that they love, and to do it safely. It is incredible work, and many people do not understand even a fraction of what patrollers do. Their job is extremely commendable and impressive. We want to inspire others to join this group of amazing folks, and we can do that by helping them learn more about our members. I have full confidence that we will be able to continue to attract volunteers by more overtly demonstrating the camaraderie and values espoused by the members of the NSP.

NJ: Are there any other priorities that NSP needs to address?

MM: We have a strategic plan that we are in the middle of implementing. The plan does a great job of addressing today's challenges for the NSP: the changing ski industry, the need to continue to attract volunteers, the trials and tribulations of ▶



Meegan Moszynski

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modernizing our organization, and the importance of our educational programs. Staying on track with this vision is paramount to our success and viability. But again, we also need to remain flexible and able to adapt to changing—and new—circumstances, and we need to be able to constantly reassess our strategy in order to remain current. We have supported the ski industry for almost 80 years, and we want to keep doing so.

NJ: Are there any changes you foresee for NSP as an institution to keep it viable in the ski industry?

MM: I hope to elevate the position of the NSP to be more engaged in the greater outdoor recreation industry—and beyond. We currently work with so many amazing partners, and I am looking forward to engaging with additional key stakeholders that can help us influence the future of the outdoor sports industry. Let's also get involved in the climate change conversation and discuss the potential economic effects of our changing snow patterns. Let's work with policy makers to effect change that supports the durability of our ski resorts. Let's have a voice with the tourism offices to ensure that we have a voice in their strategies to increase visitation and visibility. Let's continue to work with companies and other nonprofit organizations that are concerned with similar issues.

NJ: How will your background help in your new role?

MM: I have worked in a pretty wide range of industries and sectors and with many different kinds of people, and I think that bringing that diversity of thought and outside experience will be a valuable contribution to the NSP. I have worked with leaders at all levels—national, local, political, organizational, large-scale, small-scale—and those connections have allowed me to develop my own leadership style, which revolves around convening, listening, influencing, and effecting change. Our team here at the NSP's national office is strong and seasoned, and we work to serve our members and our board of directors by working alongside the needs of ski areas. Together we can ensure the success of our work and the viability of our membership base. The NSP comprises many people who are extremely passionate about patrolling and have been involved in patrolling for many years. Working with those folks, respecting their accomplishments, and encouraging growth and adaptation throughout our base will be the focus of a lot of my work. I hope to continue that ethos of leadership and respect within the NSP to support us in our next stage of growth.

NJ: Where did you learn to ski and who taught you?

MM: I grew up skiing at Snowbird, Utah. I started to ski at age 3. My dad taught me by letting me ride in his snowplow while he held me up under my shoulders. I remember going to ski school there and racing in the

Snickerdoodle races on Chickadee. I was always the fastest during our practice runs, but then I flubbed during the actual race. I am not competitive and don't like to race. I really just wanted to enjoy the moment—and to ski! I also clearly remember my ski school instructor there. His name was Brig, and we called him "Brig the pig that wears a wig." A toddler's humor, I guess.

I went through OEC training in college because I wanted the knowledge and was excited about the opportunity to one day join a patrol. I didn't end up trying out for Middlebury's local patrol because I was a swimmer, and I could not do both sports in the same season. But I still have my book and notes from that class from 20 years ago!

Moving to Jackson Hole, Wyoming, in 2003 really made me a strong skier. I got to town and told everyone I had skied my whole life, and I quickly learned that everyone there is a ripper. I was put in my place very quickly, so I guess you could say I *really* learned to ski in Jackson.

NJ: What is your favorite place to ski?

MM: Jackson Hole. Hands down. Not that I'm biased or anything.

NJ: What would people be surprised to know about you?

MM: I speak three foreign languages. I lived in Paris for two years as a kid, where I became fluent in French. That helped me learn Italian in college, and then I focused on Spanish in grad school. I rarely use them anymore, but they're in my head somewhere, I know it! Also, I hate spiders and mayonnaise.

NJ: What would you be doing if not this job?

MM: This is my dream job. But if I were doing something else, it probably would focus on saving all the dogs around the world. I love dogs and want them all to be happy, and animal cruelty or mistreatment in any way makes me absolutely bonkers. I also love food, wine, and whiskey, and would love to work on a vineyard or run a distillery.

NJ: What do you want the industry to know about you?

MM: I'm passionate about skiing and all things winter. I love love love the cold and being outside, and I am so excited to be able to work in an industry that allows me to support the things I love. I think our industry is facing a lot of challenges, and we need to work with our community partners and those affected by similar challenges in order to sustain the ski resorts and survive as an industry. I am prepared to work with people across the country to make sure that happens. I want skiing to be around for many more generations to come. ■

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