# NORTH DAKOTA NATIVE TOURISM ALLIANCE

April 2, 2019 at 10am

Phone Conference

Board of Directors Meeting

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**MEETING MINUTES**

1. Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 10:11am by President Les Thomas

1. Roll Call

**Present:** Les Thomas- President, Turtle Mountain Band

Darin Morsette -Vice-President, MHA Nation

Selina LaFontaine- Secretary/Treasurer, Turtle Mountain Band

Jen Martel – Board Member, Standing Rock Tribe

Jason Morsette- Board Member, MHA Nation

Doug Sevigny, Board Member, Spirit Lake Nation

**NOT Present**

Cynthia Antelope – Standing Rock Tribe – Excused

Tamara St. John – Wahpeton Sisseton Oyate – Excused

Warren Hawk – Alternate – Standing Rock

Natasha Gourd- Alternate – Spirit Lake

**NDNTA Advisory Committee Members**

Stacey LaCompte – North Dakota Indian Business Alliance

Seleni Matus – George Washington University – Institute of International Tourism Studies, School of Business

**Others Present**

South Dakota Department of Tourism

Kirk Hulstein – Industry Outreach & Development Director

Jacey Jessop- Industry Outreach & Development Representative

1. Opening Prayer by Jason Morsette
2. Agenda Review – No Conflict of Interest

Jason would like to add to the agenda under new business c. Update on AIANTA BODs Interview.

Les makes the statement that if anyone wants to change/or add to the agenda as we proceed, they can.

1. Approval Of Agenda
   1. Les asks for the Approval of the Agenda. Darian makes the motion to accept the agenda with add to agenda under new business c. Jason Morsette update on AIANTA Interview. Jen seconds the motion. Agenda accepted at 10:15am. Discussion held. **All in Favor, No Abstentions, Motion Carried**
2. Special Guest – SD Tourism Department (SDTD) – Les welcomes our special guest Kirk and Jacey from SDTD.

Stacey LaCompte introduces Kirk advising the Board that SDTD is requesting technical assistance and guidance from the NDNTA on establishing a SD native tourism alliance similar to NDNTA. Kirk gives his thanks for the NDNTA allowing SDTD in joining our regular BODs meeting today. Stacey states that SD Tourism acquired a study on tourism, which leads them to pursue a SD Native Tourism Alliance

Kirk gives some back ground on their work there in tourism in SD. He states that 2yrs ago they did a strategic plan bringing a lot of their industry members together in a very large appraise of our tourism industry, one of the areas that everyone felt very strongly about was that they have a lot of potential to increase tourism development on the SD Native Reservations, they know that visitors are looking for those experiences.

Thru the work of Red Cloud Indian School whom hired Agency MABU to conduct two larger surveys, the one survey was sent out to nearly 600,000 individuals that are subscribed to their newsletter, travel guide or requesting information from them.

Some highlights from that are as follow:

* 31% said that that they were aware of SD had tribal experiences.
* 86% said that they would like that type of experience and would come to SD for it.

Seeing these results was mind blowing to them and our industry is saying we need to work on this and figure out a way to develop a plan to assist in facilitating in any way and however we can help the SD Reservations in doing this. In addition to that Red Cloud Indian School, they worked with MABU out of Bismarck ND. Stacey informs Kirk that she works part time out of Mabu as well.

Kirk says, ok Stacey when you worked with them, some of the findings from that survey were pretty high in 70% in that they never experienced a Native American experience. Stacey says yeah. Kirk says 67% said that they wanted to (have a native experience). 68% said that they wanted that on a reservation. MABU worked on that study or survey. After they started to do some research and came across our organization (NDNTA) and all the work that you guys have done in bringing the tribes together for this effort. At this point, they reached out the NDIBA (Stacey) to set up an initial introduction meeting and valuable feedback from NDNTA.

Les asks Kirk if they are a part of the Chamber of Commerce, Kirk replies no, they are their own department and their secretary is a part of the cabinet. Les states that ND, SD, Montana, Wyoming and Idaho are under the Great American West now. Has SDT worked with Fred Walker from NDT? Kirk answers yes.

Kirk resumes where he was cut off from the lost call. Kirk reiterates some of the above information and that they just want to listen in and find out from us what has worked and what has not, that they want to learn from us or sit down and put together some regional partnerships. That is something we can discuss.

Selina says so you want to know how we structured ours and Kirk answers yeah, any insight that you have would be welcomed.

Seleni from GWU introduces herself to SDTD and how they are working very closely with NDNTA, Stacey of NDIBA/Agency Mabu and other local partners to really help give width to the regional alliance for so many reasons that make sense and to let you know that we are aspirational and all the work that we have been doing in North Dakota. This is supported by the BIA and in this next round of work which we have all indications that we think BIA will support. They (BIA) wanted us to expand the work that we have been doing in ND to SD, so we look forward to being a part of the discussion where appropriate and with NDNTA, NDIBA (Stacey) and ourselves (GWU). We would like to stay in close touch until we hear definitely from the BIA when the funding is available for consolidation to work in ND but also new work in SD. We would definitely want to plan this out in collaboration with you and others. Kirk says that sounds fantastic Seleni!

Les states that Ed Hall III is out of Washington DC and that is who Seleni is working with from the BIA. Les says that he talk to Ed last week and Selina seen him at the Res Summit last week in Las Vegas. Les states that they (BIA, OIEED ) did get their 2019 funding so they are trying to get that appropriated out and I think that is what Seleni is referring to and he (Ed) is not too sure about 2020. He (Ed) said that they transferred his department underneath another director and he has to work with that. Seleni answers that it is looking hopeful and just a matter of time.

Seleni says let’s continue to stay in close touch and look where we can take in all the lessons learned from the process that we helped to develop in North Dakota and use in South Dakota and we are very excited about that potential of course. Kirk states that is awesome and one other thing that we keep looking at is something like the “Great American West” their efforts, people aren’t planning really with their stakeholders and that’s been a barrier and we don’t think that it should be, that is our take on it, we are willing to work with Wyoming, North Dakota or whomever just to prove our tribal product regardless of state borders.

Selina asks if they are aware of AIANTA and the NATIVE ACT and that is through Ed Hall III. Seleni answers that the actual funding that we are foreseeing coming through is all a part of the bigger plan that the policy set forth.

Les is asking if the South Dakota Tourism can come up and meet during this month. Kirk said he would have to check his schedule and email everyone to confirm. Les asks Seleni when would, approximately the funding come through so we can set something up here in North Dakota. Seleni replies that they are in the early contracting phase and it is really up to BIA and may be another 1 to possibly 3 months out, Seleni emphasizes that this is only her estimate and that they are preparing it now and it is looking more sure and until we have that firm contract in our hands, we will let everyone know when we do have.

Les asks if there are anymore comments. Stacey says to recap about the BIA funding coming through, that it includes South Dakota. Correct? Seleni says Correct Stacey and that it includes North and South Dakota. Stacey ask then, would we be doing similar work in how we started up the tourism here in North Dakota with a strategic planning that was 2 days, brought in all the partners and all the tribes. Seleni answered correct and that is the subjective general standard goals for us and we would have to refine it with you all and Kirk and others in doing a bit of a consonance to really understanding the landscape fully in that it cultivated that “summit” we held in the beginning in bringing in all the important understanding and looking at the potential opportunities, the challenges, then figure out what might be the ideal objectives that we can collectively work on over the next year and a half.

Les makes mention of the United Tribes Summit is September of every year in Bismarck, ND. Seleni says that they have been on the agenda for the past few years in educating with Tribal Leaders, in hosting sessions about GWU, tourism on Indian land and NDNTA Initiatives, Seleni says that she needs to coordinate with Anna just to make sure that, that occurs this year as that is going to be a very important so that we “round up” everyone to ensure we continue to move forward together.

Seleni states that in terms of the scope of work for ND, everyone around the “virtual” table, has a sense of what that is and to recap for SDTD the next round of support to NDNTA we hope to be able to step forward and support the tribal leaders and tribes and actually have new product (experiences around events ready to offer) from each of the tribes to showcase. It is what we all agreed to work on in the next year and half now that we have a solid foundation in the NDNTA, which we will work together to create new experiences and support “hopefully the” support development with new macro and entrepreneurial are supporting these experiences and how does this connect back to NDNTA. Well NDNTA is the “nerve center” of it all and the efforts will emanate from NDNTA. NDNTA will be setting the shared values, types of experiences under their brand. NDNTA is going to define that brand, that regional brand. There will be extensive tribe level efforts with the direction under the NDNTA Board Members and the leaders of those tribes develop these experiences which will be defined by the community to meet their needs and be very representative of what they feel they would like to offer a development of a network of experiences. The ND State Tourism Office, also many other organizations have been a part of this effort. Seleni says that maybe another year, year and half to being closer to working more deeply with them. They have not been so involved with creating the product experience development. The idea is with the NDNTA brings these “experiences” to the market, then North Dakota Tourism Office will then help to promote throughout all their channels including some of the ones that were mentioned, their trade shows. There is a lot of testing to do, baby steps of course and once we are developing products (experiences) there is enormous responsibility in ensuring that it is done right. I think the initial testing will occur around regional visitation, we hope to set very practical and achievable targets for the changes that these experiences might help to create in bringing about more native experiences and I hope that is helpful and that is the essence but not the only thing we will be doing, there is a lot of support for NDNTA that is just a compilation as well a part of that and as I mentioned all the activities will emanate from the NDNTA.

Selina states that the George Washington University provided NDNTA certificate training in Cultural Heritage Tourism and some of us also received the Destination Management Certificate training in really preparing us in launching this. Kirk says that would be very helpful for us as well. Seleni says you know what Kirk, it has taken us how long guys to come together 2 or 3 years right to create the foundation. So that is a big lesson Kirk in we took our time, we built this well and now NDNTA is running it! Just the way it should, we are there right in the wings and ready to support them. It has been careful planning, very respectful engagement and that is how it will continue. It has taken time and one lesson Kirk, that I am sure you are very well aware of and that development work is more than tourism its community development work, where that takes time and it has taken us 3 years to get here, to be ready, to initiate this more specific focus on development of tourism experiences around tribal events.

Kirk states that they kind of had a timeline set for 5 years out, where will we be? What we want to show for it? What’s their short and long term from reality that we can focus on developing? Les says for them to keep in mind that each tribe has their own protocol.

Stacey says to Kirk is one thing that would give you leverage with SD is that the new state/tribal secretary is the former Chairman Flute of the Sisseton/Wahpeton Tribe who has been a part of the initial development of the NDNTA and a strong supporter and NDNTA have presented to him before and so he is aware of all the efforts that the tourism alliance has done here in North Dakota. He is a very strong supporter, he could be a really good advocate for us to reach out to the South Dakota Tribes and have them all at one table. Kirk says good point Stacey. Selina states that our BOD Rep from Sisseton/Wahpeton, Tamara St. John who is newly elected SD State Legislator.

Kirk says thanks everyone for the phone call and all the advice and I really hope that we can stay in contact, work together in how ever we can. Stacey says, we should have a follow up conference call with Seleni &Anna, bring in Secretary Flute and Tamara to let them be aware of this coming in starting that process. Kirk agrees with setting that up and how ever the process is for it. Stacey asks Seleni what she thinks, Seleni replies absolutely that sounds good in starting that dialogued. All agree to start the next call.

Les asks if there is any more input or discussion. Les and BOD’s give thanks and say Goodbyes.

Kirk and Jacey leave the meeting and hang up. - Stacey leaves the meeting and hangs up. - Doug S from Spirit Lake joins us.

Seleni wants to give NDNTA a more in-depth formal update for NDNTA and the status of the Grant, so everyone is clear on what that is. Everyone agrees. Seleni has heard recently from the BIA, Anne Jennings -contract officer was in touch with me two weeks ago and she is basically asking for the proposal in which Anna B had already had. She wants to start the contract. I sent it to her right away but haven’t heard from her and this is not atypical as it takes a little bit of time, it seems they are working on the contract now, so my sense is we will have this all finalized like I mentioned earlier within a month to a few months, if they are having problems internally in getting this moving, so that is the status update on the grant, it is looking quite hopeful but we are not at the finish line yet.

Seleni wants to mention also that she is working with (BIA) Ed Hall III as well as the organization of American Space which is a hemispheric level integration organization based here in Washington DC. We work pretty closely with them, we are putting together, the three organizations in partnerships, and this is the first ever summit of Indigenous Tourism for the America’s. The vision is we will have 200+ people come together with you all in Albuquerque, in November, 3rd week. I will send the dates out to you, we are just building the website, and sponsorships details. This will be the first native meeting with indigenous people working on tourism from North American including Canada, Central America, and South America. So this is one of the things that Ed & I have been talking about for three years and finally with a little more funding and this is something that Ed is really passionate about, so we are helping to bring this to fruition. Seleni states that she will let us all know how things evolve and providing updates as they move along, and of course NDNTA is going to be a BIG part of it and I want to put it on your radar screen.

Selina states that when she attended the Res Summit the last week of March that she sat in on a session “Developing Your International Business Market- Tap into the International Marketplace for your Product or Service”. Speakers were Ms. Katrin Harry from Raven Events (Managing Partner), Jim Klas, of KlasRobinson Q.E.D (Founder) and Karen Allen of U.S. Export Assistance Ctr Phoenix, U.S. Commerce. They are looking to partnership with American Native Tribes for goods and services. Selina states that she recorded it (audio only) and will put some bullet points together and send to everyone. Seleni said that would be great and that they can possibly invite them to the Summit.

Seleni states that the Summit they are planning will not have mini sessions, just one huge session for everyone to come together talking about relevant topics. The idea is to retrace the connection between the indigenous people to the America’s and there are very well defined networks, trading routes and exchange, we all know, right. All these values and traditions and so forth retracing the connection and really using that as a foundation, coming up with new ideas in how we might collaborate on a hemispheric level. (Meaning, from across the hemisphere, developed theme based, deliberate forums on Tourism - Indigenous People)

Seleni states she has been working very diligently with her GWU team, collaborators and students. I want NDNTA to feel very involved in this, BIA wants NDNTA to be a big part of this, as we highlight what we did and use this as a model. Also, Anna will be coming back soon and will be integrating this on a deeper level and back on for more support from her as well.

Seleni leaves meeting and hangs up.

Les states that was a very promising and good update for us and the new prospects with SDT.

1. Approval Of Minutes

Les states that the current minutes are approved but the minutes from Natasha have not been, that need to be turned in as Selina does not have them all so those will be tabled.

1. Treasurers Report
   * Selina gives an update and provided all a copy that was put together with Stacey from NDIBA. Copy will be on file. Bank History Summary, January, February Bank statements. Les calls for a vote to accept the treasurer’s report. Darian makes the motion accept the Treasurer’s report. Doug seconds the motion. Discussion held. **All in Favor, No Abstentions, Motion Carried**
2. Chairman’s Report

Les gives us an update that a USDA Rep contacted him on some used furniture being given away and Les went down and picked up some office furniture and has it in storage, for NDNTA to use. He picked up a desk, some chairs.

Les asked Selina to give an update on the Website. Anna sent an email to the officers and had asked if we wanted all board to comment and add or change anything to the website. She is waiting for feedback. Selina sent the email from Anna to all the board to review. Please all board members look over and at our next board meeting make a decision for approval or add or change.

1. Old Business
2. Otto Bremer Grant
   * The meeting with Otto Bremer

Les and Selina gave a brief summary of their meeting with the Otto Bremer Representative, Selina states that she emailed everyone her thoughts of the interview and also sent to the board her follow up letter to Lisa from Otto Bremer. We will not hear back till July or August if we received the grant.

1. Partners in Marketing Grant **TABLED** Selina states to the board that she wants to make sure we are being smart in our decisions on what we want to go after as this and the booth will leave roughly around $11, 000 in the account. Les states that we need to market ourselves and start working on our capital campaign.
   * The match funds for the Marketing Grant
   * Fiscal sponsor update
2. North Dakota Tourism Conference

* Booth

Les and Selina will be working at the booth. Darin, Jason and Gary will be there attending the sessions. All tribes please submit material for the booth.

1. Legal Counsel – Selina states that this should have been Les to update but she will take care this with the New Business b.) NDIBA bringing on as consultants. Selina states that NDIBA has resources we could utilize for our policy review and also finding a legal counsel for NDNTA possible pro bono in some areas. Stacey has done a lot of work for the NDNTA, plus she is on our Advisory Committee but there is more NDIBA can offer us.

Les mentioned that the Larson firm in Bismarck email address and to send to Greg through Robin Coleman, [rcoleman@bismarcklaw.com](mailto:rcoleman@bismarcklaw.com). Selina states that what Natasha told her when Natasha spoke to Greg, he wasn’t so sure about the pro bono work and wanted our material to look over and review before confirming any of it could be pro bono work. Les states he will follow up with a phone to Robin.

1. New Business
2. Bank Location and the change of address to send out the bank statements.

Selina states that in the special meeting, it was mentioned by Jason to possible change the location of the Bank to Minot. Because of the officers do not live in Bismarck. This has been resolved since then and that the bank has a second location located in Minot and that the officers can utilize that location as well.

Also, Stacey offered that Mabu can also check our mail in Bismarck so we can still receive our mail.

1. NDIBA – bringing on as consultants – continued discussion from Old Business d.) Selina states that she sees we need more board strengthening and training with new members added and also a refresher for the seasoned members. Also, the legal review, she can find us the resources and at some point we will no longer receive the free work she puts in. Les states that Stacey is pretty astute in that she really put in the work to help us, the organization. Selina is asking the board if it is ok for Stacey to send us a proposal of the work that NDIBA can come on board and help assist us with outside the “normal” free technical assistance she gives us. Les states he thinks that is a great idea. Darin states that he would like to know if that would mean she would not be a Advisory Committee Member than? Would that be a Conflict? Would it be their resource that the agreement is made with? We will ask Stacey to give us a better understanding of all this.
2. Jason Morsette update on AIANTA BODs Interview

Jason stated that he had his interview middle of March; He stated that the interviewers asked a lot of questions and one of the questions was how did he get so many reference letters and from senators? Jason said that with his work, sometimes you just have to ask them and they will give a letter if they do support. Plus the support letters from all the 5 tribe’s tourism directors, they were impressed. Jason states that he stumped them with a question he had for them, did they know of our existence as the NDNTA? Their question to him, after Jason states that we (NDNTA) will be doing the same as them, they asked then, how will you bring the states together? Jason states we brought 5 tribes together and we will do the same with the states with advocating and forming partnerships with them.

Jason states that there will be a lot of hard work in that position and that there are 8 states for the Great Plains. He is still waiting to hear back if he was chosen and there were 3 in the final interview.

1. Tribal Updates

Spirit Lake Nation- Doug S- Doug has been working on the visitor center and trading post; he doesn’t know why it has taken so long to open. NDSU will be doing a feasibility study and he is looking to produce honey or buy it for the trading post but there is a firm of the reservation that produces honey already so we hope to but from them for our gift store and the production of candy out of honey or sugar, you have to sugar plants sitting in the valley there that can produce product right there.

Les asks Doug about the other person possible coming on from Spirit Lake and if he wants to go with Natasha’s recommendation of the lady from the Spirit Lake Casino. Natasha is the alternate for your reservation. Doug will have to make the recommendation to the board for the acceptance of a new board member, once that happens than if approved, this person will be asked to join, an officially placed on as BODs during our next schedule board meeting in May.

Standing Rock – No Update – Jen left the meeting or lost call

MHA Nation- Jason stated that they were out on travel last two weeks and there was some really good economic Impact happening back home.

Darin and Jason attended a huge honoring in Colorado Springs Pioneer Museum, where Jason and Darians son along with another tribal member were inducted into their Museum. It was a huge opportunity to get that kind of exposure. He (Jason) did very well down there representing.

Gary Snow who is on the NDNTA as alternate, He attended the Res Summit in Las Vegas with Darian. They got some good contacts out of there and will revisit them. Darin was interviewed for the Res Summit TV. They received an invitation to the 4th annual Navajo Nations Economic Summit, where there will be other businesses and break out session. They will meet and discuss as it is approaching soon. The biggest thing that got to Darian was the Match Making and will revisit them on that.

MHAT just finished their 5th annual Elbowoods basketball tourney. It was a huge success, they captured at 16 teams in boys, 10 in girls. Like Jason said it was great economic impact in our area, we filled 100 rooms at casino and at Teddy’s, Little Missouri Inn; we were reaching out in collaborating with the other outside businesses. They were more that glad. Teddy’s Residential Suites put them on their web page to help promote the event. They are very easy to work with, as with the casino. The casino had a big horseshoe tournament at the same time. The war bonnet dance was happening this weekend also so it was packed here. Darin states that their small little community was super busy and rockin’ and that is what we would like to see in all our communities. All tribal communities hosting events, so it’s not all coming to us.

Jason talked about their event held in February, the MMIP, not only women but our men as well. They had their round dance at the earth lodge. The local people attended and participated in the smudging and preparing of the earth lodge.

Jason stated that while he was in Colorado there were some interested parties in wanting to come up to North Dakota and do a documentary on the MMIP details will be put together down the road.

Photography is a huge thing and it is stressed by both Jason and Darian for us to start taking part as they want to really capture the Native American especially the Great Plains region.

Darian states that something else they are working on is their new tribal office; Jason and Darian are on their advisory board in helping to develop that idea with the architect, project manager, along with the tribal analysis, in trying to review with their chairman.

They are also in the process of developing their tourism plan by this summer. What are your events, what are your draws to your area? They are planning their events and they will be calendar out and advertised, not just the casino. Darian mentions about product development and that is the biggest thing and we have been saying this for two years now for everyone to have theirs ready. We all have to get on board with it. Les states that is easier said than done. Darian wants to hear that our tourism is doing this, our plan says that and our product is this and we have a busy community. So let’s get to that point guys.

Les states that not all tribes have a staff, not all tribes have that council support, and not all tribes have a budget set in place. But everyone is doing the best they can! Like Darian said get as much as you can organized and cross promote. Les states that we need to sit down and brainstorm some of this.

Turtle Mountain – Selina- Les, Selina attended the Res Summit and was impressed with the session “Famous Hospitality, I gave all the information to the Casino for them to reach out to him. James Anderson is the son of “Famous Dave” I also took in the Financial Management for your nonprofit, also met by special invitation the Rep from American Indian College Fund and they want to partner more with the Great Plains. Met up with Ed Hall III and we had lunch along with very good conversations. Ed introduced me to some of the southern tribe’s tourism directors which were amazing to hear what they have endured and where they are at today. I did a lot of networking.

Les states that some of the council is working on the Heritage Center in getting it open so that tourism can go in there. Les mentions about grant writers and needing those.

Selina states that she is working with the International Peace Gardens in a few collaborative projects, also with the regional tourism departments or chambers of commerce in developing some packaging and events.

Also, it is being discussed about bringing back the study that was put together on the TM Tribal Scenic Byway.

Discussion Held: Les wants everyone to have their summer events put down and send out to everyone so we can put it together for NDNTA to bring around to different locations and such.

Darian requests invitation for when our Heritage Center opens their doors.

1. Adjournment

Les asks for a motion to adjourn. Selina makes the motion to adjourn. Second by Darian. **All in Favor, No Abstentions, Motion Carried Adjourned at 11:45am.**

1. Next Scheduled Meeting Date: May 14, 2019