

ATA Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Saturday, October 22, 2016
10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Oracle Inn, 305 E. American Avenue, Oracle, Arizona 85623

Board members present: Rob Mason, Larry Snead, Bernie Stalman, Jan Hancock, Jeff Whitney, Lirain Urreiztieta, Ambika Balasubramaniyan, Denis Ryan, Susan Lagerman

Board members present telephonically: Fred Gaudet

Board members absent: Steve Anderson, Todd Sadow, Ben Murphy, CW Payne

Staff members present: Matthew Nelson, Executive Director; Shawn Redfield, Trail Director

Guests present: Laura White, USFS AZNST Administrator; Jeff Bridge, ATA Regional Steward-Sonoran Desert Region; Joe Winfield, Coronado National Forest; and Alicia Bristow, Oracle Women's Network

NO.	DESCRIPTION	ACTION ITEMS
1	<p><u>Call to Order & Welcome to Board Members and Guests</u> Meeting was called to order by President Rob Mason, and Rob introduced Alicia Bristow, who was invited to provide a brief overview of the partnerships and other activities on the Arizona Trail in the Oracle area. Rob also welcomed Jeff Bridge, Regional Steward and Business Partner.</p>	
2	<p><u>Approval of Minutes from July 16, 2016 Board of Directors Meeting</u> Jan Hancock provided copies of the minutes to Board members prior to the meeting, and the Board was asked for any additions or corrections, Jeff Whitney made a motion to approve the minutes and Susan Lagerman seconded the motion. Minutes were approved unanimously.</p>	
3	<p><u>Strategic Plan Review</u> Rob Mason and Matt Nelson reviewed the final Strategic Plan document that had been rewritten and updated through numerous meetings with members of the Strategic Plan Committee members in both Phoenix and Tucson. Jeff Whitney noted the Strategic Plan was well written, that the Committee has looked ahead in developing the Plan, and he expressed that he felt the goals and strategies were very doable. Ambika commented that she really liked the clarity of the new Strategic Plan. Matt noted that he felt approximately 25% of the goals were aspirational, not quantifiable, based on the structure of the former Strategic Plan.</p> <p>Jan Hancock made a motion to approve the 2016-2020 Strategic Plan, seconded by Ambika Balasubramaniyan, and the motion carried unanimously.</p>	
4	<p>Alicia Bristow, representing the Oracle Women's Network, a local</p>	

	<p>nonprofit 501(c)(3) provided a very interesting report on the Town of Oracle, proud to be one of the Arizona Trail Association’s most supportive Gateway Communities per capita. She shared some of the ideas and partnerships that their organization was planning to establish to potentially develop a Visitor Center to help build more economic development and attract new businesses to Oracle.</p> <p>Guest Jeff Bridge, Arizona Trail Segment Steward, reported his work with Sirena to connect Biosphere 2 with 1.5-mile loop trail and that he was in the process of seeking sponsorships for funding this project and the potential of offering a Tucson Marathon, promoting the new Arizona Zipline Adventures, and others offered ideas such as hosting a AAA bus tour, and developing a local source of transportation, and Matt Nelson shared that the Gateway Community Advisory Council had suggested a shuttle service in the Town of Superior that may have some helpful ideas for the Oracle area.</p>	
5	<p><u>Redefining the Arizona Trail’s Passage</u></p> <p>The Board discussed a possible realignment and some potential combined passages of several segments of the Arizona Trail over the next five years to provide a more attractive user experience. Jeff Whitney made a motion to adopt the recommended new alignment for 4-5 miles, with the potential of combining some passages, which could change the overall total number of segments. Larry Snead seconded the motion.</p> <p>Board discussion followed, with potential realignments in the Mazatzal Wilderness, Cross F Ranch, and Mt. Peeley areas, with a recommendation to combine passages 25 and 26, with the expectation toward completion in 5 years. The motion was amended to combine Passages 25 and 26 to and to contact the Tonto National Forest to start the NEPA process now. It was noted there would be no effect with this conceptual plan for an Alder Ridge alignment, per an attached map, with an anticipated completion of five years or less. Larry Snead seconded the amended motion and the motion carried unanimously. Jeff Whitney noted there was an existing trail (now the AZT) from Twin Buttes to the LF Ranch.</p> <p>The Board discussed the possibility of splitting one existing passage into two passages in the Coconino National Forest to help retain the same number of total passages of the AZT. Passage 30 at Mormon Lake and Passage 34 in the San Francisco Peaks were considered for potential splitting into two passages due to the many miles in these passages. Lirain indicated it would be good to include Pine Grove campground in the Mormon Lake passage, and that the 30 miles in the Kelly Tank area north of the San Francisco Peaks could be split into Segment 30 and 31.</p> <p>Larry Snead made a motion to split Segment 30 into 30 and 31, and Jeff</p>	<p>Matt Nelson and Aaron Seifert to work on the mapping changes in combining Passages 25 and 26 in the Tonto National Forest, and splitting Passage 30 in the Coconino Forest into two Passages (30 and 31). Matt will alert the Forest Service to ask for their assistance in the NEPA that could be required for any of these realignment projects.</p>

	<p>Whitney seconded the motion, with the contingent upon the confirmation that this would be possible following a site assessment.</p> <p>There was a concern about how these changes would affect the printed Arizona National Scenic Trail guidebook, and Matt Nelson reported that the publisher would be printing 15,000 copies of a second edition, and that 100 copies were in storage. The printing of the second edition of the Guidebook would be approximately two years away. Following this discussion, the motion carried.</p>	
6	<p><u>Executive Director's Report</u></p> <p>Matt Nelson reviewed his detailed written report he provided to Board members prior to the Board meeting:</p> <p><u>Fundraising:+</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grant applications and corporate contributions included the large Southern Arizona Resource Advisory Council (\$38,000) grant and the Pioneer Title Agency (\$25,000) unrestricted funds and the Cox Conserves Hero (\$10,000) unrestricted funds. • Commitments for future financial support, including (\$15,000), Tucson Electric Power/Unisource • Newly submitted grant application to the National Park Foundation (\$17,000) <p><u>State of Arizona Funding:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions underway with the Governor's Office and the Arizona State Parks Director to define the agreements, roles of the state, federal and nonprofit partners, and to determine the best ways to utilize the \$150,000 appropriation from the legislature's Arizona Trail State Fund to be used for the construction and maintenance of the Arizona Trail. The Arizona Statute provides for year-by-year funding but this has not been happening and there is need to look into the Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) and Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that have not been updated for years • Several suggestions being discussed could directly impact the existing Arizona National Scenic Trail's congressional legislation, as well as the Federal management and route of the Arizona National Scenic Trail and will undoubtedly require our ATA Board's direct involvement in any discussions. • Jeff Whitney commented that as the Arizona State Forester that he has frequent interactions with the Arizona Governor and that he would not support any changes with the Federal legislation in place for the Arizona National Scenic Trail, and that trying to combine with Arizona State Parks could be a disaster for the Arizona Trail and that many State Parks are not adjacent to the route of the Arizona Trail. • Jeff also suggested there was no advantage to combining these 	<p>Matt will provide a bio on Zach McDonald for the Board or feature Zach in an e-News article.</p>

Statutory funding allocations with Arizona State Parks, and that these funds should be protected separately by the legislature for the identified purposes of construction and maintenance of the Arizona Trail.

- Bernie Stalman noted that the Florida NST and the Wisconsin NST are good examples of how Federal funding works with different states.
- Jeff commented that we need to know how a Federally designated trail could also be a State trail.
- Susan Lagerman suggested that we informally speak with the Arizona Attorney General about some clarifications.
- Larry Snead noted that the Arizona National Scenic Trail has been designated by an Act of Congress and that any Arizona Trail changes could impact the content or intention of that document.
- It was noted that the \$150,000 allocation of funds set up annually for the Arizona State Trail in the Arizona State Legislature was only 01.25 percent of the State Parks budget.

Funds for Arizona Trail projects:

- The Tonto National forest has been successful in securing significant funding grants for Youth Corps crews and Federal Land Transportation Program funds that will benefit the Arizona Trail.
- These grants and projects benefit the Arizona Trail but ATA does not receive these project dollars directly.

USFS Comprehensive Management Plan:

- Considerable management and coordination of many elements that must be inventoried, researched, and studied for hazards and safety are currently in process.
- This work is time-consuming for ATA's staff and resources and is being partially supported through our Challenge Cost Share Agreement with the USDA Forest Service. See Laura White's Board report for additional details.
- Several Board members expressed ATA should plan to propose an update of the USDA Forest Service IGA and MOU with ATA.

Other Report Items:

Matt reviewed several additional topics in his Executive Director's report:

1. The BLM Visual Resource Inventory is progressing after the completion of field work in April, 2016 and a final report is to be completed by December 2016.
2. Matt reviewed some of the successful statewide funding events that helped raised awareness of the Arizona Trail.
3. The annual reporting of the ATA's required tax reports is in process and figures from this report will help with other reports.
4. Matt reported that ATA will work to produce a valuable

	<p>Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NIRCA) to help substantiate ATA’s proposed increase in indirect/overhead cost rates for grant proposals.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Matt further reported that he is anticipating staffing changes in the future and some adjustments in compensation as well, which falls under his Executive Director position. He will provide a final report for the Board once this restructuring process is completed. 6. Matt announced the hiring of Zach McDonald, originally suggested by Mark Flint, for the new position of Assistant Trail Director, who will be a half-time employee and work out of Tucson to help assist Shawn Redfield and work with the Association’s trail operations programs. Part of this planning will provide a succession plan for when Shawn Redfield “retires” from ATA’s Trail Director position. Matt is also looking at the potential of having a Northern Arizona Assistant Trail Director so two individuals can share the responsibility of trail operations statewide. 7. Ambika asked if Matt could provide a bio and announcement regarding Zach’s new position with ATA, and any other staff, such as the Volunteer Coordinator, who she feels should be recognized for their outstanding support in 2016. 8. Matt noted that the staffing structure will be adjusted to implement the new 5-year ATA Strategic Plan. 9. Ambika asked if these staff people could be retained on our budget as contractors and that further contractors could potentially be engaged with our Association in some capacity and if they could be potential members of our ATA Board of Directors. 	
7	LUNCH – Provided by The Oracle Inn	
8	<p><u>Coronado National Forest’s Development Recreational Program</u> Joe Winfield, Coronado National Forest, provided a very well prepared presentation regarding the status of a Restructuring of Developed Recreation, a process which has been underway to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize the importance of developed recreation sites • Identify developed recreation issues, costs and a need for restructuring • Encourage public input about a gap between resources and developed recreation sites <p>Joe’s presentation highlighted the need to determine where the Coronado National Forest should prioritize desired visitor site amenities and if the Coronado should consider changes in its fee program. He also provided some of the metrics of how the Coronado NF recreation sites are funded, and how they can better align the fees collected with the needs of the recreating public, and how these funds are allocated for site operations, repairs, replacement, and maintenance expenses. A market analysis revealed that the Coronado National Forest recreate user fees are lower than similar developed on federal and state lands.</p>	<p>All Board members to send their comments to Matt Nelson regarding the Coronado National Forest Developed Recreation Sites Restructuring Initiative and Proposed Strategies.</p>

	<p>Joe’s presentation concluded with four different strategies (A,B,C,D) and one (Strategy A) proposes to identify partner organizations and concessionaires to assume the daily operations of developed recreational sites, or operate the sites. Other strategies included closing sites, increasing fees, and increasing the number of few sites. The presentation was intended for informational purposes and to receive feedback from the ATA Board of Directors via the ongoing survey. Considering the number of visitors to the Coronado NF and the many miles of the Arizona Trail in the Coronado NF, this strategic planning process is very critical to the future of the Arizona Trail and loss of some existing recreational sites on the Arizona Trail Route.</p> <p>Board Comments included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Larry Snead asked about potential partnerships through volunteer programs that could help reduce the gaps identified. • Lirian asked about the potential of increasing the forest internship program at the universities to promote involvement with students who may want to work in the field of recreation. • Ambika commented on how important it was to have the excellent data that Joe provided to help make recommendations. • Bernie Stalman commented on his concerns about vandalism and hoping the Coronado could help educate the public and perhaps develop a shooting range to offer alternate locations for shooting. <p>Matt Nelson asked the Board to send their Coronado NF Restructuring comments directly to him, and to please include comments about how this restructuring could mean increased fees to our AZT users and the concerns if the Arizona Trail might lose some developed campgrounds located on the AZT route.</p>	
9	<p>Financial Report</p> <p>Matt Nelson opened the Board discussion regarding he ATA’s Financial Report for Treasurer, C.W. Payne (the financial reports were provided to Board members electronically prior to the Board meeting). Matt reported that the organization is right where it should be on its annual budget and noted that expenditures were effectively being managed by the staff to keep the organization on track through the end of the calendar year.</p> <p>Matt noted the need for purchasing a van for the ATA and he was working on a financial agreement that would synch with our ATA budget over a 3-year period.</p> <p>Matt asked the Board for suggestions about ways to increase our funding and Larry Snead suggested looking at expanding ATA’s Business Partnerships as a more sustainable way to keep our ATA income more consistent.</p>	<p>All Board members to make an effort to recruit one new ATA Business Partner before the end of 2016.</p> <p>Jan Hancock to work with Matt and other interested Board members to establish a preliminary plan to develop an Arizona Trail Endowment Program.</p>

	<p>Susan also offered a suggestion to add a “pin drop” on our navigational maps that would list the locations of Gateway Community businesses and include more information about the businesses’ services, to help attract more Business Partners. She noted the more integration we had with the Gateway Communities and the statewide Business Partners, the greater the benefits could be to these businesses.</p> <p>Jan Hancock suggested the ATA could make a more focused outreach to the legacy community through a formal ATA Endowment Program.</p> <p>Ambika suggested ATA take a look at the excellent endowment program model that the Desert Botanical Garden established, and that it was a very big success.</p> <p>Jan volunteered to help set up a committee that would have some will and trust attorneys, with assistance potentially from Lyn White with Clark Hill, and other legal firms who could guide us, to learn how to raise awareness of the Arizona Trail with attorneys who work with wills and trusts. Craig and Barbara Barrett were perfect examples of the types of Arizona conservationists and environmental protection supporters who may find the Arizona National Scenic Trail as a viable option for their investment.</p> <p>Matt asked each Board member to make their own personal effort to bring one new Business Partner or sponsor to the Arizona Trail Association before the end of this year.</p> <p>Susan made a motion to approve the quarterly ATA Financial Report as presented, and Ambika seconded the motion. The financial report was accepted and will be filed for audit.</p>	
10	<p><u>Trail Director’s Report</u></p> <p>Shawn Redfield provided a very detailed report (attached to these minutes) on the many activities underway on the maintenance and routing of the Arizona Trail over the past months and anticipated activities through the end of 2016. Highlights discussed included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Arizona State Parks Recreation Trails Program (RTP) grant was approved and is currently in review by the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) and it is anticipated the Washington Park/Colonel Devin section of Passage 27 project can begin in approximately 3 months. • Awaiting potential RTP competitive grant project to remove the AZT from 18 miles of forest roads on the Happy Jack Passage and replace with new singletrack. • Impressive progress on the proposed installation of nearly 16 new gates, adding to the 29 gates already installed statewide. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New trailhead signs have been installed and more are planned. These signs have unique artwork and require a long lead time to complete them. A new Utah-Mexico mileage sign at the Pine Trailhead has been installed and two steel AZT markers were installed on both sides of Highway 87 where the AZT crosses the road. • Proposed continuing with planning for a trailhead at Oak Tree Canyon on Highway 83, Passage 6 that begins with locating proposed fencing on the level area of the perimeter of the future trailhead. • Major trail maintenance projects have been completed or are in planning for many passages on the AZT, and all are detailed in Shawn’s report. Partnership and grant funding has been an important component of the ability to maintain these passages. • The South Rim of the Grand Canyon Passage 37 is undergoing some potential rerouting due to the paving of the Greenway Trail in that area. Meetings with the new Superintendent of the Grand Canyon will be held soon to review the AZT on the South Rim. • The ATA is involved in the Stakeholder group monitoring the 4 Forests’ Initiative involving forest thinning in the Coconino National Forest in the Payson and Flagstaff areas. • Tucson will have a new tools and maintenance trailer in the next six months once the new racks and bins have been constructed by volunteer Gary Hohner and others. • Board members are urged to read about all of the multiple trail activities under Shawn Redfield’s management statewide in his attached report. 	
11	<p><u>Open Discussion on ATA Programs, Operations and Staff Reports</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ambika reported that there is need for a new AZT video. • Ambika wanted to know if the AZT has sign guidelines like those provided on the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) and wondered if the ATA could set up a committee to work on AZT sign guidelines (this would be separate from the Comprehensive Plan). She noted that there are 3,000 signs on the PCT with GPS locators every ¼ mile and QR codes for geocaching purposes on each segment. She understands the administering agency sets the Federal standards for sign guidelines and Laura White may have some USDA FS guidelines for our reference, including the frequency and numbers of signs recommended. • Matt reported that Aaron Seifert has been working on this type of information on our AZT maps on a new GIS layer he is creating for the AZT and that this could be ready as quickly as one week away. Ambika noted that with signage comes a lot of challenges, including the responsibility to keep this information current and accurate. 	

	<p><u>Future Meetings and Other Important Dates</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ATA Annual Meeting – Saturday, February 4, 2017 • Next quarterly Board of Directors meeting will be held on Saturday, April 8 in Central Arizona (location TBD). • Other Board Meeting dates include Saturday, July 15 in northern Arizona (location TBD) and Saturday, October 14 in southern Arizona (location TBD). 	<p>All Board members to enter future Board meeting events in their calendars.</p> <p>Attached reports are to be included with the minutes of the meeting.</p>
13	<p><u>Adjourn</u> There being no further business, Larry Snead made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Ambika B, and the meeting adjourned at 2:12 p.m.</p>	