

**Arizona Trail Association Board of Directors
Meeting Minutes
July 15, 2017
10:00 a.m. to 2:15 p.m.
The Nature Conservancy's Hart Prairie Preserve Meeting Room
Flagstaff, Arizona**

Board Members present: Rob Mason, Ben Murphy, Denis Ryan, Bernie Stalman, Jeff Whitney, Phyllis Ralley, Steve Anderson, Jan Hancock

Board Members absent: CW Payne, Todd Sadow, Fred Gaudet

Agency Representatives present: Laura White, AZNST Administrator, USDA Forest Service

ATA Staff Members present: Matt Nelson, Executive Director; Shawn Redfield, Trail Director; Aaron Seifert, GIS Director

Guests: Larry Snead, Kristy Kennedy, Tracy Fleming

ITEM	ITEM DESCRIPTION	ACTION STEPS
1	<p><u>Call to Order and Introductions</u> The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. and Rob welcomed the Board members and guests. The agenda order was adjusted to await the arrival of Board members for a quorum for topics requiring Board approval.</p>	
2	<p><u>Trail Director Report</u> Shawn Redfield provided a very comprehensive written Trail Operations Report and also provided additional information about several areas on AZNST, including Passage 39 Grand Canyon North Rim and Kaibab National Forest that has a total of 139 downed trees and that a one-day work event that will be conducted to remove these trees from the Arizona Trail to make it passable. Shawn also noted there are additional funding changes in Passage 43, 14 and 15. The Board complimented Shawn and all the volunteers and trail crews who could address the multiple maintenance issues in the Matzatzal Wilderness, including work from pack stock volunteers. The Board expressed its appreciation for all the outstanding volunteer leadership Shawn Redfield has provided for many years.</p> <p>Aaron Seifert noted he would be adjusting the GPS mapping information for the Washington Park and Mazatzal Divide and Wilderness information following the trail improvements and minimal route adjustments made in these AZNST segments.</p> <p>Shawn and Aaron reported the need for improved trail data gathering equipment and have obtained quotes for a sub-meter Trimble unit as well as the accompanying software and hardware required.</p> <p>Matt Nelson noted that the National Forest Foundation had provided a \$37,000 grant to the ATA and that ATA was able to provide both a cash and in-kind volunteer match in funds that equaled \$270,000 that for the Mazatzal Restoration Project.</p>	<p>Aaron to adjust the AZNST route with new GPS data received.</p>

<p>3</p>	<p>Executive Director's Report</p> <p>Matt Nelson reported that anticipated new federal government budget proposals could result in an 89% financial cut to the US Forest Service's trail budget next year. Due to this, major spending of available funds will be ramping up between September through December 2017, including the hiring of ACE and AZCC Conservation Corps hires while the funding is available in 2017.</p> <p>Matt noted that ATA has received \$56,756 in corporate funding and that Pioneer Title has contributed an additional \$25,000 in unrestricted funds for ATA projects and programs in 2017. In addition, Matt said ATA will be receiving \$25,000 from the Coronado National Forest that can be applied to the Seeds of Stewardship program and that REI Co-Op has contributed funds in Tucson, Phoenix, and Flagstaff, and that \$5,000 has been donated by the Arizona Lottery.</p> <p>Additional financial and in-kind donations have continued from a long-term ATA supporter, Summit Hut through a partnership with The North Face. The Seeds of Stewardship program received an in-kind donation from Bogs Outdoors – 60 pairs of insulated boots to allow the ATA to lead groups of youth outdoors in the colder winter season.</p> <p>Matt also reported that the Coconino County Supervisor Art Babbott is obligating \$25-\$30,000 for construction of singletrack across Babbitt Ranch prior to his retirement from his position.</p> <p>Other financial support has been provided by the Town of Payson, which has donated \$1,000, to bring more emphasis on the Payson Trails Master Plan and an economic development goal of using existing trails and roads to connect to the AZNST – anticipated to be a 5-year project. Jan suggested that this goal needs to be shared with US Representative Paul Gosar, who is very involved in assisting Payson with its goals.</p> <p>Matt updated the Board on the State of Arizona Arizona Trail Fund that was established as a \$500,000 appropriation and was re-funded in 2016 at \$150,000.</p> <p>Board members suggested also working with the Arizona Office of Tourism for additional funding opportunities, meetings with the Urban Land Institute, suggest some of the other states that are promoting trails through their governors' challenge programs, and to note that the AZNST brings funding into many of the smaller Arizona communities with our Gateway Community program.</p> <p>Matt noted he would like to have some Board members from around the state with him to "make the rounds" in the State Capitol to urge the support for the State Fund for the Arizona Trail.</p> <p>Matt also announced that the ATA would want to celebrate the 50th</p>	<p>Plan for the 50th Anniversary of the National Trails System</p> <p>Consider outreach to the AZ Office of Tourism for support</p> <p>Board members to assist Matt in visiting AZ legislators for support</p>
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	<p>Anniversary of the National Trails System in 2018. He noted there would be a national promotion and numerous celebrations in many states to celebrate this 50th Anniversary, and he would like to have a special celebration for the AZNST in Arizona. Jan Hancock noted the National Equestrian Trails Conference was being held in Phoenix, AZ the first weekend in November 2018 and this may provide a possible opportunity for a statewide celebration at this national conference that will be featuring trails shared by all trail users. Phyllis Ralley offered to help with this 50th Anniversary PNTS celebration in Phoenix.</p> <p>Matt announced a new program is going to be starting soon that will use wildlife cameras to help provide a more accurate number count of people using the AZNST as well as the types of use. The locations of these cameras will remain confidential for many reasons. It is anticipated that 50 cameras will be utilized and the data gathered can not only assist ATA, but also assist in capturing photographs of wildlife using the AZNST to provide a comprehensive study of wildlife on and near the AZNST.</p> <p>Matt reported on the status of the full federal Form 990 tax report submittal, which is required every three years, with annual reports in other years. Matt noted ATA will be seeking a new accounting firm and would like Board suggestions in this regard. Jan Hancock noted the Maricopa Trail and Park Foundation is using Stacy Schneider, CPA with Schneider & Associates for its financial reports and that she is an active hiking enthusiast.</p> <p>Matt provided a preview of the way ATA’s financial reports will reflect that 22.79% of the funds support administration, overhead and indirect expenses. These figures are required for many federal grants.</p> <p>Matt asked the Board to assist in gathering data of ways the AZNST is being used by trails and nature enthusiasts, and Jan Hancock recommended the use of <i>iNaturalist</i>, a free app, that is a large nationwide group of citizen scientists who assist all trail users to identify and photograph locations of flora and fauna they experience.</p> <p>Matt also reported that BLM has been investing both time and funding to translate the Junior Explorer Arizona Trail publication in Spanish language, a wonderful expansion to many additional youth.</p> <p>Matt noted that ATA has an intern now with photo contest experience and ATA Board member Ambika Balasubramaniyan who also has <i>Arizona Highways</i> photo workshop experience, has agreed to work with the intern to promote diverse and wide audiences to submit photos of the AZNST for a photo contest and the photos could be required to have photo releases, (with legal photo credits) so they could be used for AZNST promotions for tourism and marketing purposes, or even an AZNST calendar!</p>	
4	Financial Report	Jan Hancock to

	<p>Matt Nelson provided the ATA financial report for C.W. Payne, ATA Board Treasurer.</p> <p>Matt reported that ATA will have an \$800,00 operating budget next year. He informed the Board members that he would be releasing the current Director of Philanthropy, as she was asked to solicit unrestricted funds for ATA, and the results were not materializing. Rob Mason noted it may be advisable to hire another person who is outside our recreation industry with a broader level of contacts. Jan Hancock recommended contacting the former Nature Conservancy person who established the Nature Conservancy in Asia, who is living in Arizona. Jan will provide contact information for this individual.</p> <p>Matt noted that he has planned to use all the State of Arizona funds received to date to a zero balance. Jeff Whitney suggested developing a PowerPoint that demonstrates what the ATA has done with the funds allocated.</p> <p>Shawn Redfield suggested that we develop a way to help AZT users better understand how ATA's funds are being spent/allocated on the Arizona Trail. Matt noted that the ATA Annual Report provides this information and that it demonstrates how the Trail Operations budget is being spent. Rob Mason suggested that it could help raise more individual contributions if our ATA members could see these figures in our newsletters.</p> <p>Jeff Whitney suggested that the pie chart show more detailed information, and he also suggested that ATA constituents contact their own individual US Congressional representatives to encourage trails funding nationally and for the AZNST.</p>	<p>provide contact information for Nature Conservancy person.</p>
<p>5</p>	<p><u>Approval of Board Meeting Minutes from April 8, 2017</u> Rob Mason called for any corrections to the April 8, 2017 meeting's minutes. Steve Anderson moved to approve the meeting minutes and Jeff Whitney seconded and there was unanimous approval.</p>	
<p>6</p>	<p><u>Board Development Report</u> Rob Mason and Jeff Whitney provided the Board Development Committee Report. Rob reported that Larry Snead and Todd Sadow have both resigned from the Board of Directors and that the Board Development Committee is looking for candidates to consider filling these positions. Rob also announced that Jeff Whitney was recommended by Larry Snead to become the new Development Committee Chairperson and that Jeff had accepted this chairmanship.</p> <p>Rob Mason had two prospective candidates to propose as potential new board members: (1) the Arizona REI Co-Op Central Region Market Manager and (2) the former Maricopa County Manager. Unfortunately, the REI representative has just taken another career position out of state, and the</p>	<p>Matt to send Jeff Whitney a copy of the ATA Board Development Matrix</p>

	<p>County Manager has just declined after seriously considering the opportunity.</p> <p>Jan Hancock noted that Jeff Whitney may want to use the Board Development Matrix that has served our Board well in guiding the blend of people who would represent the state-wide scope of the Arizona Trail as well as sustaining a desire to achieve Board diversity.</p> <p>Rob Mason confirmed that Lattie Coor and Diane Brossart are also serving on the Board Development Committee and would be asked to remain on the Committee. Jan noted that Diane would be leaving her position as president of Arizona Forward at the end of 2017, and expressed that Diane still had unique capabilities to continue to serve on our Development Committee.</p> <p>Jeff Whitney requested the opportunity to meet to discuss the matrix, and others noted it would be important to attract more females, younger members, and more diversity in potential board member candidates if possible.</p> <p>Rob Mason also announced that he will have completed the two-year term as president that he committed to when he was elected and that the Board will need to consider candidates and asked the board members to let him know if they had any interest in the president position.</p> <p>Rob then announced that Phyllis Ralley had approached him regarding her interest in becoming an ATA Board member. Rob read her qualifications and noted that at the end of 2017 that she would be retiring from the Bureau of Land Management which would make her eligible to serve as a board member. Many noted all the many contributions that Phyllis had made as a volunteer to ATA since 1990, and Rob officially nominated her as a Board member candidate.</p> <p>Rob asked for a vote to ask Phyllis to become a member of the Board until the official ballot for board member elections in February 2017. Phyllis was excused from the room for the voting, and unanimously approved to serve as a member of the Board of Directors.</p>	
7	<p><u>USFS Administrator’s Report</u></p> <p>Laura White updated the Board about the upcoming Open House Public Meetings for the AZNST Comprehensive Plan, and she distributed the flyer listing all the statewide locations where the public can attend the Open Houses. She reported that Adam Milnor with the National Park Service RTCA (Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program) in Tucson was assisting in the facilitation of the Open House meetings. Public comments will also be received in written comments and electronically during the comment period.</p> <p>Laura noted that there would be a 20-minute presentation explaining the</p>	Board members encouraged to attend one of the Open House Meetings

	<p>Comprehensive Plan, and there would be exhibits at various stations with maps and additional information for the public to view.</p> <p>Laura was hoping for good attendance at the Open Houses, and was not sure who might be able to attend the meeting planned for Kanab, Utah and encouraged anyone who may want to be there to show support.</p> <p>Steve Anderson reported that there were 55 people who attended a recent Open House trail proposal meeting in Tucson.</p> <p>Jan Hancock noted that it would be very important to have members of the ATA Board attend these meetings, to show our support of the Comprehensive Plan to the public attending Open Houses.</p> <p>Laura also reported that she had not resurrected her efforts to establish an Advisory Council for the Comprehensive Plan because she was not certain about how to restructure the Advisory Council yet due to some pending changes regarding federal, state, and tribal members.</p> <p>The Four Forest Restoration Initiative (4FRI) areas will also be included in the review of the Comprehensive Plan.</p> <p>Other information regarding funding updates included the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Infrastructure Initiative could include trails into one big Congressional Infrastructure bill for bridges and highways and this bill may end up taking all the trails dollars, and that we should at least expect a 10% or 20% cut in trails funding.</p> <p>If the Infrastructure Bill is not approved there may be a Continuing Resolution for another year. There are NEPA funds that have been banked for trails projects and this will hopefully keep the Comprehensive Plan moving forward. National Scenic and Historic Trails may not be immune to federal budget cuts next year.</p>	
8	<p><u>LUNCH BREAK</u> – lunch was provided by The Toasted Owl Cafe, 12 S. Mike Pike, Flagstaff, AZ 928-774-5326, one of our ATA Business Partners in northern Arizona.</p>	
9	<p><u>AZT Trail Blazer Award</u></p> <p>Rob Mason reported there has been some progress on the “Hall of Fame” project to recognize significant people who have been a part of the past history of success of the AZT. Rob noted that Dave Hicks and Kent Taylor have been added to the committee and that Tom Coulson and Phyllis Ralley were named as co-chairs of the committee. They have renamed this recognition as the Arizona Trail Blazer Award.</p> <p>There were many suggestions for ways to recognize people for this Trail Blazer award and a discussion that included archiving the awards, adding</p>	<p>AZ Trail Blazer Committee to develop a nomination form for potential award recipients.</p>

	<p>people annually, inspiring others to become members of the Trail Blazer Award, and Phyllis Ralley had designed a patch that could be awarded to Trail Blazer Award recipients.</p> <p>Other suggestions included dividing the recognition into two groups, those who were Trail Blazers up until the date the AZT was completed, and those who are continuing the AZT mission following the completion date of the AZT.</p> <p>The Board encouraged the Committee to establish some criteria for nominating people for the AZT Trail Blazer Award, and all expressed their desire to have the award recipients be recognized on the ATA website in some way.</p> <p>Ways to nominate people to the Trail Blazer award was also discussed, and the Board generally agreed that there needed to be a nomination form and that this could be announced and be promoted through the ATA newsletter to all members and also have the form available at the upcoming ATA Annual Meeting.</p> <p>To launch the Trail Blazer Award the Board suggested recognizing the first award recipients at the Annual Meeting with a short PowerPoint presentation about the award recipients. The Committee was charged with deciding the number of recipients to be honored and how this could be accomplished at the ATA Annual Meeting.</p>	
<p>10</p>	<p><u>Open Discussion on ATA Programs, Operations, and Staff Reports</u></p> <p>Aaron Seifert provided a GIS report, noting he had a very busy forest fire season as a member of the Fire Management Team and printing multiple fire maps on incident sites on many 16-hour days. He reported that a new Mountain Bike map has been created that includes one alternate route designated for mountain bike riders on the AZT.</p> <p>Aaron is also working on adding the GPS coordinates for trail users traveling either north or south on the AZT (currently only GPS coordinates for travel in one direction from south to north). He is also establishing maps for each Segment Steward specifically for that steward.</p> <p>Aaron is working with Laura White to determine the protected easements located ½ mile on each side of the AZT for the Comprehensive Management Plan. These easements include all land management agencies and there can be future ordinances and agreements signed to help with the protection of this ½ mile viewshed along the AZT easement corridor, and this can also help stop social trails connecting to the AZNST.</p> <p>Aaron Seifert noted that some Google maps and Garmin maps do not include the Arizona Trail and that our ATA website is more up-to-date. Aaron would like to have Google more responsive in making the changes to the Arizona Trail route.</p>	

Matt noted that 16 maps will need to be updated with changes in the Arizona Trail route that are being made by the end of this year.

Matt provided a copy of the ATA Membership Report that confirms a 15% increase in membership now of 1,119 members, which has resulted in a 36% greater income over the 2016 membership income for ATA. Rob Mason noted that we welcome ideas for increasing membership and we need to expect the membership to level out or go down if our numbers follow the national trend in lower memberships in trails organizations. Bernie Stalman reported that the Huachuca Hiking Club pays ½ of the ATA membership fee for new memberships and that the members seek more loop trail experiences. Aaron Seifert also suggested increasing more opportunities for adventure outings offered to ATA members.

Matt reported that our organization's Volunteer Coordinator is doing an amazing job and that she is heavily engaged in ATA work events projects and training programs.

Matt noted that Natural Restorations is having great success and he reported that a recent project they conducted on a Cinder Hills OHV roadway and had collected and removed 57 tons of trash in OHV areas and 224,000 pounds of trash on public lands. They have submitted their application to IRS for their nonprofit 501-(c)(3) status on June 9 2017, and it is anticipated they will soon become a new nonprofit and will no longer need ATA's fiscal sponsorship.

Matt reported that ATA may need to transition to a new website format that is easier to make changes without needing to go through the webmaster, and expand the webmaster services to include social media management. The Board expressed its appreciation for all the website work that has been accomplished by the ATA webmaster over many years. Aaron also noted that it would be important to not lose important information from our current website during any transition to a new format and that the new website format should have the ability to produce statistics and analytics helpful for ATA in the future, and he recommended seeking a number of professional referrals for any of these changes. Denis Ryan noted that the website is a major marketing tool and that it would be important to utilize software such as "save sites" before shutting down the existing website. Jan Hancock recommended looking at Carbonite or a similar system for saving all the existing website information in a cloud.

Matt asked all Board members to please try to attend the Arizona Trail Day event on September 9th in Buffalo Park. He noted that Jim and Carol McFadden were volunteers helping manage this event, and that our Volunteer Coordinator was organizing volunteers to assist from 10:00 am – 2:00 pm. Denis Ryan noted that the event in 2016 was lacking some organization and coordination.

	<p>Jeff Whiney reported that he has hired a planner, Carl Ghericki from NAU, who is working on a 5-year report for the “Forest Action Plan” that will become the “Arizona State Natural Resources and Strategy Report” and that he would make sure the AZNST would be included in this report that would be submitted to Congress. He noted that a draft of this report will be available for review by April 2018 and that our AZNST Comprehensive Plan information can be wrapped into this document.</p> <p>Matt was asked about the status of proposed new trailheads, and Steve Anderson reported that the Sahaurita Trailhead on Highway 83 will be a 2-acre trailhead with parking for 15 equestrian rigs that is being developed by Pima County, and that there could be a 2+ year waiting period for the sale and transfer of State Trust Land to Pima County so this trailhead can be built. Steve also reported that the Pistol Hill Road Trailhead by Colossal Cave Mountain Park is still in the planning stages. Matt added that the proposed Oak Tree Canyon Trailhead was still on the planning horizon with the Coronado National Forest.</p>	
11	<p><u>Future Meetings</u></p> <p>Rob Mason urged all Board members to attend future meetings so there is no problem in achieving a quorum of Board members.</p> <p>He announced the next ATA Board meeting would be held on Saturday, October 14, 2017 in Vail, AZ at La Posta Quesmada Ranch in Colossal Cave Mountain Park.</p>	All Board members to mark calendars for the future Board meeting
12	<p><u>Adjourn</u></p> <p>There being no further business for discussion, Jeff Whitney made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and Steve Anderson seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m.</p>	

Respectfully submitted by Jan Hancock and voice recorded by Phyllis Ralley