

**Arizona Trail Association Board of Directors Meeting Minutes**  
July 20, 2019  
The Nature Conservancy Hart Prairie Preserve – Flagstaff, Arizona

Board Members in attendance: Steve Anderson, Ambika Balasubramaniyan, Rob Mason, Ben Murphy, Phyllis Ralley (via telephone), Denis Ryan, Kent Taylor. A quorum of directors was present.

Guests in attendance: Lisa Schnebly-Heidinger, Vicki Levin, Aaron Seifert

Staff in attendance: Matthew Nelson, Anna Perreira

Action Items are noted in RED

**I. Call to Order & Introduction of Board Members and Guests**

Board President Steve Anderson called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m. and encouraged staff, board members and guests to introduce themselves.

**II. Approval of Board Meeting Minutes**

Board President Steve Anderson called for approval of March 23, 2019 Board Meeting Minutes and Executive Committee Minutes. Rob recommends amendment to reflect signing of NAU Cline Library Deed of Gift for contributions to Library and Archives. Kent moves to approve minutes with amendment. Ambika seconds the motion. Motion passes unanimously. Kent moves to approve executive committee meeting minutes. Ambika seconds. Motion passes unanimously.

**III. Executive Director Report**

Matthew Nelson highlights some of the topics presented within the written Executive Director Report (attached). Along with ATA staff and a CPA, Matthew is working on new Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) with the US Forest Service, which is currently 22.79%. Matthew seeks review from finance committee and/or board. Rob asked if negotiation process was boilerplate or there's wiggle room; Matthew said it is a negotiated agreement. 2017 audited financials will be used to determine the indirect/overhead rate. The process will be expensive and time-consuming but is a better alternative than the standard 10% rate provided by most federal agencies.

Arizona Trail State Fund only been funded three times in 14 years, but after meeting with most members of the Arizona Legislature and educating them on the Arizona Trail and why funding is needed, a \$250,000 appropriation was made within the State's budget. This funding doesn't flow through ATA, but to conservation corps to conduct priority projects as determined by the ATA. It's not geographically limited. The goal is to spend it all by May 2020. While the State Fund was supported by many members of the Legislature, the one individual primarily responsible for making this happen is House Speaker Rusty Bowers. **ATA Board of Directors are encouraged to reach out to all of their State Representatives and Senators to thank them for their support.**

Kent points out the projects being funded with State Fund include matching funds (federal, private, county, etc.), which is very favorable to our legislators.

Matthew informed the Board that Hudbay/Rosemont Copper has paid 45 percent of overall project costs to support 11 miles of trail construction. The other 45 percent should arrive in August, for trailhead development, gates, signs, water source, and other approved project expenses. He reminds the Board that the ATA has a formal statement about the Arizona Trail and the Rosemont Copper Mine on our website, so when anyone asks, you can direct them to the webpage that explains it.

Valley Toyota Dealers recently approved a donation request for a new vehicle, and the ATA took ownership of a 2019 Toyota Tacoma in June. It will soon have a vinyl wrap with Arizona Trail design and

promotion for the Valley Toyota Dealers. Please support the Valley Toyota Dealers when you're looking to purchase a new vehicle and tell your friends about their support of the ATA.

Ambika suggests we **invite Valley Toyota Dealers representatives to the Annual Meeting.**

ATA received a small grant from Arizona State Parks and Trails to support the Trail Skills Institute.

\$5,000 has been received from South32, an Australian mining corporation that is developing a silver and zinc mine south of Patagonia. This funding will be used to support the environmental studies for a trail realignment to remove the AZT from paved and dirt roads now being frequented by mining trucks.

Heritage Fund Grant for \$20,000 has been conditionally approved for Sahuarita Trailhead development. Environmental studies and concurrence of findings of no significant impact from the State Historic Preservation Office is needed within 120 days. Then trailhead must be developed within three years, otherwise funds must be returned to Arizona Game & Fish Department.

Steve (Pima County) assures Board that application for land purchase and trail realignment has been submitted to ASLD. Their decision will determine the fate of the project.

Kent (Pinal County) has a meeting scheduled with ASLD in September, and will report on his impressions of their willingness to approve future trail projects after that time.

Matt announced that the ATA just released the third in our commemorative mug series. These are not for sale, but are a membership benefit to those joining/renewing at the \$100+ levels. Membership continues to grow (more than 1600 current members) and more individuals are renewing at a higher level. Our efforts to boost membership are paying off.

In October the ATA will launch the Arizona Trail Passport program. Congressman David Schweikert suggested a passport program, inspired by the passport program on the Camino de Santiago. ATA is reaching out to businesses within gateway communities to order their stamps. Passports will be available for sale through the ATA. We are going to hold off on announcing the program until at least 50 stamps are in place. ATA has a standard stamp template available, or locations can create their own. This program is intended to drive more visitation to Arizona Trail Gateway Communities and local businesses.

Arizona Trail Day returns to Flagstaff on Saturday, Saturday Sept. 14. Please plan on being there because some staff and board members who usually are there, can't be. Tamara McDonald is the event coordinator; please contact her to volunteer.

AZT in a Day is happening on Saturday, Oct. 12. This is an attempt to cover all 800 miles in a single day, hiking or biking or running or riding. Registration is open online and thus far about half of the segments have someone signed up. We want this event to engage thousands of new people. The online event portal also includes a fundraising component, which we are hoping yields at least \$50,000 for the ATA. Karrie Kressler, the ATA's Community Program Coordinator, is organizing AZT in a Day. A Phoenix-area public relations firm will be doing massive statewide media outreach with AZT in a Day as a focus in late August, as well as promoting Rodo Sofranac's recent book that benefits the ATA.

The ATA has worked with local businesses statewide to organize 25 "Trailblazing" events for the benefit of the ATA. All Arizona members have received a flyer with event information. **Board Members are encouraged to attend events nearby, and then inviting everyone you know to attend.** Anna Perreira explained that the majority are benefit nights, where either existing or new partners will donate up to 25 percent of proceeds from sales of food and beverage sold at the event. The more people who attend the better.

Denis asks what to expect in terms of these events generating revenue. Anna explains income through Business Partnerships (\$250 to \$1000), and initial estimates for food, beverage and raffle ticket sales are somewhere between \$600 and \$1000 per event.

**For the AZT in a Day Wrap Party, Anna encourages all Phoenix-area Board Members to attend, and encourage their friends and colleagues to attend.** This will be ticketed event, with the cost per person approximately \$20-25.

Grand Canyon National Park FINALLY put the Arizona Trail on the Visitor Map. Once a new Superintendent is hired, Matt will swiftly nourish the relationship between ATA and GCNP.

BLM agreed to print 5,000 more Junior Explorer Handbooks. Brooke Wheeler and Phyllis Rally deserve thanks for helping to facilitate this.

Arizona Office of Tourism has agreed to print 10,000 new Arizona Trail maps. These should be available for distribution in September.

Phyllis says the new ACERT maps are about to be delivered, which include the AZT. BLM gets 10,000 for free; thinks she can obtain some for the ATA, or AOT might provide.

#### **IV. Financial & Fundraising Report**

Anna reports that we currently have \$500,000 on the Balance Sheet. Our P&L looks fantastic and we are well on way to hitting every line item projected on our 2019 budget. How are we going to reach our goals? Corporate donations -- already in addition to what's detailed in the Fundraising Report, we received another \$10,000 from Tucson Electric Power; \$5,000 from South32; \$1,000 from High Mountain Medical; and others. Still pending is an annual grant for @ \$15,000 from Resolution Copper.

Business partnerships are up 14% from this time last year.

Individual contributions on the 2019 budget seek a very ambitious \$100,000, which is much higher than 2018. Most of it would stem from AZT in a Day fundraising. Giving Tuesday and Year End Campaigns typically bring in about \$5,000 each.

Grants, we have received \$15,000 from Freeport McMoran and \$26,000 from REI Co-op. Another \$305,000 will be applied for, with grant deadlines coming up over the next five months.

Sponsors, now that have a platform in place for AZT in a Day, we have a solid structure to approach new sponsors who can see how they will be promoted to a large community of trail users.

Aid stations at running events, Anna commented that many companies are willing to donate products in-kind but are hesitant to give cash. She is trying to show the value of getting in front of consumers, so she hopes to gather another \$8,000 from five running events.

#### **V. Revised 2019 Budget**

Matt reported that with Rosemont Copper funding and that project being added to the Priority Project List for 2019, the Board needs to approve a revised budget. The increase in income will go directly to trail construction, trail development, other consultants, and some to payroll for Zach MacDonald, the ATA's Assistant Trail Director who will be working as a project manager for the Rosemont Re-route. Matt asks for review and approval of the 2019 revised budget.

Rob has question on future of Forest Service Challenge Cost Share funding; Matt shares his impression that there's no certainty that funding will continue, but Regional Office generally recognizes and supports the partnership with the ATA. The concern is that recreation is not a priority for the US Forest Service so we should not count on continued support unless the agency receives direction from Congress. Kent points out that like funding through the BLM, our political climate affects ebb and flow of funding.

Dennis asks if the recent announcement to move the BLM from Washington D.C. to Grand Junction is good or ill. Steve says wait and see. Kent fears it means the agency losing any influence in DC. Matt asks Phyllis for her impression as lifetime BLM employee. She informs the Board there is a webpage dedicated to the explanation of the BLM move, but her personal feeling is the Administration is working to destabilize the BLM. As of two weeks ago, Matt says there is a \$1,000,000 appropriation to the BLM for National Scenic Trails. The Arizona State BLM Office needs to tap into that, which could revitalize the Assistance Agreement with the ATA that was not renewed in 2018.

Rob asks if health insurance increase is for more employees? Overall premium went up after Matt's recent health scare, he says. Eligible employees pay half the cost of health insurance and ATA pays the other half.

Rob questions Customer Relationship Manager (CRM) expense. Matt says this software is necessary for tracking and communicating with donors, members and others involved with the organization. The CRM should pay for itself, although the initial and annual cost is a new expense for the ATA. Matt says a comprehensive CRM is vital for non-profits that depends on contributed income.

Steve asks for a motion to accept the revised 2019 budget. Rob moves; Kent seconds. It passes unanimously.

Matt thanks the Board and points out that our annual operating budget has grown from \$250,000 when he began in 2012 to \$1.3 million in 2019.

## **VI. Investment Policy Review and Approval**

Anna reviews the suggested edits from members of the Finance Committee to the ATA's Investment Policy. Rob finds EFT should say ETF, and asks if board is prepared to invest endowment funds. \$5,000 is currently available. Rob says investment must be made swiftly if Board approves this policy. Matt says it's currently in a Vanguard money market. Rob says finance committee needs to create investment decision swiftly. Board agrees. Denis says plan is similar to pension plans, with a 5-7% return. Phyllis adds that we should consider getting endowment funds into more people's legacy plans. All agree. Matt thanks Anna for taking the lead on development of this policy. Anna suggests that when the Finance Committee look at shifting funds we should think about who on staff should be managing these funds.

Steve asks for motion to approve: Rob moves to approve. Ambika seconds. Approved unanimously.

## **VII. Trail Operations Report**

Trail Director Shawn Redfield is not here to give the report since he is busy helping making progress on the Happy Jack Singletrack project, so Matt presents the report. Matt says one of the main reasons that nine out of ten priority projects will get done this year is because of Shawn. He continues to be an amazing asset for the ATA and the AZT

Support from ADOT is deserving of mention. They recently replaced and upgraded signs at the Pine Trailhead. And, further agreed to do more work where the AZT crosses highways.

New trailhead signs at Canelo Hills, Grandview Lookout Tower, and the Tusayan Greenway Trailhead.

Aspen Corner signs is almost finished. Matt initiated a tribal consultation process since the Peaks hold significant cultural relevance for 11 area tribes. The Coconino National Forest reached out to 11 tribes in the sign development process, admitting it's the first time the Forest has engaged tribes in interpretive information. The process has taken more than 18 months, but sets a high bar for any future sign on Coconino National Forest. District Ranger is grateful for the ATA's vision and cultural inclusivity.

Temporal Gulch Passage Reroute project is 32-mile trail construction project to remove the AZT from paved and dirt roads near Patagonia. The alignment has been ten years in the making, with Zach MacDonald finishing the alignment this summer in advance of biological and cultural studies as part of the NEPA process (grant funded). We anticipate the project will be cleared for construction by October, and will be cost approximately \$1.2 million to build.

Rosemont Reroute, construction of 11 miles will begin by early September, with a combination of machine and hand crews. Completion anticipated by Nov. 20. If the Rosemont Copper Mine begins development, the existing trail will be rehabilitated and naturalized. Until that time, both trails will remain open and safe for public use.

AZT Rainwater Collector should be on the ground in August on the Tonto National Forest near Ajax Tank. This is NEEF grant funded and will be the first of its kind on the AZT.

Superstition Wilderness, the bad news is Woodbury Fire that consumed more than 123,000 acres and about 31 miles of the AZT. Aaron did a great job with data from Justin Eddinger (Tonto NF) to create an interactive map so we can actually see burn severity and the potential need for hillside stabilization without going into field. No word yet on when ATA can access the area do trail assessments.

Tonto NF applied for about \$875,000 in Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) funding to hire conservation corps to repair trails. But all work has to be done "before first rain." Not possible. This could mean no BAER funding, which would mean maybe some disaster relief funding, which could mean a 9-month delay. The AZT is currently closed with no reroutes possible. This is going to be a major

challenge. There's a mountain bike wilderness bypass in place in this area, but it's unclear how much of this route might work as a temporary trail detour.

Matt has recommended funding from the Arizona Trail Fund (State of AZ) to support repair of a massive blowout on Highline Passage. Once state funding is approved in September, a conservation corps can get it done in 8 days.

Happy Jack Singletrack completion goal was end of year 2020; looks like will be done by end of 2019 instead. Date of ribbon-cutting TBA... hopefully in October.

Little Elden Reroute on heavily eroded section is making progress. It is now open now but needs more volunteer labor to get it finished. Far more scenic, safe to hike and bike, and even do on horseback (unlike the previous alignment). Next project is trail obliteration of former trail.

Babbitt Ranch Singletrack Project, about 13 miles between Flagstaff and Grand Canyon. Alignment been checked and approved and a bit more than two miles have already been built. Matt Roberts (Flagline Trails LLC) is building trail with a mini-dozer, with hand crew support behind him. A conservation corps is contracted to work in early August, so about 75% of the project can be accomplished this year. We have a three-year window, but probably only two are necessary. This project made the *Flagstaff Business News*!

Kaibab Reroute between Grandview Lookout Tower and Tusayan, currently follows many USFS roads – some of which have recently been opened to motorized use. This is a popular area for hunting, wood cutting and motorized recreation, so we have support from Kaibab NF to realign. Hope to have plan submitted by September. Construction will probably commence in 2020.

## VII. GIS Director Report

Aaron report that overhauling the Arizona Trail Topo Map Set was deeply enjoyable. Thanks to everyone who helped review the maps and provide comments. **As a product, it could benefit from a nicer cover page explaining what the product is** (currently, it's a stack of shrink-wrapped papers).

On average, about 41 views daily of full interactive map. Aaron keeps posting and updating info on Rosemont Reroute and Temporal Reroute and others. The Trail Steward interactive map getting a view a day on average. It's a great resource that more stewards can utilize.

Aaron asks that when major reroute is done, someone can record the line with the Trimble device. It's highly accurate, and instructions are included.

Scenic Inventory Interactive Map still under Tamara's management. **When all volunteers gather data on signs, it's important to note the unique sign ID within the online map so we can update the resource.** A GPS coordinate isn't enough.

Aaron asked for input on when the Garmin data card should be updated; when to do that? Ambika suggests we give Garmin the info and they determine when to release a new data card. Aaron thinks that an annual update is probably the best we can hope for.

Aaron shows the Board the interactive map of the Woodbury Fire, showing lightly to heavily burned areas. Not as bad as feared.

Rob asks if trail angels or shuttle service could be answer for thru-hikers trying to get around the burn and closed trail.

Matt comments on detour and temporary reroutes: on-the-ground signage and website/smartphone app data is most crucial. AZT DETOUR signs just been ordered, with blank spaces for arrows. Now these can be FedExed to Forest Service employees, trail stewards and others. They are flexible, reusable, and can be nailed to trees or zip tied to existing sign posts.

## VIII. Arizona Trail Archive Project Update

Rob is in constant contact with Peter Runge, Director of Special Collections at the NAU Cline Library, and was excited to accept five boxes of archival documentation from Jan Hancock along with three boxes from the ATA office. Peter is excited beyond all description about this. **Rob will arrange with Jan a time to get the five boxes from the Phoenix area.**

Phyllis comments that in conjunction with our archive project that a thru-hiker, vlogger and filmmaker named Darwin is working on a documentary about the AZT. A Dropbox account has been established and people are already adding photos and data. Email Phyllis so she can send invitation for Dropbox to submit to archive (and documentary).

Matt suggested doing an appeal to AZT community for material. Phyllis will email Matt bullet points about how to do this. Madeleine Shewalter, Dale's wife, gave all of Dale's stuff to Peter directly.

**Ambika suggests adding fundraising request to whatever Matt sends to the general public.** This project will require ongoing funding to support staff time at Cline Library.

## **IX. Lunch**

Everyone enjoyed lunch from Bigfoot BBQ with the view of the Peaks from Hart Prairie Preserve.

## **X. Board Development**

David Benson was unable to attend so Matt gave the report on his behalf. Looking at gaps in current board and term limits. The Board is going to turn over completely in next few years because of term limits within our bylaws. Currently, Directors can serve two consecutive three-year terms. Most members expire between next year and three years. Overlap is important, and gaps in Board skills and experience can be detrimental to nonprofits. Fundraising is an overlooked board talent, as well as accounting.

Matt (and David) asked board the current Board is lacking.

Rob says leadership has been lacking, but that has improved, so nothing wrong at this time.

Steve said legal experience. Prospective Board Member Vicki Levin (guest) may be able to provide that.

Matt adds that diversity (geographical and cultural) is vital, along with fundraising, setting policy, and holding staff accountable are the primary functions of the Board. New Board Members should be encouraged to help with fundraising. Also, a retired federal agency land management employee would make an ideal board member. With the recent turnover within the USFS, NPS and BLM, there should be plenty to choose from. Bill Gibson, Francisco Valenzuela, Pablo Burghard and Joe Winfield are a few options.

Ben would like to see small business owners involved with the Board since spending may look different to them than it does to government types who work with huge budgets.

Denis suggests gateway community members so rural communities are represented.

Matt mentions that having Native American representation on the Board is important, as tribal representatives bring great perspective to large-scale projects and organizational priorities.

Kent suggests a governmental affairs specialist.

**All Board Members are encouraged to help replace yourself when you think of leaving.**

## **XI. Legislative Updates**

Matt says the ATA is frequently asked to comment on all kinds of proposals on public land. The Trail Operations and Protection Committee often works on a draft letter, making recommendations on proposed projects with protection of the Arizona Trail and trail corridor as a priority. Those don't require review and approval by the Board, however the bigger issues (especially proposed federal legislation) does indeed require Board involvement. We have three to discuss today:

**Grand Canyon Centennial Protection Act (H.R. 1373).** This proposed legislation will make permanent the 20-year mining ban in the Grand Canyon region. In 2012, Interior Secretary Ken Salazar established a moratorium on hard-rock mining, but recent attempts by the current Administration to undermine that secretarial order motivated Representative Raul Grijalva to introduce legislation to protect Grand Canyon and the Colorado River from the impacts of uranium mining.

Rob asks if support (or lack of) could affect our status as a non-profit. Matt says no.

Dennis says uranium mining is a head-fake; asks if new mines have opened. Matt says there is only one active uranium mine near the AZT, but there is the potential for 10,000 separate claims on the South Rim.

Rob suggests since it could have a direct impact on AZT, there's grounds for reversing the board's normal position of not supporting or opposing proposed legislation.

Ben says if uranium mines are approved, there could be millions spent on rerouting the trail. Not to mention poisoning of vital water sources, which is already an issue in Grand Canyon.

Rob counters we don't want to get involved in politics.

Dennis disagrees, and says this is the ATA exercising power it finally has.

Matt says there are currently 140 co-sponsors for this bill in Congress and the Board should think about what's best for the trail. Our mission statement starts with protection of the ARizona Trail, and this legislation could do just that.

Ambika suggests that any written response should focus on what is best for the trail, rather than an emotional response.

Rob points out that Rosemont Mine is also an impact, and we didn't support/oppose that project. Matt counters that copper is non-toxic and there was no proposed federal legislation that could have protected the Santa Rita Mountains.

Phyllis moves to take a vote to support the Grand Canyon Centennial Protection Act.

Ben made the motion; Phyllis seconded. Motion passed with one dissenting vote.

**Matt will draft a letter of support for H.R. 1373 and circulate among all Board Members before sending to members of Congress and partner organizations.**

**Human Powered Travel in Wilderness Areas Act (S.1695).** Currently, amendments to the Wilderness Act define mountain bikes as mechanized transport. There's a proposed bill to allow local land managers to consider opening wilderness areas to mechanized transport. Matt asks for Board Members' thoughts.

Ben, personally, would like to see mountain bikes on wilderness trails, but it doesn't hurt the Arizona Trail NOT to have them.

Kent says this bill was introduced by Senator Mike Lee (R-Ut) who has a very anti-public land voting record. Kent is a mountain biker, but fears but this is "the camel's nose under the tent" that could undermine the Wilderness Act.

Rob says it's not that he's against specifics but doesn't recommend the ATA get involved by commenting.

Phyllis says the ballot box is the place for our comments. Perhaps the best approach is to share the information with ATA members and encourage them to comment.

Matt says he often does this, and encourages ATA members to get involved without telling them how to comment.

Aaron points out since many wilderness trails aren't mountain bike-ready, does this create multiple problems?

Matt and Rob agree the only perceived benefit if this passes is to relieve the burden of ATA developing and building wilderness bypass routes for mountain bikes, but it would create a huge burden to maintain wilderness trails for a new use – which the trail was not designed or built for.

Ben moved to not oppose or support S.1695. Ambika seconded. Passed unanimously.

**eBikes on Public Land.** Currently, electric bicycles (eBikes) are defined as "motorized" and not allowed on non-motorized trails. Matt has intel that the Interior Secretary is about to issue a secretarial order that all trails within DOI (NPS and BLM) must allow eBikes. The American Hiking Society has drafted an online letter people that organizations can sign onto, informing the Secretary why this decision would be erroneous. The deadline for sign-on is Wednesday.

Ben moves not to sign on. Rob seconds. The motion passes unanimously.

## **XII. Other Business**

- a. **Fundraising** – Anna urged in-kind donation encouragement and spreading the word about the upcoming Trailblazing 25 events. She’s seeking silent auction items for AZT in a Day Wrap Party. Peer-to-peer fundraising is the fastest growing in the industry, and Anna showed new fundraising platform on website and explained opportunity to create a platform, blog, post pictures, etc. Everyone who registers for AZT in a Day gets a fundraising page, even if they choose not to fundraise. She encouraged everyone to register for AZT in a Day, start a fundraising page, then share with friends.

Anna thanked the Board for their support of the recent Top 25 fundraiser (a beta test for this bigger campaign).

Kent adds he is the worst fundraiser ever and that this was out of his comfort zone, and procrastinated in setting up his page. He sent an email and five minutes later was deluged with alerts of support. “The platform works, and if I can do it...anybody can.”

**Board Members are encouraged to go to [aztrail.org/events/aztinaday-2019/](http://aztrail.org/events/aztinaday-2019/) to set up their individual page.**

Ben suggests pitting university outdoor clubs (NAU, ASU and UofA) against one another for mileage and fundraising. **Matt will share this information with Karrie.**

- b. **Larry Snead.** Rob informs the Board we lost a valuable member of the Arizona Trail family yesterday when Larry Snead (former Executive Director and longtime Board Member) passed away. Board members are encouraged to think of possible ways to recognize what Larry Snead has done for AZT and how can he be memorialized.

Aaron asks if there are plans being put in place? **Matt says yes, and will share with the Board once that information becomes available.**

### XIII. Future Meetings & Important Dates

- September 14 – Arizona Trail Day-Flagstaff (Buffalo Park)
- October 12 – AZT in a DAY (statewide)
- October 19 – Board Meeting (Tucson)
- October 20 – AZT in a DAY Wrap Party (Scottsdale)

### XIV. Adjourn

With no further business identified, the meeting was adjourned at 2:19 p.m.