

Executive Director Report – October 19, 2019

Below are highlights of programs, activities, initiatives, promotions and partnerships since the last board meeting (July 2019).

Administration

Insurance – costs for commercial auto, general liability and other elements of our insurance have increased by almost \$10,000 annually. This is an unfortunate national trend despite the ATA's near-perfect record. I am continually working with Conservation Insurance to find the best and most affordable coverage for the ATA's programs and operations.

Taxes – Form 990 for 2018 is complete and awaiting approval by the Board. It has been reviewed by ATA Treasurer, me and Anna. Compiled financial statement from Julie Klewer will happen in November.

NICRA – Anna is helping compile information for the Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement, which will be submitted to the USFS Region 3 Office as soon as possible. Our indirect/overhead rate will be based on 2017 audited financials, and will likely be 17-18% (down from 22.89% in 2013).

Bookkeeper – the contract with the ATA's third-party independent bookkeeper was cancelled in October. Her duties will be assumed by Debbie Thorman (payroll) and our CPA (monthly financial statements).

CRM – ATA staff continue to work together to develop the ATA's CRM database to better track, manage, communicate with, and engage members, donors, volunteers, business partners and others who engage with the ATA.

Staff

After five years of dedicated service to the ATA, Sabrina Carlson is pursuing another career in order to better attain her personal financial needs. The position of Youth Outreach & Education Coordinator position has been filled by Julie Polovitch, a highly qualified and experienced outdoor educator. She left her position at Arizona Wilderness Coalition to work for the ATA. You can read her bio on the Youth Program Report, and her resume is included in Board Documents. Please welcome Julie to the ATA Staff (julie@aztrail.org)!

Arizona Trail State Fund

The Joint Legislative Budget Committee approved my requests for conservation corps funding in September for the entirety of the \$250,000 allocation. I am working with Arizona State Parks & Trails to develop agreements between their agency and ACE and AZCC for these projects:

- Babbitt Ranch Singletrack construction
- Happy Jack Singletrack construction
- Woodbury Fire rehabilitation
- Mazatzal Mountains maintenance
- Highline Trail repair
- Temporal Gulch Re-route construction
- Black Hills & Tortilla Mountains Passages maintenance
- Sabino-West Fork maintenance

The \$250,000 from the State of Arizona will be matched by \$317,500 in other funds (USFS, Recreational Trails Program, Burned Area Emergency Response, private donations, grants, etc).

Printed Materials

AZT cycling jerseys and tech shirts – the ATA's first attempt at a new product (cycling jerseys and long sleeve tech shirts) was very successful, with 190 sold through pre-order. Net gain for ATA: \$3,050.

More significant than the financial reward is the promotional value associated with this product, as well as the strengthened relationship with the mountain bike community.

Arizona Trail Maps – the Arizona Office of Tourism has decided to print 50,000 (not 10,000 as originally agreed to!) new Arizona Trail maps and assist with distribution statewide. Detailed map with trailheads and gateway communities will be featured on one side, and AZT itineraries on the other side. The design is complete and we are awaiting printing and shipment of the maps.

Regional Presentations

New Mexico Outdoor Economics Conference – I was invited to be a featured panelist at this conference, held in Silver City on October 3-4, along with National Scenic Trail colleagues from the Appalachian and Continental Divide Trails. Over 300 individuals were in attendance, including federal agency representatives from Washington, DC. The response was very positive and further proves that the ATA is a leader within our industry. The most inspiring takeaways from this conference were New Mexico's addition of a state office of outdoor recreation – this makes Arizona the only state in the West without one! – as well as an equity fund to connect underserved populations to trails, parks and forests.

In addition, the New Mexico State Land Commissioner gave an incredible presentation on how State Lands are open to recreation, and until they are sold (per state mandate), should be utilized by all New Mexicans for the natural resources they contain and the recreational benefits they provide. She is supportive of trail development and said that, "New Mexico's State Lands are open to all! Let's maximize the recreation potential that exists on these 9 million acres." I offered to fund a trip for her to travel to Phoenix to meet with the Arizona State Land Commissioner to share her perspective.

I plan to meet with the Governor's Office later this year to discuss State Land issues, as well as the benefits of having a state office of outdoor recreation (after all, the annual consumer spending for outdoor recreation in Arizona is double that of New Mexico).

The Utah Outdoor Recreation Summit also invited me to present about benefits of long-distance trails, and to inspire leadership within the State of Utah to consider a cross-state trail – picking up where the AZT ends at Stateline Campground. I will represent the ATA at that conference on October 23-24.

Big Industry Projects

Asarco – Ripsey Wash Bypass project will begin in the winter of 2020. Asarco will fund trail construction, trailhead construction, and trail maintenance. 0.5-mile of existing Arizona Trail on the southern end of where the new trail begins and the old trail is abandoned will be rehabilitated to prevent trail users from accidentally entering the tailings storage facility. The BLM may choose to retain and maintain current AZT from Florence-Kelvin Trailhead to the Gila River, but it would no longer be part of the Arizona National Scenic Trail nor would the ATA take responsibility for maintaining it.

Rosemont – currently on hold (indefinitely) while Hudbay appeals the recent decision by a federal judge. The ATA had hoped to move forward with the Oak Tree Canyon Trailhead project, but the Coronado National Forest is fearful that since the trailhead was mentioned within the EIS (that was determined to be flawed by Judge Soto) that they cannot move forward with approving it through a Decision Memo. I will redirect grant funds and USFS funds dedicated for this project since it's not likely to see any progress over the next few years.

Resolution – the draft EIS has been released for the Resolution Copper Mine Project, and Fred Gaudet has been diligently combing through it. The preferred alternative for mine tailings is in the Dripping Springs Mountains with no direct impacts to the Arizona Trail. Matt, Fred and the Trail Operations Committee will submit a comment letter before the deadline.

Sunnyside – a new mining exploration project south of Patagonia could increase truck traffic on Harshaw Road, compounding the current issue with South32's Hermosa Mine. We have drafted a comment letter that will be sent to the USFS next week, recommending all truck traffic be routed along Flux Canyon Road, and mitigation measures to build trail away from Harshaw Road to protect trail users from mining truck traffic.