

**Arizona Trail Association  
Board of Directors Meeting (via Zoom and Telephone)  
Saturday, July 18, 2020  
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

**Board Members in Attendance:** Ambika Balasubramaniyan, Fred Gaudet, Jan Hancock, Lisa Schnebly Heidinger, Susan Lagerman, Vicki Levin, Rob Mason, Ben Murphy, Phyllis Ralley, Kent Taylor.

**Not Present:** Steve Anderson

**Guests:** James Arndt, Jake Baechle

**Staff Members:** Matt Nelson, Anna Perreira

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	ACTION ITEMS
1	<p><b>Call to Order and Welcome</b> Susan Lagerman, Board President, called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. A quorum of Board members was in attendance, and guest James Arndt was welcomed to the meeting.</p>	
2	<p><b>Approval of Board Minutes of October 19, 2019 Minutes</b> The previous Meeting Minutes were recorded by Lisa Schnebly Heidinger. Four additions and corrections were submitted by Phyllis and Rob, and Jan will edit the minutes.</p> <p>Kent made a motion to approve the Board minutes with all corrections noted. Ambika seconded the motion which was unanimously approved.</p> <p>James Arndt joined the meeting briefly to greet everyone and express his interest in becoming a member of the ATA Board of Directors and noted he had just recently hiked on the Arizona Trail and loved the experience.</p>	<p><b>DRAFT copy to be submitted to Matt Nelson for posting online.</b></p>
3	<p><b>Board and Staff Communications - Discussion</b> Susan led a discussion regarding the Executive Committee importance of maintaining good communications between the Board of Directors and the Executive Director, especially when announcements and press releases were submitted about controversial issues that had not been reviewed by the Board. Several Board members noted they had no knowledge about recent press releases from the ATA when asked, and that there were also comments and questions about controversial issues and statements that had not been communicated to the Board. Susan noted that due to communication issues we lost our last Board President who brought great value to our organization</p> <p>There was a discussion about the amount of time that would be needed to write and circulate press releases and issue statements. Most agreed that this be a 24-48-hour time frame, with an opportunity to send a draft of any communication with sensitive information to at least two members of the Executive Committee.</p> <p>Ambika offered to be a contact for Matt and Susan asked for another Executive Committee member and Rob Mason offered to be a second</p>	<p><b>Susan, Rob, Ambika and Kent have volunteered to review any ATA public information and press releases that may contain controversial issues 24-48 hours prior to publishing.</b></p>

	<p>backup in reviewing any documents with sensitive issues before release to the public. Kent Taylor also offered to be available for Executive Committee reviews of any potential controversial communications.</p>	
4	<p><b>Professional Development Opportunities</b></p> <p>Susan noted the Board was recommending there should be Board input on policy statements involving major issues, and the Board recommended Board member and Staff training with the Alliance of Arizona Nonprofit Organizations to provide guidance in the management of larger policy statements. The Board noted they did not want to impede the flow of information or other activities of the Executive Director, and discussed the value of establishing guidelines and ongoing training for both the Board members and Executive Committee going forward, with the mission of unifying the communication process.</p> <p>Matt noted he would like to have more clarity and a written procedure would be helpful. Several Board Members suggested moving forward with the development of protocols with guidance on the time frame for reviewing statements involving controversial information versus safety and trail conditions that would need immediate notification.</p> <p>Several others recommended the Executive Committee be sensitive to short turnaround times for the Executive Director. Some suggested Matt try to work with other Executive Directors of nonprofit organizations to help develop some communications guidelines for a potential Board Policy. Several others noted that the Board has not taken this role in the past and that this will require some planning and working together to finalize the guidelines. All agreed they wanted to develop a policy and procedure to help us avoid the “perfect storm” in the future.</p>	<p><b>Now that the ATA is an Alliance for Arizona Nonprofits member, Board Members and Executive Director are encouraged to access webinars, meetings, and training opportunities.</b></p>
5	<p><b>Executive Director Report</b></p> <p>Matt Nelson had provided a detailed description including recent topics for the Board’s review prior to the Board meeting, and he encouraged everyone to read his full report.</p> <p>He highlighted some important information about so many miles of the Arizona National Scenic Trail that had been damaged by wildfires (nearly 100 miles) and that people need to know about these fires and trail closures as they make plans for thru-hiking and riding the Trail now and later. He noted there were going to be rapid Trail Conditions Assessments and efforts to reduce flooding and erosion on the fire-damaged areas. He also noted that there are no alternative options for re-routes around some of the closed areas.</p> <p>Matt also summarized the status of the Arizona Trail State Fund that is currently not approved for 2020 or 2021 funding due to the legislature not in session with the COVID-19 guidelines in place. Matt expects the Arizona State Parks &amp; Trails Funds and projects that are under contract to be continued. Some of the ATA’s Challenge Cost Share Agreements with the USFS are currently on hold due to COVID-19 restrictions, including</p>	<p><b>All Board members to read and review Matt’s Executive Director Report and get with Matt if any questions or comments.</b></p>

	<p>youth and veterans outreach projects, and have been extended through March 31, 2021.</p> <p>Susan noted that with 10% of the AZT impacted and closed we need to be aware that funding sources can be reduced, and Fred Gaudet asked about thru-hikers needing to know about closures, water sources, etc. Matt reported that at this time the ATA is discouraging all thru-hikers from using the AZT in the Fall Season of 2020, because thru-hikers just cannot use it.</p> <p>Kent Taylor asked about the “Arizona Trail in A Day” event and how we were planning to conduct this event this year due to all the AZT closures. Matt noted that there wouldn’t be a full 800-mile goal due to the impossibility this year due to all the trail closures. Instead, individuals will be encouraged to explore segments of the trail close to home and to help raise funds for the ATA.</p> <p>Matt also asked the Board to please read the proposed “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion” Statement that was included in the Board packet. He would like to know if the Board would like to assign this to a Committee to read and review the two versions (one is Matt’s and one is Susan’s). Rob Mason said we should not table this and make a recommendation for Board action, as there were many ways to interpret “Black Lives Matter” and other recent inclusion issues. Kent Taylor asked if we had any approved a statement, and Matt reported that we’ve had a statement in place for a year and it should be adopted as a Policy. Lisa, Fred, and Ambika all offered comments and most agreed that brevity and Susan’s edits were preferable and to move forward with Susan’s version to serve as our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy.</p>	
<p><b>6</b></p>	<p><b>Approval of Election of New Board Member</b></p> <p>Susan and Ambika introduced James Arndt and asked him to provide a brief background for the Board members as a candidate for Board membership. James works with the “Teach for America” program at Camelback High School and he feels he can help us attract youth trail users who have a strong interest in trails, and his goal is to reach inner city youth in bigger cities and get them involved and using recreational trails.</p> <p>Lisa Schnebly made a motion to approve James Arndt’s candidacy for a Board of Directors position, and the motion was seconded by Vicki Levin and carried unanimously. Ambika will distribute the Board member matrix to James and all Board members to complete and update.</p>	
<p><b>7</b></p>	<p><b>Financial Report and Review of Recession Budget</b></p> <p>Anna Perreira, Chief Financial Officer, provided a detailed Development Report, Balance Sheet, Profit and Loss Statement, Budget vs. Actuals 2020 Board Approved Budget January – May 2020 for the Board’s review. Anna and Matt had also worked on and prepared a draft “2020 Recession</p>	

	<p>Budget” that has adjusted the anticipated financials through the end of 2020 for the Board’s review and comments.</p> <p>Matt reported that the updated 2020 Budget reflects the anticipated reduction in income and expenditures due to COVID-19, noting that many private and foundation grants are no longer available. A significant drop in corporate giving and business partnerships is also anticipated.</p> <p>Anna explained the revised budget with Rosemont’s \$200,000 removed and noted that ATA still expects to end up OK this year, however our corporate donations are currently down.</p> <p>Kent Taylor asked about the CARES Act Paycheck Protection Program loan that was not reflected in the revised budget. Anna reported that it’s on the Balance Sheet. This \$68,000 is expected to be 100% forgiven.</p> <p>Rob Mason noted that Arizona’s nonprofit organizations look good for forgiveness of loans, and he complimented Matt and Anna and all of the Staff members for making many adjustments and great efforts to get through the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>Susan, Phyllis, and Rob all agreed that the adjustments in the DRAFT Budget have been amazing, and encouraged all to keep up the good work, and Phyllis voiced high compliments for the DIY Seeds of Stewardship educational programs that ATA staff developed and distributed in April.</p> <p>Kent Taylor made a motion to approve the DRAFT 2020 Recession Budget, and Ambika seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.</p> <p>Anna updated the Board on the Vanguard reserves, and she recommended that ATA would not want to be managers of the ATA’s stock ETF shares of \$1,000 each or stock portfolios. Rob Mason noted that he agreed with the staff’s recommendation.</p>	
8	<p><b>Keep It Grand Campaign</b></p> <p>Matt Nelson provided a report on the Grand Canyon Centennial Protection Act and a public outreach effort the ATA will undertake to encourage members to reach out to Arizona’s Senators to support the Senate bill (it has already passed in the House). Matt shared the online customized postcard campaign (<a href="http://keepitgrand.net">keepitgrand.net</a>) that has been developed to encourage the public to share their feelings, images, comments, etc. regarding a permanent mineral withdrawal near Grand Canyon. He asked for any questions and comments.</p> <p>Phyllis Ralley asked what the cost of the online postcard campaign program would be, and Matt said the cost would be \$5000-\$7,000 and a grant had already been secured for this. Fred Gaudet asked if there was any opposition to the uranium mine. Susan asked what area would be impacted, and Matt responded that the Kaibab National Forest currently</p>	

	<p>has 800 mining claims on it, but only one operational uranium mine, due to the current 20-year mining ban in the area.</p> <p>Matt indicated uranium mines have extreme danger to people, water, wildlife and other natural resources in the area, including the Arizona Trail. Jan Hancock asked if science supported the uranium mine impacts. Fred Gaudet made a motion to use the funds available for the public outreach campaign, seconded by Ben Murphy, and the vote carried unanimously. Matt asked if there were any abstaining from the vote, and none were abstaining.</p>	
9	<p><b>eBike Conflict Survey Results</b></p> <p>Matt Nelson reported that the ATA had conducted a research study on eBike conflicts on the Arizona Trail. He introduced Jake Baechle who provided information about the survey.</p> <p>The research study was a qualitative and a quantitative survey of 2,965 people and 121 people actually took the survey. The results indicated that 87% of the survey respondents could not see any benefits other than providing recreational access to persons with disabilities and that the use of eBikes on nonmotorized trails set potential trail user conflicts. The largest group of trail users opposing eBikes were equestrians. Other comments were that eBike users could “cheat” and use the motorized mode to provide an unfair advantage over others who were timing their thru rides without the eBike advantage.</p> <p>Ambika thanked the ATA for the survey and asked if the results would be published on the ATA website. Matt reported that this was the first survey by any of the National Scenic Trail organizations and he is grateful for the survey, and it will be published and shared with the Arizona Trail community and land managers. Rob Mason noted that there were growing numbers of eBikes and that we could expect more and more in the next years.</p> <p>Matt noted that the Department of the Interior and the Bureau of Land Management had determined there were 5 passages of the AZT that could be affected by eBike use. Ambika noted that many urban-area e-Bikers could probably be increasing non-motorized trail use more than other more remote trail areas.</p> <p>Matt noted that the funds for the eBike survey had been provided through the Back Country Horsemen of America and People For Bikes.</p>	
10	<p><b>Other Business – ATA Strategic Plan</b></p> <p>Matt Nelson reported that the ATA Strategic Plan for 2021 was written 5 years ago and the work on updating the Plan had been underway by a special Strategic Plan Subcommittee, but the COVID-19 pandemic interrupted these subcommittee meetings and efforts. Matt recommended that current Strategic Plan be carried over into 2021.</p>	<p><b>The current Strategic Plan Subcommittee will review the next steps to be taken at the October 2020 Board of Directors meeting.</b></p>

<p>Rob Mason agreed that the coronavirus may still be influencing our nation in the next 2-3 years or whenever a vaccine is available to fight the virus.</p> <p>Susan Lagerman agreed, because our organization will need to address the overall impacts of COVID-19 before we can develop a meaningful Strategic Plan.</p> <p>Rob suggested the Board keep an open mind about the Strategic Plan, and keep the Subcommittee in place, and look ahead for the best time to work on the Strategic Plan.</p> <p>Matt suggested we table the final decision about the Strategic Plan until our next Board meeting in October 2020 when we might know more. Board Members agreed.</p> <p><b>Other Business – Next Executive Committee Meeting</b> Susan Lagerman suggested that she would send a request to Executive Committee members to identify a date and time a meeting can be scheduled prior to the next full Board meeting. All Board Members are invited to attend this 30-minute check-in.</p> <p><b>Other Business – New Board Member</b> Ambika reviewed James’ resume and noted a lot of his expertise, youth involvement, working with diverse populations, and she also noted that the Board membership commitment could include more time than in the past. Kent Taylor agreed that our Board has agreed to invest a larger amount of time to attend some training seminars and other committee work.</p> <p>James replied that “yes, he has committed, in fact his whole family is committed, and his father would be very supportive of the Arizona Trail Association.”</p> <p>Lisa Schnebly Heidinger expressed she felt James was a great candidate.</p> <p>Susan encouraged all Board members to seek additional candidates for the ATA Board of Directors, and she encouraged all to keep diversity and inclusion when nominating new Board members, to comply with our ATA Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Statement.</p> <p>Ambika B. asked any potential candidates’ names and resumes to be sent to both Ambika and to Susan.</p> <p>Ambika notes there will be vacancies on our Board of Directors: (2) in 2021, and (3) in 2022 when their Board terms expire. It was noted that we have had 11 Board members, and now 12 with the addition of James Arndt, we have positions available for 5-16 Directors and that we can nominate any new Board members at any time and they can be elected for a full term at the next upcoming ATA Annual Meeting.</p>	<p><b>Friday, August 14 (4:30 p.m.) is the date of the next Executive Committee meeting.</b></p>
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	<p>Rob Mason asked if we could update our Board Matrix so the other Board members can see where we have a need for Board representation. Ambika agreed to send all Board members a copy of the Board Matrix and asked all to update their information.</p> <p>Rob Mason and James Arndt had to leave the meeting at 12 noon.</p> <p><b>Other Business – Miscellaneous</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kent Taylor asked that Board members fill in the Volunteer Hours for everything they are doing for the Board of Directors. He said either he or a staff person would send Board members a form to use for Volunteer Hours.</li> <li>• Matt Nelson noted that Wendy Lotze had just completed an informative video that is available for viewing on the ATA website to help volunteers log hours.</li> <li>• Matt Nelson asked that all Board members sign a Conflict of Interest form and that it be emailed back to him.</li> <li>• Matt Nelson reported that Laura White has submitted her Region 3 Retirement Request with the USDA Forest Service and that she will likely leave the agency at the end of this year.</li> <li>• Matt encouraged all Board members read and review all of the REPORTS attached to this Board meeting email (i.e. Trail Operations Report, GIS Report, and much more!) that were not discussed in today’s Board meeting due to the truncated 2-hour Zoom virtual format meeting versus regular 4-hour in-person Quarterly Board Meeting.</li> <li>• Phyllis reported she had read and reviewed all of the great reports and she expressed her thanks to all who had submitted these reports.</li> <li>• Susan simply expressed she was “speechless” with everything that was still being accomplished in spite of the coronavirus challenges!</li> </ul>	<p><b>Ambika to share Board Matrix with all Board Members. Please complete and return to Ambika.</b></p> <p><b>All Board Members to report their volunteer hours online.</b></p> <p><b>All Board Members to complete the Conflict of Interest form and email to Matt.</b></p>
<p><b>11</b></p>	<p><b>Next Board Meeting</b> – The next Board of Directors meeting is scheduled for Saturday, October 17, 2020 at the new ATA Tucson office, or a Virtual meeting. Notifications will be sent to all Board members.</p>	<p><b>Board members to save the date for the next Quarterly Board Meeting October 17, 2020</b></p>
<p><b>12</b></p>	<p><b>Adjournment</b> Susan asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Phyllis made the motion, seconded by Ben, and the meeting adjourned at 12:19 p.m.</p>	