

Arizona Trail Association Executive Director Report – March 2021

Fundraising

- Finished 2020 with a \$157,000 surplus – primarily due to Government Grants secured in 2020 but not yet actualized and reimbursed. This shows as a net gain within budget but not on balance sheet due to our Accrual accounting methodology.
- Year-end campaign generated approximately \$23,758 in individual contributions
- Spring fundraiser (March 22-April 3) will focus on Temporal Gulch Reroute Project, with a goal of \$15,000
- Outreach and benefits has brought our membership to 2,200 individuals – a new record for the organization)
- USFS funding has been allocated for: Tonto NF (\$40,000); Coconino NF (\$25,000); Kaibab NF (\$10,000); and Arizona Trail Association (\$249,000).
- Nearly \$6M over four years has been applied for through the Great American Outdoors Act, and we should know more about FY22 allocations by April or May
- Secured \$10,000 grant for Trail Technician from Partnership for the National Trails System
- Paycheck Protection Program loan secured for \$72,000 through National Bank of Arizona. Our last PPP loan was 100% forgiven and we anticipate the same for this opportunity.

State Funding

- Outreach to key House and Senate members on Appropriations Committee to support a \$250,000 appropriation into the Arizona Trail State Fund. Dorn Policy Group is supporting the effort and has been formally engaged to assist with government affairs
- Supporting the effort to reestablish the Arizona State Parks Heritage Fund (\$10M annually from Lottery revenues), which would make grant opportunities available to ATA

Staff

- Staff Meeting held on March 8 in Tucson to reconnect ATA Staff, and plan for 2021. Incredible turnout from Flagstaff, Phoenix, Tucson and Sierra Vista for this very inspiring afternoon!
- Anna Perreira left her position as CFO in February
- Tsipora Prochovnick will be finishing her seasonal position as Trail Technician next month
- Brittany Chavez hired as Development Director
- CPAs being interviewed to assist monthly as Bookkeeper
- Michael “Chappy” Chappell hired as Veteran Program Coordinator (volunteer until program funding can be secured)
- Donovan Day transitioned from Intern to Administrative Assistant
- Tasha Pontifex (Tucson) & Judy Tincher (Flagstaff) hired as Field Coordinators
- Seven thru-hikers engaged to gather data on the AZT, including birds (in collaboration with Audubon Society); campsites and camping impacts; and cattle/ranching impacts

Administration

- All Staff emails migrated to Gmail
- Website overhaul currently underway
- Audited Financials for 2020 nearly complete!

Bulldozer in Wilderness

The Tonto National Forest approved \$17,858 needed to repair damage to the Arizona Trail – the result of a bulldozer authorized by the Forest to travel on the AZT (Passage 25) for the purposes of cleaning out cattle tanks in wilderness. Documentation on the approval process, Minimum Resources Decision Guide, and all USFS communications has been provided through a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request. Wilderness Watch or other organization may pursue litigation and will likely prevail.

USFS Comprehensive Plan

Thanks to a cooperative non-federal agency partner, I have seen a draft version of the USFS's Comprehensive Plan for the Arizona National Scenic Trail. A second draft and Appendices are anticipated by June 2021. ATA should be prepared to read thoroughly and comment comprehensively, and share with our members to encourage their participation in the public comment process. The Plan has tremendous potential to be an effective conservation tool for the trail and corridor (as intended by National Trails System Act legislation), and will be opposed vehemently by industry groups.

Brian Poturalski has accepted the position as Acting AZNST Administrator, and is well-suited for the position given his long history working for the Coconino National Forest and since he's an accomplished thru-hiker/rider/skier.