

Executive Director Report

Welcome to New ATA Staff!

- Clay Showalter – Youth Outreach & Education Coordinator – Northern Arizona
- Olivia Woods – Field Coordinator – Central & Northern Arizona
- Chrissy Fichter – Volunteer Engagement Specialist
- Makenzie Mabery – Gear Girls Coordinator

Please check out information about these talented individuals on the [Staff page](#) online, and send them a warm welcome.

New CRM & Membership/Volunteer Platform – over the past two months, ATA staff have been transitioning from our two former online platforms used to manage donors, members and volunteers into a single system. While very labor intensive for staff and web contractor, we are nearly finished with merging of data and implementation of this new system. It will be more efficient, inexpensive and better for the organization's needs and our members, donors and volunteers. There will be some growing pains associated with a new system – for both staff, volunteers and members – but the new system is much more user-friendly for all and will lead to greater membership, volunteer and donor retention.

HB 2789 – the House Bill that would expand use of the Arizona Trail Fund to include development of water sources, trailheads, gates and signs – in addition to trail construction and maintenance – will not get a vote due to the primary sponsor (Lupe Diaz, LD14) being pressured by the Arizona Mining Association (AMA) to not support the legislation. So despite the efforts of staff, members and our lobbyist, this bill will likely die a silent death. We should strategize after the state legislature passes a budget how to hold Rep. Diaz accountable for his inaction.

Arizona Trail Fund – we remain hopeful the Arizona State Legislature will include a healthy appropriation for the Fund in the FY23 budget. However, lobbying from the AMA against the Arizona Trail and the ATA is certainly not working in our favor. We hope that by our thousands of members calling their representatives that there will be overwhelming support within the legislature. In addition, the state currently has a \$5.4 billion budget surplus! We contracted a phone banking service to call all ATA members over the next two weeks to encourage them to reach out to their state reps, with the option to patch through calls directly to their state senator or representative. We will know more about the state budget by the end of June.

Arizona Mining Association – numerous phone calls and a virtual meeting have revealed that the AMA sees the Arizona Trail Association as an enemy for the following reasons: 1) we support the concept of a USFS Comprehensive Plan; 2) we prioritize the Trail over mining interests; 3) we support the Grand Canyon Protection Act; 4) we ask mining companies for mitigate measures when their operations negatively impact to the Arizona Trail. Because of this, their Executive Director will continue to lobby against anything that could benefit the Arizona Trail, including funding and legislation.

National Trails Day – the ATA organized two events for National Trails Day on June 4, including the grand opening of the Casa Blanca Canyon Trailhead. This is the first trailhead on private land that provides access to the Arizona National Scenic Trail. We are very proud of our partnership with Borderlands Restoration Network on this new facility.

Rosemont Copper Mine – a federal judge's decision to halt the Rosemont Copper project due to the Environmental Impact Statement being fatally flawed was recently heard by the Court of Appeals, and the decision was upheld. This could make its way to the Supreme Court and is very likely to be upheld due to the nature of the 1872 Mining Law. This means the entire EIS process will have to begin again, so we are not likely to see impacts associated with the Rosemont Copper project for another five to ten

years, if ever. The company (HudBay Minerals) is instead focusing its energy on developing Copper World on private land to the east. The trail reroute project is now on permanent hold.

Asarco Ray Mine Tailings Storage Facility – Asarco’s most recent update is that no activity near Ripsey Wash is anticipated for at least the next 2 years. The 6-mile reroute of the AZT around their future tailings storage facility will only begin when construction impacts are on the horizon, and we’re just not there yet.

USFS Comprehensive Plan – Public release of the Comp Plan is now anticipated for July 2022. Tribal consultation begins this month, and then 30 days after that time the Plan will be released to the public.

USFS Funding – Matt has been working closely with Marcy DeMillion (AZT Liaison for the USFS) to secure agreements to support the ATA over the next year, including CMTL, GAOA and FLTP funding. All of these agreements should be signed this summer.

- CMTL will support our master challenge cost share agreement and provide a portion of funding for vital staff positions, including Trail Director, Volunteer Program Manager, Administrative Director, GIS Director, Youth Outreach Coordinators, Wildlife Monitoring Coordinator, and Intern.
- FLTP will support analyzing new realignments to remove the AZT from dirt roads.
- GAOA will support a dedicated trail crew for 22 weeks to conduct priority trail construction and maintenance.

2021 Financial Review – an independent CPA has been contracted to prepare our 2021 Financials. Document uploads from ATA Staff are nearly finished. ATA Finance Committee will need to review and approve the Reviewed Financials as soon as they’re available. Next year will be audited financials.

Border Wall Update – no news on what will happen to the 400 feet of orphan wall along the southern terminus. A determination has not yet been made by Dept of Homeland Security, however recent mandates from the White House for other segments of “unfinished” border wall look promising for wall removal and remediation at this location.

BLM Transportation Management Plan – A new TMP is forthcoming, and Trail Operations Committee should be prepared to comment on the plan as it relates to the AZT within the Gila Middle South Planning Area.

Grand Canyon Protection Act – S.387 was introduced in the US Senate by Kelly and Sinema in 2021, but has been dormant ever since. It is receiving a hearing the Senate Energy & Natural Resources Subcommittee on June 7. We have been encouraging ATA members and trail supporters to reach out to Senator Kelly (he’s on the Senate ENR Committee and is expected to testify in support of the bill) in advance of the hearing.

AZT in the News – there have been so many great articles on the Arizona Trail this season. We share some of these on Facebook occasionally, but we archive all the ones we can find on our [AZ Trail in the News](#) page online. Please stay informed by checking this page at least monthly.