

Arizona Trail Association  
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes  
October 15, 2022  
Arizona Trail Association Office  
(738 N. 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 201, Tucson)

Board members in attendance:

James Arndt, Ambika Balasubramaniyan, Kait Boyle, Dana Ernst, Lisa Schnebly Heidinger, Susan Lagerman, Victoria Levin, Phyllis Ralley, Shawn Redfield, Bianca Salazar

Staff in attendance:

Chrissy Fichter, Zach MacDonald, Matthew Nelson

Guests in attendance:

Karen Gresham, Clark Tenakhongva

I. Welcome and Introductions

Matt described colorful prior history of the office space within the Historic Y. Susan called meeting to order; all present introduced themselves.

II. Approval of Board Meeting Minutes from June 2022

Phyllis moved to accept motion; Ambika seconded; minutes approved unanimously.

III. Executive Director's Report

Matt said this summer was exception to usual torpor with many projects. Two new staff members were hired to support Seeds of Stewardship program: Sarah Dowling in Flagstaff, Melissa Schwan in Tucson.

Inclusion training in August included almost all staff. He described it as valuable as an awareness builder; Shawn said there would be long-term benefits.

We have secured \$250K from the Arizona Trail Fund to support state-approved contractors and conservation corps to conduct priority trail work; this was heavy lifting because of opposition from Arizona Mining Association, but outreach to members of the Arizona Legislature from board, staff, members and supporters carried the day. Almost 1/3 of state legislators for the upcoming session will be new and Matt encouraged us to meet with them to educate them about the Arizona Trail after November elections.

USFS Comprehensive Plan still “coming soon,” having advanced from Regional Office to Washington Office for review. USFS funding contracts are lagging which may mean using available funds within our reserves until reimbursement is possible.

Southern Terminus restoration has been stalled since Jan. 6 when 400 feet of “orphan wall” was built. Now it appears remediation means restoring roads and filling gaps with shipping containers. But it's illegal (and debatably ineffective). Outcome pending.

Grand Canyon Protection Act (which will include a permanent moratorium on uranium mining in the Grand Canyon region) is deadlocked in Senate committee. House looking at alternatives, including a possible National Monument designation.

ATA now has a parental leave policy since demand emerged for the first time. This includes six weeks paid leave, and up to six weeks of unpaid leave after child birth or adoption or miscarriage. This benefit is far above most non-profits, while below big corporations and educational institutions.

#### IV. Trail Operations Report

Zach reported that most passages received some improvement, and biggest ones included three reroute projects in northern AZ. Fire mitigation and rain created challenges, but staff and volunteers the Orderville Trailhead was completed – with the oldest wooden trailhead sign permanently preserved within the Kaibab NF Visitor Center. Other big projects included a 3.6-mile reroute near Walnut Canyon; 1-mile route south of Orderville Trailhead; and a 3-mile route within the Mangum Fire burn scar. Removal of downed trees along the trail within Grand Canyon National Park was another big success. Shawn reported that segments of the Highline are being rebuilt to improve sustainability and safety. Many small reroutes have been designed, and volunteers worked vigorously to clear the corridor while machine work progressing smoothly. Zach reported that upcoming projects include Oak Tree Canyon Trailhead, 10+ years in making; Temporal Gulch Reroute is underway once again and is expected to be completed by May of 2023; and a new rainwater collector will be built at the Freeman Road Trailhead this season.

#### V. Volunteer Report

Chrissy reported her position has been funded since May by Partnership for the National Trails System, ATA, and USFS. She wants to broaden our community, increase and diversify engagement. Summer events more robust than usual (15); 6,666 volunteer hours June-Sept. with 150 volunteers engaged, and one bear encounter. Seven new trail stewards have been recruited and registered. Website tracking volunteer hours improving thanks to new CRM.

#### VI. Financial Reports

Gregory Coy, CPA, joined meeting for questions. Finance and audit committee has approved reviewed financials for 2021. He said slight loss for 2021 was offset by net assets and funding. Percentages are in line with similar organizations. New accounting standards coming out next year include increased documentation for all in-kind donations. Ambika moved approval; Susan seconded; passed unanimously. Susan reviewed Form 990 and would like better volunteer hour record keeping. Ambika moved to approve Form 990, Bianca seconded; approved unanimously.

#### VII. Development Report

Matt reported that new Challenge Chose Share Agreement has been signed with USFS for \$194,000 to support staff and some trail projects (Superstition Wilderness Maintenance and Pigeon Spring Restoration). He's waiting to sign major FS agreement (about \$450,000) for reroute and environmental studies, and limited trail construction.

Corporate donations include Pioneer Title \$25K support; Copperstate Farms new donor at \$20K; owned by son of Gov. Symington. It's a commercial cannabis company based in Snowflake. Board encouraged to amplify raffle ticket sales and year-end fundraising campaign. We may not meet our overall organization budget for 2022, but expenses are in line with income.

#### VIII. Board Development

Prospective Board Members Karen Gresham and Clark Tenakhongva joined the meeting. Karen self-described as former CPA, now on school board, and has experience with fundraising. Clark Tenakhongva serving on three school boards and tribal education board, is a military veteran, worked in Veterans Affairs and Tribal government for Hopi, and helped get Bears Ears National Monument designated under President Obama (and original boundaries reinstated under President Biden). Karen and Clark were excused from the meeting so the Board could discuss. Phyllis moved to electing both to the Board. Ambika seconded. Vote to accept both was unanimous.

#### IX. Policy and Advocacy Committee

Kait informed the Board that the ATA signed onto a letter along with many other organizations written by The Wilderness Society and sent to BLM State Director to designate more Wilderness Study Areas and Areas of Critical Environmental Concern.

#### X. Other Business

Susan asked Board Members for any top-of-mind brainstorming topics the ATA should be working on.

Susan is concerned about heat-related deaths on trails in the summertime; would like ATA-sponsored messaging on safety. Arizona State Parks has a Safety & Environmental Education grant that would support it. "Drink half, turn back" kind of thing. Digital PR campaign, also on trailhead signs.

Shawn suggested 30-second video on operating wire gates.

Annual Meeting in February – Board agreed in-person with live stream option. Ambika, Bianca, and Lisa will join planning committee.

#### XI. Future Board Meetings

Dates for 2023 will be developed through email and Doodle poll for March, summer, and September or October.

#### XII. Adjourn

Ambika moved to adjourn; Bianca seconded; approved unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 12:27 p.m.