

Executive Director Report Summer 2023

Wendy Lotze did an exemplary job as Acting Executive Director while Matt was on sabbatical during the months of June and July. Progress was made on important projects and grant opportunities, and the entire staff is grateful for Wendy stepping into this role to lead the organization this summer – especially Matt!

Staff Updates

Karrie Kressler left the ATA this summer to embark on a cross-country bike ride with her father, and will then be seeking new employment that is not admin related. She stayed on for two months after announcing she would be leaving to assist with a smooth transition to the new Administrative Director.

Renee Stevens was hired in May as the new Administrative Director. She brings a wealth of professional experience (including her experience as a CPA) in administrative duties and accounting, and a passion for the Arizona Trail. Renee regularly participates as a runner and volunteer at ATA events, and helped her husband Dallas plan for his AZT thru-hike.

Zach MacDonald recently accepted a position on the recreation team with the Coronado National Forest. He is leaving his post as Trail Director after seven years, but is available to help train new staff and assist with some project-related duties and inquiries over the next two months to ensure a smooth transition. Applications are currently being received from qualified candidates for this position.

Rosi Green is leaving Arizona and won't be returning for the Autumn season as our Trail Technician. The position is currently being advertised and we expect numerous applications from qualified candidates. Depending on the ATA's project schedule for October '23 – April '24, two Trail Techs may be hired for the Trail Operations Program.

Ali Soland was hired as the Youth Outreach Assistant for Southern Arizona, after Melissa moved to Reno, Nevada. Ali spoke at the Annual Meeting and represents the next generation of motivated young trail leaders.

Sara Sprague was hired as the Youth Outreach Assistant for Northern Arizona. Sara recently graduated with her Master's degree from NAU, and her experience working with youth outdoors and within the Flagstaff community will greatly benefit the program.

Donovan Caputo is leaving as Administrative Assistant to be a full-time father, and to later pursue a career in the restaurant business. He is grateful for the ATA's support over the past five years. This position is being reassessed, and Julie Marshall will be taking over his membership and retail fulfillment duties for now.

Treven Hooker is getting married! He recently announced that he and Emily Wheaton will celebrate their union through a marriage ceremony on October 15.

Wendy Lotze is returning to part-time employment to accommodate her teaching schedule at the UofA (landscape architecture). She will continue to serve in a leadership role within our Volunteer Program.

Please learn more about all ATA Staff through the [Staff page of our website](#).

Website

ATA Staff updated the website this summer by eliminating redundant material, organizing pages, adding content, transferring files that are using up our data allowance, and much more. A new page was created to feature the ATA's Board-approved Statement on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and a link was created off the main menu. The new page includes an opportunity for the community to share their thoughts and experiences on DEI with the ATA. This increases the visibility of the organization's commitment to providing informed and authentic leadership in promoting diversity and inclusion. Please visit aztrail.org often, and provide any feedback to the Executive Director.

USDA Forest Service Agreements

Matt and Marcy have been working on three separate challenge cost share agreements between the Forest Service and ATA, which was carried forward by Wendy and Marcy this summer. These agreements, which are expected to be signed and executed this month, include over **\$1.2 million** in multi-year funding:

- FLTP & CMTL for \$587,250 to support 67 miles of studying new reroutes to remove the AZT from roads, and three trail construction projects
- GAOA for \$425,020 to support priority trail maintenance and improvement projects on USFS managed lands
- CMTL 2023-24 for \$223,333 to support Trail Operations, GIS, Youth Outreach, Gateway Communities and Trail Promotion

Arizona Trail Fund

Governor Katie Hobbs & the Arizona State Legislature made a \$500,000 investment in the Arizona Trail Fund for state fiscal year 2024. This is a non-lapsing appropriation and will provide funding for state-approved contractors to conduct priority maintenance and construction projects on the AZT, and can be used as matching funding for federally-funded projects. This is also an ideal funding source for segments of the AZT not on USFS-managed lands. This is the largest investment in the Arizona Trail Fund in history! Our goal is to spend at least \$250,000 per year and then make a case for an additional appropriation in the future. Gratitude to Tom Dorn and Cole Libera at Dorn Policy Group for helping make this happen, as well as all members of the Legislature that made this a priority during the last session.

Baaj Nwaavjo I'tah Kukveni - Ancestral Footprints of the Grand Canyon National Monument

ATA has been actively promoting the designation of the new Grand Canyon Area National Monument along with twelve Tribes and many conservation and outdoor organizations. After the Grand Canyon Protection Act died in the Senate the focus shifted to appealing to the President to use his authority under the Antiquities Act to designate the monument. On Tuesday, August 8, Matt and Board Member Clark Tenakhongva attended the proclamation ceremony near Tusayan. They were joined by tribes, leaders of coalition member organizations, and federal officials. Please help us celebrate the protection of nearly 1 million acres and 40.5 miles of the Arizona Trail!!! Read the complete proclamation [here](#), and see the map attached.