

Friends of the Tonto National Forest
Minutes for Board Meeting 24 May 2021

Meeting held using Zoom. Attending were Trent Shue, Scott Wood, Susan Sridharan, Patti Fenner, Don Pike, Dayan Anderson, Eric Yamane, and Urb Weidner

6:03pm Call to order – Brian

President's Report – Brian

Strategic Plan: Review/update/roles & responsibilities

- Intent is to look at goals & objectives, which were set in 2019 to ensure on track

Organizational Development

Goal 1 Increase organizational capacity

- Change from our current simple accounting system to one that will grow with us -
Assigned to: Finance Committee - Done
- Identify changes needed in standing committees; modify bylaws accordingly
Assigned to: President, Past President, Vice President, Executive Director -
Identified six committees: Communications, Natural Resources, Cultural Resources, Education/
Outreach, Finance, and Membership/Recruitment.
There was a discussion of where Recreation fits. It was determined that Recreation may fall under Education/Outreach; however, not clear in all cases. Recreation could include trail maintenance, Adopt a Trail, etc. Brian stated that a separate Recreation committee may be a goal for the future. Suggests we target it for 2023; may do it earlier. If committees change, will need to update the bylaws and obtain membership approval.
Brian said committee heads should be contacted to see if they have established a plan for operations. Overviews do exist, but not detailed targets and plans to achieve the targets. Should be done with a vision for the next couple of years.
- Appoint committee chairs - Assigned to: President
Committee chairs have not changed; however, a chair has not yet been named for Education Outreach,
Dayan said she could assist with Education Outreach as part of her work with CAZCA. It was suggested she could lead until it's determined what the committee will be doing.

Recruit committee members - Assigned to: Each committee chair

Goal 2: Establish volunteer network to include trained project leaders who can develop and implement projects

Actions – Year 1

- Develop orientation manual and training program for project leaders and other interested members, consistent with Forest Service requirements - Assigned to: Vice President and Executive Director
Orientation was a success with good turnout and volunteers. Question remains as of identification and development of leaders.

- Recruit and train project leaders from our volunteer pool/ mailing list - Assigned to: Vice President and Executive Director

Actions = Years 2021/22:

- Project leaders work with other volunteers to develop new project leaders
 - Don said two aspects: technical knowledge and paperwork associated with projects. Should work on this in 2021. Don said he would work with Patti to set up training guidelines. Technical skills require some prior knowledge.
 - We need to ask people, who attend our events, if they would be interested in leading a group or project.
 - Dayan raised the question of our having any involvement with AmeriCorps. We potentially could arrange for AmeriCorps volunteers. Dayan went to the AmeriCorps website, and it appears volunteers and funding could be available from our organization. Applications are due by June 23rd. Brian said American Naturalist group could also be a source of volunteers.

Goal 3: Build membership and volunteer base

Actions: Years 1 and 2:

- Conduct at least one annual event designed to attract new members/volunteers - Assigned to: Membership and Recruitment Committee
 - This was done in 2019 and was successful. Will plan another event for Fall or early 2021.
- Contact all members personally to encourage involvement
 - Assigned to: Membership Committee with help of the entire Board
- Assign mentor to new members - Assigned to: Membership Committee
 - Brian suggested to Pete that we reach out to new members and ask them how they wish to participate. Need to create relationships. Pete will check with Georgy to see if our contact list is available.

Forest Service Partnership

Goal 1: FOTNF is recognized by the Tonto as a significant partner in successful development and accomplishment of resource management projects

Actions - Years 1 and 2

- As a minimum, meet at least annually with District Rangers and/or his/her staff
 - Assigned to: President & Executive Director; all board members may participate
- Meet regularly with FLT and Partnership Coordinator
 - Assigned to: President and/or Executive Director
- Keep up to date and support the Tonto in its strategic plan
 - Assigned to: President and/or Executive Director

The above items have been accomplished. Communication is getting stronger. Will continue to maintain these relationships. However, we need to expand beyond support of just 1-2 Districts.

Programs

Goal 1: Increase public understanding of natural and cultural resources, and opportunities to assist in their management, within communities that surround the Tonto National Forest

Actions - Year 1:

- Sponsor at least 2 community outreach events per year - Assigned to: Outreach/Education Committee
 - Did open house at Sears-Kay and participated In Earth Day booth.
- Participate in a minimum of 4 other sponsored conservation events
 - Assigned to: Outreach/Education Committee to delegate

- Develop and maintain relationships with other nonprofit/volunteer organizations

These things are being done and should roll over to any new plans.

Goal 2: Increase range of operations across the Forest

Actions - Year 1:

- Identify for implementation projects on Cave Creek, Mesa and Payson Ranger Districts
Assigned to: Natural and Cultural Resource, and Recreation Committees

Scott has been working with the Payson District on the Shoo Fly project. And Trent is doing some work there on water sourcing inventory. Goal is to expand beyond Mesa..

Year 2:

- Identify for implementation projects on all 6 ranger districts
Assigned to: Natural and Cultural Resource and Recreation Committees
Will roll over to upcoming years as our capabilities expand.
- Build membership and volunteer participation across the Forest
Assigned to: Membership Committee

Fundraising

Goal 1: Secure operational budget to support paid staff independent of Forest Service funding

Actions - Year 1:

- Secure permanent sources of income and/or grants to be able to pay a part-time staff.

The question was raised by Susan as to who is responsible for fundraising. May need to have a support person to focus on fundraising.

Note: Overall discussion on future direction took place at this portion of the meeting -

- Need to decide if this is still the direction we should take. Question raised by Brian as to whether we need a part time Executive Director or hire, for example, a media person. Urb asked whether this is different from what had been previously discussed relative to having a part time volunteer. Patti said we were going to recruit a volunteer to handle the list of duties, which had been sent around for review.
- Don said we should be looking at the job description of the Exec Dir duties, not just for someone to answer emails and simple tasks.
- Dayan said we may want someone to go to meetings to recruit and develop relationships. This person could be a point person for our organization. Dayan felt that, if we just want someone to answer emails, that is not an Executive Director level.
- Don said we should not be looking for someone just to just answer emails and associated admin work.
- Patti said there are two different things. One is task oriented in the short term. Other is higher level longer term. Don suggested Patti just handle the short-term need and get assistance as needed. The board should be involved in addressing the longer term requirements.
- Dayan envisioned Executive Director to do beyond what we now do. We currently are a working board. May need more If vision is to expand beyond what we are currently doing and to get more volunteers and fundraising. Executive Director, if needed, would develop expanded programs
- Scott felt things being discussed are already in the Exec Dir job description. Question of do we need to do more. Urb understood we were looking for someone (volunteer or paid) to offload some of Patti's admin work to allow her to spend time on higher level activities.
- Determined need for grant writer, which may or may not be paid.
- Brian said Patti doing fantastic job; however, may be helpful to have someone whose main job is to build the organization and capacity. Dayan raised question as to if Patti could be compensated for picking up additional work.

- Brian said we need to understand where we want to see ourselves in the next couple of years and 5 years out. If we grow, may need paid staff to allow for growth.
- Scott suggests what is being discussed should be part of the future strategic planning as opposed to what we have talked about.
- Brian suggested we talk among ourselves as to where we want to see the Friends in the future. This will tell us when and for what tasks additional staff is needed. Scott suggests planning session to address this. Don believes we need to go beyond where we now are to provide more support to the Forest Svc.
- Scott says building an active membership is a first step so that we have the capacity to do more. Means we have to work on outreach.
- Brian said he intended to get a jump on the Fall plan review and determine if we are on target.

Goal 2: Position FOTNF to attract and retain donors

Actions: - Year 1

- Create a fundraising committee
Assigned to: President, Past President
Susan says we also need a fundraising person. Patti and others are doing a lot this already; however need more to grow. Need someone to develop donor relationships. Fundraising responsibility now rests with the vice president, not the Exec Director.
- Actively seek grant funding to correspond with selected projects, organizational capacity, and operations
Assigned to: All board members
- Seek partnerships applying for grant proposals with other nonprofit/volunteer organizations
Assigned to: All board members
- Obtain Guidestar Bronze Star Status for FOTNF
Assigned to Executive Director with help from Finance Committee
Have achieved Gold Star. Will go for Platinum

Year 2:

- Find corporate sponsors to support FOTNF activities on a continuing basis
Assigned to: Fundraising committee
- Obtain Guidestar Gold Star Status for FOTNF
Assigned to: Executive Director with help from Finance Committee
Achieved Gold Star; going for Platinum
- Pursue listings with donation coordination organizations such as United Way
Assigned to: Finance Committee & Executive Director
- Cultivate relationships with donors
Assigned to: Finance Committee/other committee chairs as appropriate to donor interests

May need to create ad hoc group to address fundraising beyond what we have already done.

In summary will focus on membership and outreach to people who can assist us. We should be thinking about next few years to establish a plan for what is needed and how to achieve.

Brian reported on the Hi-Line Trail improvement project. We put money down to do archeological survey. Ready to do phase I which is trail building and trail naturalization from Pine to Washington Park. Will not have enough funding until Jan/Feb, 2022. Question of how Friends want to be involved. Arizona Trail Association has the lead working with the Payson Ranger District and other partners. Friends of the Tonto are monetary partners. We may not be able to do much outside of providing volunteers and perhaps some archeological support. Scott will talk to the Payson District about specifically what type of archeological/cultural surveys and monitoring are required on the highline project, and how Friends can assist.

Financial Report – (While not covered in the meeting, Susan uploaded detailed financial information to Google Drive in advance of meeting. Info is summarized below.)

Cash & Investments:

\$ 6,723.73. Checking

23,290.43 Money Market account

20,261.74 CD's (There are three CD's – One, was recently reinvested)

\$50,275.90 Total cash & investments of which \$32,234.95 is unrestricted

Revenue: (4/25/21 to 5/22/21)

\$ 250.00 Donation SRP match for Photopoint volunteers

137.00 Clothing orders checks undeposited

2.00 Paypal Giving Fund

35.00 Membership dues

7.92 Interest & dividends

\$ 431.92 Total Revenue

Expenses: (4/25/21 to 5/22/21)

\$ 1.07 Paypal fees

651.00 Insurance – General liability

309.00 Insurance – Volunteers

45.67 Storage unit rental

130.19 Riparian Photopoint Expense – Dropbox subscription

22.50 Riparian Photopoint Expense - Postage

53.11 Water Source Inventory CB Radio batteries & case

10.00 Water Source Inventory – Facebook ad

325.80 Invasive plant control – ArcGIS subscription

\$ 1548.34 Total Expenses

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(\$ 753.81) Net Income (loss) for period of 4/24/21 to 5/22/21

Also, Susan said the Desperados have indicated they wish to be involved in trail maintenance in Cave Creek District. Susan and Patti will meet with the Forest Service on Wed to discuss alternatives. Desperados will form a partnership to work towards signage or clearing of established hiking trails.

Milkweed – Susan

- Has two new interested volunteers, one of whom has an agricultural background

Membership Committee Report – (Report sent by Pete prior to meeting)

- 35 individual members, 19 families, 1 organization = 55 total
- 1 new family membership

Adjourn 8:00pm

Submitted by: Urb Weidner