



**Rocky Mountain Conservancy
Board of Directors' Meeting Minutes
October 1, 2021
Via Zoom Video Conference**

Board Members: Brian Ross, Christina Kraft, Walt Borneman, Tim Davis, Lynne Geweke, Jan Robertson, Charles Cofas, Katherine Dines, Joel Mayo, Doug Campbell, Zac Wiebe, Jim Pickering
Staff: Estee Rivera Murdock, Carolyn Carlson, Jess Willuweit, Michael Allen, Ian Stafford, Lisa Oakley
National Park Service Guests: Darla Sidles, Superintendent & Caleb Waters, Chief of Facilities & Rich Fedorchak, retired Chief of Interpretation
Absent: Howdy Fry

Brian Ross made an adjustment to the meeting agenda

- Seeing as though Howdy Fry is not able to attend this meeting – Brian wants to move the Investment Committee Update to the Executive Session at the end.

Call to Order – 9:07 AM

Approval of the Board Meeting Minutes – June 11, 2021

- Motion – To approve prior meeting minutes with no questions or corrections
 - **Motion:** Timothy Davis, Second – Katherine Dines, no objections, no abstentions, unanimously approved

Review of Q1 2021 Financials:

- Operations & Finance Committee – **Christina Kraft** presented on:
 - Highlights
 - Despite COVID-19, RMC doing very well
 - Financials trending positively – nice revenue increase in organization
 - Net gain of \$700K so far in 2021
 - YTD Product Sales at \$3.8M compared to almost \$2.9M in 2019
 - PPP loan anticipated to be forgiven, just waiting on final confirmation
 - Investment portfolio at about \$13.5M
 - Inventory is remaining consistent – doing our best to stay in front of sourcing/inventory challenges
 - Organizational net worth up at \$22M - \$23M once PPP loan is forgiven

Philanthropy Committee Report:

- Philanthropy Committee – **Katherine Dines** presented on:
 - Reviewed 2021 Philanthropy Plan Initiatives
 - Earned Media – major news coverage (i.e.: FOX News, Local Paper) for SARS Vehicle Donation Campaign
 - Raised nearly \$70K for SAR Vehicle
 - Colorado Gives Day on 12/7/21 – Board Members encouraged to donate through the website
 - Focus on major donor stewardship
 - Reactivate major donors
 - Member rate seems low, but anticipate this to climb through remainder of 2021 with upcoming Membership campaign running from Mid-Oct – Dec 2021
 - YTD Gross Membership total is \$118K down so far from the projected \$157K goal
 - Develop, Lead, Nurture campaign where tiers are synergistic between donors, members, park volunteers
 - Due to COVID, the Legacy Luncheon planned for Sept 30th has been postponed until May 2022
 - Mention of thanks to Grant family for their generous legacy of multigenerational donations

- In process of obtaining a quote from sculptors to have our logo in bronze
- Recognizing current and former board members with a personal letter and gift in recognition of supporting donation efforts
- West side donor event postponed until 10-22-21
- Coordinating rollout of Annual Appeal Letter print and mail pieces in November 2021 and then on quarterly basis
- Philanthropy Committee – **Walt Borneman** presented on:
 - Reviewed 2021 Philanthropy Donors & Gifts
 - 3 major sources of income; Retail, Endowment withdrawals and Philanthropy (donations)
 - YTD donations & license plates at \$805k, just short of the 2021 goal of \$1.25M
 - Mention of thanks for estate and land gifts; Felsenberg, Cooper, McDevitt, and Grant
 - Hosted Dr. Richard Hoffman for a Long Peak hike. He has supported the Longs Peak trail project for the past 2 years and has pledged continuing support for the project
 - Special Initiatives include general solicitation, major donors, and Lead & Nurture campaign – Every donor is important!
 - Colorado Gives Day will have a dashboard showing numbers at next board meeting in 2022
 - Acknowledgement of Timed Entry issues – donor complaints and potential hardships to Philanthropic Team. Unsure yet of how this will play out, but the team is aware an “on it” as best as possible
 - Impact of Fires (Cameron Peak and East Troublesome) at end of 2020; donors gave over \$157k towards the newly created Fire Restoration Fund. YTD in 2021, donations total over \$62k for this Fire Restoration Fund
 - Acknowledgement of great success with project specific campaigns – Bear Boxes, SAR Vehicle and Fire Restoration
 - Kudos to Michael Allen and his team, as they have done a fantastic job
 - Looking to target more families to donate, like the 46 very important family donors on record with RMC
 - Madison Abbott hired on as newest Donor Services Associate

Rocky Mountain National Park Reports:

- RMNP Chief of Facilities – **Caleb Waters** presented on:
 - Shadow Mountain Fire Lookout Project Details
 - Task Order Awarded for design development to implement the desired future conditions in Nov 2021
 - Final construction drawings/contracting package completed in October 2022
 - Pursue State Historical Funding/RMC donations/NPS funding for 2024/2025 construction
 - Desired future condition will be 3 levels – first 2 levels will be for storage, the 3rd level will be rehabilitated for RMNP use and the observation deck above will be revamped for public.
 - Wood components are failing; desired preservation includes steel components wrapped in wood to reduce future maintenance while keeping cosmetic look
 - Lightning mitigation: The structure will be equipped with a Lightning Protection System to include grounding the building, which will be address in future proposals/drawings
 - Presents logistics complexity; this is a wilderness area – to get scaffolding and materials into the area may present a challenge as well as potential higher costs. Use of pack animals or even helicopter may be needed. More on this to come later
 - Cascade Cottages Project Details
 - Task Order Awarded for schematic design, development, and construction drawings in Nov 2021
 - Final construction drawing/contracting package completed in Oct 2022
 - Pursue funding donations/options through RMC and NPs for 2024/2025 construction
 - Desired future construction to be somewhere between developed and rustic– details still being worked out (paved or not, port-a-potty or plumbing, etc.)
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 - Anticipation of demolition of existing building and construction of a new administrative campground
 - Procurement from RMC for this project would be quicker and more convenient than through a federal contract mechanism
 - Reiteration from Brian that this was the last privately owned property and that it was important for RMNP/RMC to purchase it to eliminate the potential for it to be purchased and developed commercially.
 - Other Various Large Park Project Highlights
 - Rehabilitate East Side Water Treatment System; water lines, testing, etc.

- Moraine Park Campground; construction estimated for 2023. Buildings still being assessed. Estimated at a \$20M project
 - Fall River Entrance Station; construction estimated to begin April-June 2022. To include 1 exit lane, 3 new booth lanes and 1 additional fast pass lane as well as a remittance office and water system
 - RMNP seeking funding to rebuild 25 beds lost in the East Troublesome fire in 2020. To include housing unit(s), roads, wastewater system, etc.
 - Historic Barn Restoration/Rebuild
 - Grand Lake Entrance Station
 - Kawuneeche Visitor Center Remodel to Admin/VC
 - William Allen White Cabin Renovation/Assessments
- RMNP Superintendent – **Darla Sidles** presented on:
 - Thanked Board and RMC Staff for their ongoing professionalism. Proud of their partnership with RMC
 - Timed entry going well overall - scheduled to end on Oct 11, 2021
 - Completing After Action Review over the next few weeks regarding Timed Entry System; lessons learned, adaptation of program, challenges for potential new year, etc. lessons learned report to be sent out by Nov 2021
 - Timed entry had roughly 25% no show rate. RMNP overcompensated based on the trend and increased 5pm permits to help even this out – worked well.
 - Chief of Interpretation offer extended; pending acceptance. Top 2 candidates are exceptional. Name(s) to be disclosed at a later time
 - Kathy Brazelton is acting Chief of Interpretation, until estimated Jan 2022 timeframe
 - NEPA/Data Gaps being researched, and a plan is being drafted
 - Visitation to RMNP only down 7% from 2019 with implementation of timed entry and other COVID guidelines
 - Projection for fall/winter of 2021 is to be well over 2019 numbers, if no timed entry system
 - COVID guidance from Park that all Park Staff and Partners are to be fully vaccinated by Nov 22, 2021 (reasonable accommodations to be considered). Unsure at this point how this will affect Volunteers. More on this to come later.
 - Fire recovery project; Confirmation that RMNP was able to obtain funding for estimated \$50M
 - Trails recovery/restoration; 54 miles of trail restored, 5k trees cleared, 18 bridges constructed and restored, numerous signs and archaeological compliance maintained.
 - Thanked Chris Wenzel for exemplary retail merchandising in Rocky nature stores
 - Diversity Intern Cohort Coordinator, Steven Ochoa
 - Increase diversity and intern collaboration
 - Merges training, consistency, and job placement opportunities
 - Short term position with RMC, will become NPS hire after 1 year using federal base funds

Action Items:

- 2022 Park Project Funding & Aid Funding – **Estee Rivera** presented on:
 - Reviewed spreadsheet containing each of the forty-three (43) 2022 RMNP asks
 - Total 2022 Request total: \$1,665,480
 - Total 2022 Aid Request recommendation – 7 items: \$109,540
 - On behalf of Leadership Team, Darla Sidles requests that Board approve all asks
 - Board asks for a report back of what funding was actually utilized by Park, since Park does not use all of what is approved.
 - **Motion:** To approve the entire 2022 Park Request Total of \$1,665,480
 - Motion – Jan Robertson, Second – Katherine Dines, no objections, no abstentions, unanimously approved

Ad Hoc Committee Reports:

- Facilities Committee – **Charles Cofas** presented on:
 - Field Institute: Building painted
 - Exploring ideas with Education Committee on options for utilizing building
 - Grant Property: workforce housing/fellows & RMNP needs
 - Kudos to Carolyn for her demolition project work at Grant property
 - Land valued at \$146K (demolished cabins an additional \$240K)
 - Selected Steve Lane of Basis Architecture to design workforce housing

- 4 - 1300 sq ft units (3-4 bedrooms/each), accommodating minimum of 12 up to maximum of 32 tenants
- Units to be ADA compliant
- Grant family has 1st right of refusal upon any future sale of property
- Grant family pleased with design of thus far
- Units would have separate utility metering
- Most units would be rented seasonally but others may be year-round
- Estimating \$1.2M to build with 15-18 month timetable
- Brian Ross stated reasons why developing this property was important to RMC:
 - For past 7 years identified that we are unable to fulfill our mission without adequate housing
 - Ethically owe it to the Grant family to build housing as was the intent of their generous gift
- Thank you to Charles Cofas for countless hours championing this project
- Preliminary design application process scheduled for Feb 2022. Anticipated start of construction in May 2022
- Brian Ross stated that a special Board Meeting will be called when the detailed presentation for this project is available, in order to proceed

Education Committee Report:

- Education Committee Guest Speaker – **Rick Fedorchak** presented on:
 - RMC is doing revisioning of Education Program
 - Other organizations are doing the same
 - Other organizations have expressed interest in seeing final report from RMC
 - Opened up interesting communication channels, in that we are not alone in this
- Education Committee – **Jim Pickering** presented on:
 - Report creation and rollout
 - Extremely detailed working document
 - In Feb 2022 budget meeting, draft of positions, salaries, revenue generated will be done (answers to What, How and Why questions)
 - Proposes classes to be held in Field Institute building
 - Proposal to offer “higher end” classes, charge handsomely for these classes, reaching certain crowds then using proceeds to subsidize outreach programs for youth
 - Wants to get away from offering numerous “everyday” classes, as it detracts from the specialness of program and will lose appeal
 - Kudos to Jim for such an amazing report and jumping off point
 - Estee will draft up job description(s) and salary ranges for positions
 - Suggestion from Lynne to make this report into a format that can be distributed publicly, as other companies were interested in seeing it
 - **Motion:** To accept and receive this report with thanks from Jim as a great reference and working document
 - Motion – Walter Borneman, Second – Katherine Dines, no objections, no abstentions, unanimously approved to adopt the report
- Message from the President – **Brian Ross** presented on:
 - Recognition of 4 people on outstanding work and efforts
 - Katherine Dines – In regard to fire impacts on West Side of Park. Applaud efforts regarding catering, opening home for event, assisting with coordination of party rental supplies, etc.
 - Howdy Fry – In regard to fire impacts on West Side of Park. Applaud efforts in graciously opening his rolodex and making calls getting folks on the phone.
 - Jim Pickering – Leading team in generating the Educational Report. Making calls, doing research, and petting together a fantastic report
 - Charles Cofas – Going above and beyond in his analysis and managing of the Grant property. Demonstrating exceptional patience and detailed work in execution in his handling of this project. He receives the “Gold Star”!
 - Board Recruitment
 - Enlisted the Executive Committee in a strategic plan to recruit new members, with a focus on diverse members.

- Spoke with an influential female Hispanic leader, in the state about joining the Board of Directors.
- In the process of speaking with a woman who is highly regarded in the Estes Park community about joining the Board of Directors. Anticipate being able to vote on this person in February 2022.
- Rich Fedorchak has been approached about joining the Board of Directors. Rich is a nationally recognized talent and is such an asset to the RMC team. Term would begin in Feb 2022.
 - **Motion:** To accept Rick Fedorchak onto the RMC Board of Directors
 - Motion – Charles Cofas, Second – Doug Campbell, no objections, no abstentions, unanimously approved to accept Rick on to the Board of Directors

RMC Staff & Executive Director Reports:

(Due to time constraints, Estee Rivera presented quickly on all department updates)

- Administration – **Estee Rivera** for **Carolyn Carlson** presented on:
 - Completion of an RMC website Board Portal to allow board members easy access to dashboards, financials, meeting minutes, and more
 - Successful inter-departmental AmeriCorps program administration
 - HR Coordinator, Lisa Oakley hired, trained, and getting up to speed with projects
 - PPP loan 2 anticipated to be forgiven; Application submitted, awaiting final decision
- Stewardship/Conservation Corps – **Estee Rivera** for **Ian Stafford** presented on:
 - Corps is our signature program – thank you for strong work surrounding this
 - 40 RMCCC participants (7 leaders/33 crew members)
 - 5 crews in USDAFS/3 crews in RMNP; 2022 is looking to host the largest crews to-date
 - First season hosting a Rocky Fire Corps working on weather proofing trails, facilities improvements, and other restoration in wildfire burn areas. Ideal gateway position to NPS Fire Crew positions.
 - Ian involved with Government work and Public Policy
- Retail – **Estee Rivera** for **Chris Wenzel** presented on:
 - Doing best to stay ahead of inventory challenges. Product ordering 8-12 months out. Trying to keep VCs shelves stocked
 - FRVC construction anticipation
 - KVC restructure and construction anticipation
 - Closures/hours modifications unknown still for Moraine Park VC
 - Staff challenges; Warehouse Mgr. (vacant), Outlets Mgr. (vacant through 2021) and being managed inhouse by Chris W, many clerk positions vacant as we receive pushback on mask mandate
 - Kudos from Board Members to Chris SW and Chris W for their resilience and perseverance through these challenges!
- Philanthropy – **Estee Rivera** for **Michael Allen** presented on:
 - SAR Outreach Program a success – Raised \$75K with over 263 donations
 - Long term supporter for Longs Peak, Dr. Hoffman with \$50K donation this year. Hosted on Longs Peak hike with Walt and Estee
 - 90 new member joins
 - Focus on Develop, Lead, Nurture campaign
 - Received an estate gift (unknown amount) from Debra Adams of Ohio. Left 1/3 of her Estate to RMC. More to come on this
 - Michael is working on a small estate gift. No details from him except that his is handling some paperwork for it on 10/1. More to come on this
- Executive Director's Report – **Estee Rivera Murdock** presented on:
 - Vaccine Update; RMNP staff, RMC staff, Fellows and Corps members all required to be fully vaccinated in 2022
 - No NPS Director as of yet. Submitted a letter of approval for candidate, but nothing announced to-date
 - Lands related Projects Update
 - Although not formal at this time, a homeowner whose buildings were lost on the West side of the park is looking to see their land. We are looking into this as a potential buy
 - On the East side of the park, RMC is looking more at a sale/gift combo. Family is looking to see their 4 acre property with a cabin on it. The property (structure included) is valued at ~\$470K. Sale price is \$100K. Multi-family members own this property. If RMNP isn't interested in it, they want to list it to sell ASAP. Urgency from family to try to close this deal by the end of 2021 (for tax purposes).

- Proposal to have either Facility or Executive Committee oversee this and email a vote when all pieces are in place to act in place of the Board
- RMC will be hosting 2 Winter Fellows to assist with social media, retail, and park interpretation. Jacob Mendiola to start on 10/17/21 and Erin Tansimore to start 1/3/22.
- KVC – redesign of learning exhibits inside to more accurately capture and relay history of tribes. Retail footprint growing
- BMVC – Fully operational. Retail center open
- Message from the President – **Brian Ross**:
 - No doubt this has been a stressful week for our Financial and IT Infrastructure team, however rest assured that we appreciate everything being done and that Carolyn and Jess have the 100% support of the Board behind them
 - **Motion:** Dismiss staff and move into Executive Session
 - Motion – Brian Ross, Second – Zachary Wiebe, no objections, no abstentions, unanimously approved to dismiss staff and move into the Executive Session

Meeting Adjourned: 12:57 PM

Upcoming 2022 Board Meetings:

February 11, 2022 ; June 24, 2022 ; October 14, 2022