



**Rocky Mountain Conservancy
Board of Directors' Meeting Minutes
February 11, 2022
Via Zoom Video Conference**

Board Members: Brian Ross, Howdy Fry, Christina Kraft, Walt Borneman, Jim Pickering, Tim Davis, Zac Wiebe, Rich Fedorchak, Charles Cofas, Katherine Dines, Lynne Geweke, Joel Mayo, Jan Robertson, Kim Skyelander, Claudine Perrault

Staff: Estee Rivera Murdock, Carolyn Carlson, Jess Willuweit, Chris Wenzel, Michael Allen, Ian Stafford, Lisa Oakley

National Park Service Guests: Koren Nydick, Program Lead for Resource Management & Kim Swift, Program Lead for Interpretation and Education

Absent: None

Call to Order – 9:05 AM

Approval of the Board Meeting Minutes – October 1, 2021

- Motion – To approve prior meeting minutes
 - **Motion:** Katherine Dines, Second – Tim Davis, no objections, no abstentions, unanimously approved

Approval of Committee Assignments, Renewal of Terms and Officers

- Motion – To approve Committee Assignments as noted
 - **Motion:** Katherine Dines, Second – Zac Wiebe, no objections, no abstentions, unanimously approved
- Motion – To renew 3-year terms of board members Katherine Dines and Howdy Fry (for fourth terms), and Walt Borneman, Christina Kraft and Kim Skyelander (for second terms)
 - **Motion:** Jan Robertson, Second – Rich Fedorchak, no objections, no abstentions, unanimously approved
- Motion – To renew officer terms of Brian Ross (President), Howdy Fry (Vice President), Christina Kraft (Treasurer) and Walt Borneman (Secretary).
 - **Motion:** Charles Cofas, Second – Lynne Geweke, no objections, no abstentions, unanimously approved

Review of 2021 Year-End Financials:

- Operations & Finance Committee – **Christina Kraft** presented on:
 - 2021 Highlights
 - Retail revenues set new record over \$5M in 2021
 - Operational net gain of \$1.5M in 2021
 - Consolidated activities reflected \$3.4M net gain
 - Net gain of \$3.4M in 2021 over 2020, after projecting a loss of \$1M
 - 2021 Summary of Cash Flow
 - \$1.3M 2021 beginning balance
 - \$2.5M 2021 ending balance. Better position due to \$274K PPP loan forgiveness, administrative transfers on \$614K estate gifts
 - Both PPP Loans in 2021 forgiven
 - Huge thanks to Jess & Carolyn for frequent and timely reporting of finances

2022 Budget:

- 2022 Operating and Projects Budgets – **Estee Rivera Murdock** presented on:
 - Highlights of 2022 Operating Budget
 - RMNP sales budgeted down by 15% due to FRVC entrance closure due to construction and improvements, as well as the uncertainty of operations at the Moraine Park Discovery Center. Footprint in stores to be reduced to more normal square footage post-pandemic.
 - Outlet Stores budgeted completely flat
 - FI not budgeted for, as this will have a new home in 2022
 - Several open positions: Outlets Coordinator, Retail Manager and Warehouse Manager, FI Director and Marketing Assistant
 - Clerk compensation increase of \$1.50-\$2.00/hr.
 - 3% COLA increase and/or merit & performance increases for RMC Staff
 - Proposed budget has us a net gain of \$149K
 - Highlights of 2022 Projects Budget
 - \$1.6M requested for RMNP
 - Largest cost of \$614K is for Conservation Corps. Corps increasing in size with new associate position included
 - RMC providing a total of \$2.8M to RMNP and other similar lands projects
 - Release \$1.45M from restrictions to fund these projects
 - 2021 Aid Award
 - \$75,700 Aid Award for non-RMNP retail outlets

Approval of the 2022 Operating and Projects Budgets

- Motion – To approve 2022 Operating and Projects Budgets as presented here and as recommended by the Ops/Fin Committee
 - **Motion:** Kim Skylander, Second – Jan Robertson, no objections, no abstentions, unanimously approved
- Motion – To approve a 2021 Aid Award for non-RMNP retail outlets of \$75,700
 - **Motion:** Charles Cofas, Second – Walt Borneman, no objections, no abstentions, unanimously approved

• Philanthropy Committee Report:

- Philanthropy Committee – **Walt Borneman** presented on:
 - 2022 total fundraising goal of \$2M is up 10% from 2021 total of \$1.9M
 - Donor Retention up 2% from 2020 to 2021
 - Membership Retention steadily increased 10% year over year from 2019-2021
- 2022 Plan
 - Increase Membership Retention by 20%
 - Launch campaign to support Grant Property Construction
 - Focus on Major-Donor Stewardship
 - Develop Lead – Nurture campaign where tiers are synergistic between donors, members, park volunteers
 - Increase exposure through various media channels and marketing
 - Two project-specific fundraising campaigns in the range of \$50K-\$75K each
 - Reactivate past Major Donors

• Investment Committee Report:

- Investment Committee - **Howdy Fry** presented on:
 - Send out RFP for new manager of Endowment funds. Intends to submit a recommendation to the Board in the 2022 Summer Board Meeting
 - Investments have been a bright spot: In 2018, our holdings were around \$9.6M and grew to almost \$12.5M in 2021, which also includes a \$500K distribution.
 - 12.2% average investment return for 2021

Rocky Mountain National Park Reports:

- RMNP Program Lead for Resource Management – **Koren Nydick** presented on:
 - RMC Funds supporting numerous projects and studies, highlighting Post -Fire Recovery & Studies, Tribal Consultation & Indigenous Connections project, KVC Ecosystem Restoration Collaboration and Community Science/Research Webinars.
 - KVC Ecosystem Restoration Collaboration
 - ❖ Willows dying, vegetation shifting to dryland
 - ❖ Without willows, no beaver. Water table drops, banks erode. Loss of Riparian Ecosystem
 - ❖ Herbivory is the main factor for reducing willow
 - ❖ Beaver are the ecosystem engineers and are slowly coming back to enclosures. Their return buffers drought, floods, and wildfire.
 - ❖ Desired future conditions are improved watershed health by restoring Willow-Beaver Riparian Wetlands
 - ❖ Progress to date: Raised \$163K for Restoration Assessment (\$30K from RMC), NPS team set up preparing for compliance and detailed design, \$60K more from RMC (CR survey) and KVERC preparing to hire grant writer
 - Post-Fire Recovery
 - ❖ Replacement of burned buildings, Repair of trails and wilderness campsites, assessment and protection of archeological sites, treatment of exotic plants and restoration of limber pine and wetland vegetation
 - ❖ Studies include Forest recovery of aspen, stream and lake water quality, amphibians, trout and food-webs and moose movement
 - Science Behind the Scenery – Webinar Series
 - ❖ 5 separate webinars covering topics relating to Species adapting to climate change, Restoring Riparian Processes, Understanding Forests and Fires, and Visitation impacts on Natural Resources
- RMNP Program Lead for Interpretation and Education – **Kim Swift** presented on:
 - Rocky Projects with RMC Funding: Indigenous Connections Exhibit - \$25K, Graphic Design Work - \$19K and KVC Exhibits - \$297K
 - Indigenous Connection Project
 - ❖ Working with 3 tribes on Histories and Resource Summaries to be included with pictures and stories in the exhibits displayed in BVC and FRVC
 - Graphic Design Work
 - ❖ Aubry Andreas, Graphic Designer, producing fantastic waysides and projects
 - KVC Exhibits
 - ❖ To include interactive exhibits, stories, placards, and photos of Tribal Viewpoints and Histories
- **Facilities Committee Report:**
 - Facilities Committee – **Charles Cofas** presented on:
 - Grant Property cleared and developable
 - ❖ Met with architect, Steve Lane. Phase 1 with Larimer County - Oct/Nov
 - ❖ Submit application docs Dec. County responded with okay for multi-family zoning. 2 duplexes, each with 4 bdrms, 2 baths, living room, dining area, kitchen, and deck
 - ❖ International zoning load more stringent. Must factor in wind, vehicle charging stations, sprinkler systems, etc.
 - ❖ Significant cost impact expected with storm water culvert, also required.
 - ❖ Target completion is May 2023 but delays from County are pushing out this deadline
 - ❖ Working with Philanthropy for fundraising campaign. Detailed presentation to Board to come when all info is gathered
 - FI is under contract for sale. Needs to be re-zoned. Will know in April if purchase goes through in May 2022
 - Vance Brand land transfer to the park is done deal. Formal press release to come soon
 - Pierce-Young Property
 - ❖ Appraisal done in early 2022 – property to be used for housing
 - ❖ Eventually demolish buildings and donate land to park
 - ❖ Intention is to have staff there by Summer of 2022

- **Education Committee Report:**

- Education Committee – **Jim Pickering** and **Kim Skyelander** presented on:
 - Next Education Committee meeting to come in next 2-3 weeks
 - Education Director anticipated to start in Q2 2022 once office space is available
 - ❖ Once timeline is narrowed down, a presentation will be developed for RMC Board
 - Field Institute 2.0
 - ❖ Reset to education model
 - ❖ Prioritize new and all audiences
 - ❖ Must dovetail decisions with facilities decisions
 - ❖ Make blueprint in early 2022 for 2022 season

- **RMC Staff & Executive Director Reports:**

Note: Due to time constraints, Estee Rivera presented quickly on all department updates

- **Philanthropy – Michael Allen:**
 - \$2.6M in 2021 included \$391K Felsenberg Estate gift and \$224K William Grant Estate gift
 - \$117K Colorado Gives Day including \$10K earned that day on our RMC website
 - Over 3K active memberships in 2021, up by 15% from last year
 - Held RMC holiday celebration with 150 attendees, new format spread out over 2 days for covid safety
 - Successful SAR Campaign in 2021, raising all funds necessary
 - Emily Luth, Donor Services Manager, departed RMC in December 2021
- **Retail/Publications – Estee Rivera Murdock** presented on:
 - Park still deciding what staffing looks like at VCs.
 - Work with Park Operations to look at what MPVC, KVC and FRVC will look like in 2022. MPVC is a Conservancy store right now without NPS presence.
 - Retail Manager position offered – announcement to come once position is accepted.
 - Optimistic for 2022 – Huge uptick in online/website orders in early 2020 – consistently stayed at a higher level
- **Administration– Carolyn Carlson** presented on:
 - Audit field work to start 3/15/22
 - Firewall system to be replaced for all VCs and Q48
 - Desktop systems have fallen out of warranty – working on getting all up to date/converted.
 - Employee handbook now up to date with all Colorado laws – to be approved by Exec Committee early Mar 2022
 - Cybersecurity – strategic planning for 1 year ahead. Discuss options, implementation, and budget for rollout
- **Stewardship Report – Ian Stafford** presented on:
 - FI Manager hired in 2022 – Nathan Morrow – to assist with hiring of RMCC members and HS Program facilitation
 - In process of hiring 50+ AmeriCorps Members for Conservation Corps.
 - ❖ 89 applicants thus far. 15-20% did not respond last year after applying. 2022 has a much better return rate
 - ❖ Uniqueness of program and benefits makes it enticing and attractive to applicants
 - ❖ HS Program has 15 applicants thus far
 - ❖ 6 of 9 Crew Leaders have been hired thus far
 - ❖ Press release highlighting 2021 coming soon
- **Executive Director’s Report – Estee Rivera Murdock** presented on:
 - RMC has remained strong and focused on growth throughout pandemic
 - Lots of hiring: 3 fellows, 3 RMCCC Field Coordinators, and 1 RMCCC manager, Retail manager, Warehouse manager, Onsite Retail Coordinator, Donor Services Manager, and several task agreement employees
 - RMCCC looking at robust season with USDAFS and Rocky wanting full corps crews. Largest to-date, in fact
 - 2023 bylaws to be redone
- **Motion – Dismiss staff and move into Executive Session**
Motion – Jan Robertson, Second – Katherine Dines, no objections, no abstentions, unanimously approved

Meeting Adjourned: 12:20pm

Upcoming Board Meetings:

June 24, 2022 – In-Person at Ridgeline Hotel, Estes Park

October 14, 2022 – In-Person in Grand Lake, CO