



American Trail
Running Association

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ATRA Conference Call Meeting – Tuesday, November 10, 2015

Called to order at 6:02 PM MST

Attendance: (quorum equals officers (4) +1)

Andy Ames, Danelle Ballengee, Richard Bolt, Adam Chase, Nancy Hobbs, Ellen Miller, Eve Mills, Bryon Powell, Tom Sobal, Ian Torrence

Elections of officers: President – Adam; VP – Ellen - Danelle motion to approve second Bryon, all in favor. Treasurer – Eve; motion to approve Ellen, Adam second, all in favor. Although Susan Farago (our secretary) was not on the call, she indicated she would be interested to continue and was nominated by Adam, Ellen second, all in favor pending Susan accepting the spot.

Trail Running Conference Report – Nancy/Richard/Eve

Director of the conference, Terry Chiplin, on a call with Nancy and Richard earlier today, indicated that funds were raised through the ATRA prize draw and ticket sales resulting in \$1050 to ATRA. Terry will present the check to

Adam on Thursday, November 13, in Boulder. Richard reported that the conference was a little bigger and more professional this year; ATRA presence was very good. There has been confusion as to the branding. For 2016, the goal is to build a stronger brand entity and singular focus without blurring Estes Trail Ascent/Trail Race. The current website is confusing – Estes Trail Ascent. As such, branding will be changed to US Trail Running Conference and the new URL has been purchased (in fact at this year's conference Terry secured URL). Terry has been very open to feedback to shape and grow the conference. Suggested we set clear lines as what the role of ATRA is related to the conference "partnership." Nancy will work to delineate this for better understanding moving forward.

Calendar – in the ATRA online calendar there are more than 6000 records. In 2014 we had just over 2,900 confirmed event dates and Nancy and Richard have been updating diligently the past week and there are nearly 3,000 confirmed event dates for 2015. Next up, work on the 2016 calendar (many events delay setting their dates, we do have nearly 600 confirmed right now). There are sidebar banner ads, and page ads. There is a great search engine and search results have banner ads on individual event pages – OrthoLite our biggest financial partner shows up in multiple places on the website; IceBug on sidebar as switchback member (we also have ALTRA footwear and imATHLETE as Switchback members, and Acidotic Racing as a Steep and Rocky member. The larger giving corporate members receive now more benefit than is listed as we don't have the need to rotate (Switchback receive 4 months of ads and we will rotate as we get more of the higher-level members). As Richard says, we are under committing and over delivering right now.

Recruiting members – through in-person at events such as OR, Trail Conference, Western States; online; a suggestion to make members aware of greater membership level during the renewal process. Nancy sends out invoices one month in advance of renewal and does follow up renewal notices

and has been including an outline of benefits and for some, the higher level as was mentioned.

Other Partnerships – Nancy had a positive meeting with folks at IMBA last week. Discussed relationship between mtn bikers and trail runners – and thus, an opportunity to cross over and work together. IMBA has done so much ground work already in terms of trail building programs, work days, chapters throughout the US, etc. Tom – mtn bikers are often restricted to designated routes; in order for mtn bikes to use trails – need to have designated routes in many areas (parks, etc). Mountain biking has the most restrictive design parameters (as far as trail building). Can't really go XC on mountain bikes, trail runners and hikers can do this. Impetus to focus on creating trails – access. It was mentioned that access issues are easier in Europe (there are no issues – trails are open to all). Everyone on the call was very positive about working with IMBA in a partnership. Nancy will create a proposal and request feedback from the advisory board on what a partnership could include.

Facebook/Social media/Website updates – Richard

Website – more usage than ever before. Calendar is the most popular with 65% of traffic. One of the goals was to create a platform to provide more than just a calendar. We've been adding throughout the year various components. The biggest new item was "trail news." A blog, an area for press releases, content, stories, photos, etc. 10-12% of site traffic (traffic we didn't have before). All items are searchable and live forever. Also from enews – a teaser – to read more, generate traffic to the site. Social media site as well to drive traffic. This week we'll do 4-5 new stories, some weeks 1-3 new stories/posts. There are the standard and storied phrases...Motivation Monday...Trail Tuesday...Workout Wednesday (as examples). On the website, Richard has worked to develop new tools for trail runners – including the Trail Run Project which is included as a widget. About 2% of traffic (doesn't include the views

through the event page). The other is with Trail Shoe Finder - widget. All articles in Trail Times are posted in Trail News. Other items posted are sponsor announcements, member press releases, and relevant news from the trails. About .5% of our site traffic is from the Trail Shoe Finder widget. We plan to provide more tools for trail runners. On Social: We have Facebook, Google+, Twitter – all have been growing - 2700 on Twitter; 1200 on Google+, FB Group – 8000; FB page –nearing 4,000. Challenge with FB – their algorithms have changed over time. The reach is less organic and now more “paid” posts are required to get solid engagement. Our reach has been getting smaller, but our followers getting bigger. Explore for 2015 – is there value to do some paid FB posts. Experiment early in 2016 to see if it’s worthwhile. Engagement alone doesn’t necessarily get members. Engagement around specific offers to drive membership. Revenue stream potential. Good that we are increasing followers, but organic reach shrinks. Costs? (question from Ellen). Paid post cost depends on # followers – the more followers, the more it costs -- \$20 is starting level. On brand page – if we post – 110 of our 3900 saw post. Facebook decides what to put in the news feed – how high. Define audience to reach. How much would it cost for ad (Adam). We have different people on Facebook page and Facebook group. For the most part, people only see post in FB group – or you can be notified in our feed. Can you start/stop ads at any time (Ellen)? Richard – yes, doing a test in 2016. If we decide to spend \$300 - \$400 per month, we can decide how to distribute those dollars. Not a long-term commitment. Right now we are investing time to build brand awareness. If we are going to spend money on social, might be good to spend money on “paid search.” Of our site traffic, we only get about 8-10% from social, we get 55% of our site traffic from search (Google search, Bing search, or Yahoo). Might be better to spend money on paid search, not paid social. Looking to this in 2016.

Finances – Eve reported that we have switched over from Quicken to online QBooks. Some new categories have been created to better organize our finances. Eve and Nancy are working on the transition and Eve will prepare a

profit/loss statement to circulate to the board. The good news is that we are financially solvent and minding our expenses. We have approximately \$52,000 in our checking/money market combined.

Strategic Plan - Eve asked if we had a strategic plan. Something we have not focused energy on, but will do so in the coming year. Nancy will put together her thoughts for growth and direction for ATRA and share with the group for input. This dovetails into the role of the Advisory Board members. Nancy will provide a report with bullet points on ways advisors can assist with specific tasks for more productive involvement over the coming year. Nancy will send goals to the advisory board for review.

Other Business

ITRA/UTMB – Nancy asked Bryon if he had any insight or thoughts about the new trail definition within the IAAF, ITRA and UTMB relationship and how he saw the effects moving forward. Bryon said it is a huge deal in Europe as the European federations (ie: French), have more stake in trail – any change with oversight has a greater impact internationally. MUT would be the direct intermediary (as a USATF council), in the US, since ITRA is working toward being the governing body.

Skylrunning – Nancy distributed documents for review from the recent General Assembly meeting (October 16-17). If there are any questions, concerns, Nancy can take these to the ISF for response as ATRA is the federation member from the USA.

Google Trekker – Richard reported on a project – ie: *Expedition* of sorts – to image the Western States 100 Trail in its entirety. Richard submitted an

application to Google for the expedition and it was approved. After the imaging, we will be able to showcase the Google Trekker at the ATRA table at WS. Tom asked if anyone else is doing/using this. Richard reported that some organizations that have used the Trekker include the Florida tourist bureau (imaging all of Florida's beaches); a climb in Yosemite with Lynn Hill and Alex Hohnhold – on a vertical route in Yosemite. Tom – “It's the new foundation – people can experience things virtually at home, over the web.” Tom asked if there is a place on Google Earth talking about what they are doing with the Trekker suggesting that they should be promoting some of these projects and technology. One of the parts of the application process Richard went through was to indicate the pr plan. Richard proposed that ATRA work with respected media organization (Richard reached out to Megan Hicks, iRunFar at Moab this past weekend). Richard also reached out to Salomon to support, they are interested in the expedition. Google will provide PR support as well to amplify what we are doing. Everyone on the call was very excited about this project and gave thumbs up to Richard on his great work.

Next meeting – first quarter 2016

Motion to adjourn by Bryon, Adam second, all in favor 7:34PM MST.