

**American Trail Running Association
Meeting Minutes November 28, 2014
5:00PM MST – 5:53PM MST**

Attendance: Adam Chase, Eve Mills, Richard Bolt, Brandy Erholtz, Nancy Hobbs, Tom Sobal, Danelle Ballengee, Elliott Henry, Ellen Miller, Terry Chiplin, Ian Torrence

Finances: Treasurer Eve said income is up about \$24,000 over this time last year (a 75% increase), due to mountain running team income, donations, and membership. Expenses are well under control. Current total in accounts is \$43,000. Adam asked if part of the bump was due to attendance at Outdoor Retailer (OR). Richard reported that at OR, he had strong and positive feedback from his outreach to attendees, especially related to the preview of the new website. At OR, Richard said he had verbal commitments from companies such as Vasque, Hoka, Salomon at a greater level of membership beyond the single-track \$150 level. Once the new website is up and running, a follow up outreach will occur. Richard reported that one of the reasons income is up is the social media effort, which has grown over the past 18 months, and has made ATRA more visible. Adam added that ATRA is seen as a “go-to resource” for the sport. This is evidenced by media getting in touch with ATRA to provide statistics and talking points for articles about the sport. Additionally, ATRA is attractive for newbies getting into the sport.

Website and Social Media Updates: Followership is growing. After establishing a base of followers on Facebook, it is difficult to increase likes and followers without “paying for it” due to the algorithms. Incorporating Twitter and Google+ helps diversify and add more channels for the social media outreach resulting in added value. The goal is to drive content and maximize ad placements. Richard shared with the group that the website is done, and has been done for a while. The challenge has been to find a mechanism to update the calendar to the site. We are on our second automated tool to use and moving onto a third webhost for the upload. This is Blue Host and we are in Beta testing now and very close to the debut of the new site. The calendar has nearly 6000 records with upwards of 40 fields for each entry. A lot of data which has been collected since 1996. The current calendar on our website is truly special, but the new calendar features which will debut on the new site are incredible. Adam suggested that traffic to the new site should more than justify a \$20,000 - \$30,000 investment from an advertiser for the calendar pages.

ITRA and ATRA: Adam asked if Nancy had had any discussion with the International Trail Running Association (ITRA). Nancy and Richard had a call (Google Hangout), with one of the principles a few months ago where Nancy and Richard provided an overview of ATRA – the mission, how we were organized, our board composition, etc. Nancy was asked if she would consider being on the board of ITRA, but there has been no communication from ITRA since the initial call. Nancy did report that ITRA had made a presentation to the IAAF (and the WMRA and IAU) last January about getting “Trail” in the IAAF family (right now ultra and mountain are recognized by the IAAF, but not a separate segment of trail). There has been a question about

ITRA's mission as it appears to be an organization strictly related to UTMB and events that serve as feeder system to UTMB. The organization has been in existence for about two years. Nancy said that ITRA's president was in Monaco last January meeting with the IAAF, IAU, and WMRA. At that point the IAAF was receptive to trail being considered as another discipline within the IAAF family. Nancy will report if ITRA will again be in Monaco this January as Nancy attends the WMRA meetings mid-January.

Snowrunning/Snowshoeing: Richard reported that the discussions and outreach with the US Snowshoeing Association (USSSA) and USATF have been positive and ongoing for the past two years. Nancy and Richard have been moving forward with the premise to have snowrunning part of USATF's Mountain Ultra Trail Council. The goal is make this official next week during the Annual Meeting of USATF. There are already 12 individuals who have stated their interest in being part of a snowrunning committee. As USSSA is a for-profit, having a non-profit organization become the body for the sport is a positive direction. The 2015 USSSA Championships will be held in Eau Claire, WI, in March, and the 2016 site is to be announced at that time. The goal is that the 2016 championships would be under the umbrella of USATF's Mountain Ultra Trail Council.

USATF Notes: Nancy reported that she recently attended meetings in Indianapolis to get briefed in advance of the annual meeting about USATF's budget, direction, governance structure, and more. The budget has grown from 2013 (19 million) to 34 million in 2014. This growth is due to some restructuring in the national office of staff, additional sponsorship dollars, reduced costs for various services, investment income, and more. What this means for the Mountain Ultra Trail Council is additional dollars budgeted for operations and teams. What started nearly 20 years ago with \$125 budgeted for MUT, will grow to more than \$60,000 in 2015. This is a positive step forward and there is additional growth anticipated. Nancy, Richard, and Ellen will all attend the USATF annual meeting next week in Anaheim and report back to the ATRA board.

Trail Conference: Terry reported that 2014 was a successful year for the second annual conference. Held again at the Stanley Hotel in Estes Park, there was a 50% growth in attendance over year one. This is due in large part to Richard's efforts with social media, and ATRA's support through e-blasts, and promotion. The support of Richard, Nancy, and Eve on site was integral to the success according to Terry. The prize draw raised just over \$1000 for ATRA. There were three Live Google Hangouts, one each day of conference. There are some great opportunities to further expand in 2015. Surveys went out post conference and Terry will share results next week. This year fun runs with Altra, New Balance, and Hoka were added along with elite athletes such as Sage Canaday, Joseph Gray, Darcy Piceu, Nick Clark, and Krissy Moehl. The dates for 2015 are October 7-10, with a trail race anticipated for October 11 to be hosted by the Estes Park Running Club. Adam thought this would be a great addition to the conference program. An overview of conference, in year one there were two days; in 2014, three days with one day dedicated to trail race directors and two days to trail runners. For 2015, there will be an additional one-half day added for trail race directors resulting in a 3 ½ day conference.

The Running Event: Adam will attend the Running Event next week and suggested that this may be a better resource for us than OR and we should consider for 2016. Adam will speak with the organizers about including a trail session in 2016 sponsored/supported by ATRA. Adam felt that having a table at The Running Event (in Austin, TX) as well as circulating the event and meeting with shoe companies would be of great benefit. There are approximately 300 vendors to include specialty retailers and the flow and walkability of the show is much better than the huge complex of OR. The first two days of The Running Event target specialty retailers and include seminars. Then there are 1 ½ days of expo. Adam suggested that ATRA could provide fodder for the topic, "Where is trail running today." Adam will report back his findings after next week.

Elections will be held in December 2015 for ATRA. The next meeting of ATRA will be in first quarter, 2015.

Minutes provided by Nancy Hobbs, acting secretary for the call.