

Outdoor Recreation Council of Appalachia
Meeting Minutes
September 19, 2023, 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM

Prepared by Chloe Challacombe, chloe@orcaohio.com

ORCA Board Members Present: ORCA Chair City of Athens Mayor Steve Patterson, Athens County Commissioner Lenny Eliason, York Township Trustee Tim Warren, Buchtel Council Member Jay Kline, Jason Reed Wayne National Forest, Nelsonville Sheriff (Not Present: ORCA Vice-Chair Mayor Amy Renner)

Others Present: Jessie Powers, Delia Palmisano, Elle Dickerman, Zach Bihlman, Sky Pettey and Chloe Challacombe

Meeting Agenda

- Approve Agenda
 - Approve August 15, 2023 Meeting Minutes
 - Partner Updates
 - Legal Updates
 - ORCA Board Member Updates
 - Financial Report
 - Directors Report
 - Communications Report
 - Public Comments
 - Other
- Adjourn

Meeting Call to Order, 5:00 PM, Steve Patterson

(Motion to Approve Agenda: Lenny Eliason; Second: Tim Warren ;Approved)

(Motion to Approve Meeting Minutes from August 15th, 2023: Tim Warren Second: Jay Kline ;Approved)

Partner Updates:

NONE

Legal Updates:

NONE

Financial Report

- Jessie Powers, Please allow me to introduce our new ORCA Director of Finance, this is Zach Bihlman. He started August 21st. We also have Chloe Challacombe, our new Communications Manager AmeriCorps member. Our first communications AmeriCorps position at ORCA.

Moving forward, this will be something that Zach provides to the board. He's already begun creating forms and policies and procedures around all of our financial policies. We're really excited to have his expertise here at ORCA.

We are utilizing our line of credit and floating 2023 construction. Our 2023 construction is roughly \$487,000, which cannot be reimbursed until ODNR approves the amendment to our scope of work for the Capital project.

I request employee reimbursements: \$170.78 for myself and \$259.92 for Delia.

(Motion to accept the financial report and the employee reimbursements: Tim Warren, Second: Jay Kline; Approved)

Jason Reed: Working closely with ORCA on the events coming up and ensuring we have our safety routes in place for the new trails and everything's looking good here.

Steve Patterson: Very good. Director's Report.

Directors Report/ Jessie Powers: I request board approval to extend our offer of partnership. Our initial ORCA Partnership offer was intended to keep a manageable service area as reasonably possible, but that inadvertently left out two counties in the OVRDC and BHRC districts of Appalachian, Ohio. We have about \$150,000 of funding in our current POWER grant that needs to be used for planning and the overall economic diversification strategy we're advancing, which could cover costs for adding Clermont and Brown counties. I'd like to request board authorization to do so. I think this is just gonna be a way to streamline all the things that we're working on with partner communities moving forward. This defines the Appalachian Ohio Landscape for the ARC ARISE project as the vast area worth traversing through just outside of Cincinnati and Columbus.

(Motion to extend invitation to Brown and Clermont Counties: Jay Kline, Second: Tim warren; Approved)

Jessie Powers: I also request authorization to apply in partnership with the Pennsylvania Wilds to submit an ARC ARISE Planning application to integrate technology into outdoor recreation economies. Project titled: *Mobile Platform Development to Accelerate Growth and Value Capture of Rural Place-Based Tourism Economies and Supply Chains*. I believe we will finalize the application this month, submit it internally to both our state GOA office and the Pennsylvania office for an internal review, and then submit it for Federal review.

Lenny Eliason: Do we have a share matching or anything? Or is this hundred percent correct?

Jessie Powers: The match requirements really come in from the Pennsylvania side, we may provide in-kind match as Zach's time on the project, but we're not providing cash match or counting other staff time because those already serve as match for other grants.

(Motion to authorize: Tim Warren, Second: Steve Patterson; Approved)

Jessie Powers: I listed ORCA as a potential lead applicant for 2023 Appalachian Community Grant, and attended a meeting regarding ACG Lead Applicants at Buckeye Hills. ORCA's regional partnership for the ARISE project makes me think we need to apply. I'll be happy if someone tells me, ORCA's not the best applicant and we transition to a supportive role, but I do think our 2022 application we've created a really good framework that could be built upon as a regional ACGP application.

I'll continue to talk to the BHRC team and plan to connect with the OVRDC team too, to make sure we're just doing things in a way that's going to advance as smoothly as possible. My main goal is to ensure our projects and our member community projects are included in whatever application goes forward as the best proposal. Keeping in mind the workforce support for the tourism industry and the first responder support we included last year, we're hoping to advance both those projects again.

Those are all of the Board action items, but I have another exciting update. In June we applied to be an Economic Recovery Core Fellow host site. The Fellows serve as essentially Peace Corps for economic development, and work in a community with a partner organization for two years. If ORCA is selected, a mid-career level economic development professional comes to work for ORCA, as a Fellow not employee. The Fellow will perform a scope of work we outline, but envision as a lot of economic analysis and integration of a lot of different efforts to clearly outline ORCA's value.

If the Board would like to discuss further ORCA Partner communities potentially joining without their respective county, this would be a good time to do that, because we're trying to finalize all ORCA Partner communities, which are also the ARC ARISE Planning Grant Service area.

Steve Patterson: Based on conversations I've had and what ORCA offers communities in terms of grant support and supported activities, I think we should allow for municipalities, villages to join ORCA, if that's what could help the county government come along too and recognize the value in ORCA. I think we need to be all encompassing for those who want to use the strength of ORCA to leverage their ability to go after financing for recreational assets.

Jay Kline: Once Racine joins as a partner then Meigs County joins as a partner, do they become two separate entities or would they become one again?

Jessie Powers: Originally the Board resolved for the county to join first, but allows municipalities within the county to also join. We left it up to each County to decide who gets to assign the three advisory committee seats. For instance, Jackson County resolved to be a partner first, then the City of Jackson, and then the City of Wellston and there's an Advisory Committee Member representing each jurisdiction. Our initial concern was to keep the Advisory Committee a reasonable size, but we don't want to exclude communities with potentially unwilling county partners. I remain open to whatever best serves the region, and think it's best to include everyone interested in being a partner and serving their respective communities.

(Motion for ORCA to allow political subdivisions within a county to join as Partners without the county: Steve Patterson, Second: Jay Kline; Approved)

(Motion to adopt the director's report: Jay Kline, Second: Tim Warren; Approved)

Steve Patterson: Any legal updates?

Sky Pettey: The issue with our trademark is moving forward, but at the slow pace that the US Patent and Trademark office moves. I would think within a month or two maybe we should have word from them that yes, your trademark is approved. I don't think there's anything that will prevent it from being approved.

Steve Patterson: Okay. Good to hear. Communications report.

Delia Palmisano: Chloe is our new AmeriCorps communications manager. We have 4,824 followers on Facebook. We had almost 80,000 reach last month. Instagram numbers are also up, 2,494. Top posts are volunteer day, staff ride and dirt fondo.

Orca website numbers also continuing to grow. Site sessions last month were 294 with 213 unique visitors. So that's reaching a smaller number, but a targeted audience compared to the Baileys' website. Bailey's website numbers are also up, up 875 site sessions, up 364 unique site visitors from last month. So over 2,500 unique visitors last month.

For fundraising, we tabled at the Paw Paw Festival last weekend, which brought in just over a thousand dollars in sales. Top selling items were: the Kevin Morgan t-shirts (Kevin is also the Paw Paw Festival artist) and Trek raffle tickets. We now have 62 people registered for the Dirt Fondo. Trek raffle, we're at \$1,950, for raffling off a \$7,000 Trek bike.

Steve Patterson: Welcome Chloe.

Chloe Challacombe: Thank you.

Steve Patterson: Any board member updates?

Tim Warren: Where do we stand with the cameras for the Trailhead?

Jessie Powers: I have everything in the hallway and thought we finally had it all sorted, but I haven't heard from our volunteer installers.

Tim Warren: I'll take them with me today to the township building, so they're available when needed.

Jay Kline: Lauren Graham of Pelotonia had reached out to Nelsonville York High School and tomorrow I'm meeting with the National Honor Society to find kids that need or want volunteer hours because they're asking for some support for some of the rest stops along Car Bailey Roads and to assist with parking over at the school, which we allowing them to use. Good relationships to continue to build upon.

Jessie Powers: That's great to hear! We've helped them with some of the planning, Elle (Dickerman, ORCA Sustainable Recreation Director) and Nicke Tepe helped with route planning. Elle is riding sweep on the 50 mile ride. I'm volunteering at Snow Fork and look forward to seeing how they set up.

Steve Patterson: No public in attendance.

Jessie Powers: Last item, ORCA submitted public comments in opposition to fracking permit applications for Salt State Park. Now the Ohio Attorney General is investigating allegedly false comments in support of fracking at the state park, if we would like to restate our opposition to fracking at state parks and the use of allegedly false public comments I need board authorization to do so.

(Motion to authorize Jessie to send additional comments: Tim Warren, Second: Jay Kline, Approved.)

Steve Patterson: I don't think we need discussion. All in favor signify by saying aye.

Steve Patterson: I know this ship has sailed for ORCA to voice our opinions on the USDA Forest service, with the renaming of the National Forest. In my opinion and from a land acknowledgement standpoint to have that name changed is the right thing to do. I've seen all sorts of people's opinions about it, but it would've been nice for ORCA should voice our opinions about it.

Jessie Powers: We could still submit a letter. We just haven't had a board meeting since it was announced. I agree with you and would be happy to write a letter in support of any name change to be more appropriate and inclusive. I'm also happy to support our partners', at Ohio's only National Forest, efforts to be more inclusive.

(Motion to authorize Jessie to write a letter of support and send it on to USDA Forest service stating ORCA is in support of the Forest Service changing the name: Steve Patterson, Second: Jay Kline, Approved)

Steve Patterson: Let's keep doing the good work we're doing.

Jessie Powers: Thank You. We will and we're excited to be building the team.

(Motion to adjourn: Tim Warren, Second: Jay Kline, Approved)