



The Wild Center Board of Trustees Meeting
Monday, January 24, 2022
1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
Zoom Meeting

Board of Trustees Attendance

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| ✓ Karen Thomas, President | ✓ David Fadden | ✓ Juan Rodriguez |
| ✓ Lynn Fox, Vice Chair | ✓ Charles Fernette | ✓ John Sammon |
| Jack Ryder, Vice Chair | ✓ Richard Godin | ✓ James Schoff |
| ✓ Joseph Beck, Treasurer | ✓ Meadow Hackett | ✓ Nancy Simpkins |
| ✓ Linda Rosenstock, Secretary | ✓ Sally Hart | ✓ Charles Svenson |
| ✓ Paul Alioto | ✓ Nancy Howard | ✓ Joel Treisman |
| ✓ Lee Bailey | ✓ Michael Hunsinger | ✓ Virginia Valkenburgh |
| ✓ Michael Bettmann | Peter Kindler | |
| ✓ Terry Birdsong | ✓ Elizabeth Lowe | |
| ✓ George Cigale | ✓ Paul Maroun | |
| ✓ Larry Clifford | ✓ Pamela Matt | |
| ✓ Kathleen Colson | ✓ Brooks Reynolds | |

Emeritus Trustees

G. Thomas Aydelotte

✓ Lynn Birdsong

Advisory Board Attendance

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Martha Bullock, Advisory Chair | Robin Gosnell | Grant Reynolds |
| Sarah Bogdanovitch | Ben Ireland | John Sargent |
| Emily Hunt Forbes | Phuong Ireland | Nancy Simpkins |
| Ed Forbes | David Jones | |
| Robert Gillis | Mary Beth Reiss | |

Wild Center Staff Attendance and Additional Guests

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Stephanie Ratcliffe | Amy Harvey |
| Hillarie Logan-Dechene | Robin Ellis |
| Robert Kronenberger | Andrew Fagerheim, guest |
| Jen Kretser | |

I. Administration

K. Thomas

Karen Thomas called the meeting to order at 1:06 PM

A. Approval of October 8, 2021 Minutes

- **October 8, 2021 Minutes were unanimously approved as distributed**



The Wild Center Board of Trustees Meeting
Monday, January 24, 2022
1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
Zoom Meeting

II. Committees on Trustees

T. Birdsong

A. Election and Re-election of Trustees

The following Trustees were nominated to stand for election to an additional three year term running from January 2022 - January 2025.

Larry Clifford

Lynn Fox

Betsy Lowe

Paul Maroun

Pamela Matt

Brooks Reynolds

Linda Rosenstock

Jim Schoff

Charlie Svenson

Karen Thomas

Virginia Valkenburgh

- **Nancy Howard motioned to approve the slate of Trustees nominated for re-election**
- **Richard Godin seconded the motion**
- **The slate of trustees were unanimously approved**

The following individuals were nominated to stand for election to serve their first three-year term running from January 2022 - January 2025.

Lee Bailey

David Fadden

- **Paul Alioto motioned to approve the slate of Trustees nominated for election**
- **Charlie Svenson seconded the motion**
- **The slate of trustees were unanimously approved**

In addition to the election of the new Trustees, Committee of Trustees Chair, Terry Birdsong made the announcement of two new Advisory Board members. Past Board Chair, Nancy Simpkins will be stepping down from the Board of Trustees and will serve a three-year term on the Advisory Board, and Grant Reynolds was welcomed to



The Wild Center Board of Trustees Meeting
Monday, January 24, 2022
1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
Zoom Meeting

his first three-year term on the Advisory Board. Both members' terms will run from January 2022 - January 2025.

B. Election of Executive Committee

The following trustee members were nominated to serve an additional one-year term on the Executive Committee.

Karen Thomas - Chair

Joseph Beck - Treasurer

Lynn Fox - Co-Vice Chair

Linda Rosenstock - Secretary

Jack Ryder - Co-Vice Chair

- **Paul Alioto motioned to approve the slate of Trustees nominated for election**
- **Richard Godin seconded the motion**
- **The Executive Committee was unanimously approved**

C. 2022 Code of Ethical Conduct & Annual Potential Conflicts Disclosure Statement

The Board of Trustees are required to complete the two following documents, Code of Ethical Conduct and Annual Potential Conflicts Disclosure and the Whistleblower Policy. Both documents are accessible via the links below or as hard copies upon request. Paperwork is to be completed by January 31, 2022.

TWC Staff has also requested that both Trustee and Advisory Board members complete the following questionnaire to update contact information and answer a few demographic questions.

Code of Ethical Conduct & Annual Potential Conflicts Disclosure -
<https://form.jotform.com/213545231328046>

Whistleblower Policy -
<https://form.jotform.com/213545149518055>

Update Board of Trustees and Advisory Board Information -
<https://form.jotform.com/213556046433049>



The Wild Center Board of Trustees Meeting
Monday, January 24, 2022
1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
Zoom Meeting

III. Chair & Executive Director Reports

A. Chair & Executive Director Reports

1. Chair Report

Karen Thomas introduced this meeting as a ‘Good News’ meeting. After a difficult start in the early ‘20s, TWC has triumphed over several adversities and solidified itself as an anchor in the Adirondacks. These accomplishments are thanks to the hard work of TWC staff and the generous support of members of the board.

To highlight the great news three trustee gifts were honored to showcase how we all can support the mission and our individual passions and very importantly inspire others to support as well.

- In the spirit of “Why Not Now?” Virginia (Ginny) and Roger Valkenburgh along with friends and family joined together to fund The Jeanne Hutchins Youth Climate Coordinator position and the larger Youth Climate Program. This will provide vital operating support.
- K. Thomas then invited Ginny Valkenburgh to say a few words and read a passage from her mother, Jeanne Hutchins.
- Karen noted that starting the inspiring giving of “Why Not Now?”, the two anonymous donors who contributed \$1M to the Permanent Endowment early in the year. This will provide vital support for the future
- She then noted that Peter and Hela Kindler \$1M gift which will improve the trail system, sponsor the new *Climate Solutions* exhibition opening in 2022, and support the Permanent Endowment. Meeting both current capital needs as well as the future needs of the Center. All three wonderful stories to share.

2. Executive Director Report

Stephanie Ratcliffe shared her organizational goals for 2022. Goals include

- Efforts to recover, recharge, reorganize, adapt and rebuild in the time of Covid while retaining valued staff and maintaining positive morale.
- Initiate new trails project planning and execution (two year timeline)



The Wild Center Board of Trustees Meeting
Monday, January 24, 2022
1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
Zoom Meeting

- Complete and launch *Climate Solutions* Exhibition and programmatic focus (two year roll out)
- Execute on a major I LOVE NY Marketing grant (two years)
- Develop a process for strategic visioning
- Trustee and Advisory Board members are invited to attend a virtual zoom *Climate Solutions* Briefing session on Tuesday, February 15, 2022 at 4PM EST. Additional briefings will follow as we approach the summer 2022 opening.
- Final paperwork was completed to solidify TWC ownership of the Oxbow Land gift. This land was gifted and accepted by the Board several years ago and was held up due to legal entanglements. SR thanked Paul Maroun and Stanley Rumbough for their assistance in completing this transaction. Paul Maroun spearheaded the effort.
- Continuing work on establishing Values for TWC, the staff participated in the same exercise the board did at the October meeting. This work will continue with a Board and staff committee and S. Ratcliffe will report back with more progress when time.

B. COP26 Report Out

Strategically important to TWC Youth Climate Program, six youth delegates were sent to Glasgow, Scotland for the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference in November 2021. Jen Kretser, Stephanie Ratcliffe and Board Chair Karen Thomas accompanied them. Attending this conference provided greater awareness of our Youth Climate Program internationally. It also helped empower the youth delegates as leaders in this area.

To recap TWC experience during COP26 the following video was shown -
<https://vimeo.com/667874024>

Youth delegate and Columbia University Sophomore, Andrew Fagerheim was invited to share his thoughts and the impact of participating in this conference.

A. Fagerheim was asked, *“Now that time has passed, what sticks out the most from your experience in Glasgow?”*



The Wild Center Board of Trustees Meeting
Monday, January 24, 2022
1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
Zoom Meeting

- Coming out of this conference A. Fagerheim understands the importance of civil society, non-governmental and nonprofit organizations. Even though great conversations and plans can come out of COP26 in working with world leaders there is more work that needs to be done.
- The power of youth. Young people are not just seeing themselves as victims but as powers of change.
- A big takeaway was his optimism and his focus has shifted from world leaders to the importance of local civil society to call for and promote a response to climate change.

Additional Questions

Q: Have the youth delegates who attended COP26 formed a network to keep in contact and the conversation going on how to promote change and solution through local civil society?

- The US Action for Climate Empowerment Coalition (ACE) is currently a way that we are sharing best practices and working with governments to educate the community. TWC is currently a member of this Coalition.

Q: Historically TWC has sponsored 100 Climate Summits around the world. Is the Youth Climate Program staying connected with these areas who have hosted summits to continue working and sharing education.

- The Youth Climate Summit Network which includes past participants of Youth Climate Summits joins virtually once a month to talk about issues, ask questions, and receive support from their peers.

IV. Committee on Trustees

K. Colson

A. DEAI - Saranac Lake Teacher, Temnit Muldowney Video and Discussion

DEAI Co Chair, Kathleen Colson reports that with their continuing goal of educating the board, the DEAI Sub-Committee distributed an article that was featured in the latest Adirondack Explorer in the advance materials. This article will be re-distributed digitally when it becomes available.



The Wild Center Board of Trustees Meeting
Monday, January 24, 2022
1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
Zoom Meeting

In addition to sharing educational articles the sub-committee also wants to focus on sharing personal stories of people who live in the Adirondacks. Therefore a video put together by Saranac Lake Teacher, Temnit Muldowney was shared.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1jJaHI1aaKoNm4tvj4Pgg_D_NjEiShbQy/view?usp=sharing

As a follow-up to the video S. Ratcliffe was asked to comment on T. Muldowney's references to accessibility because of the cost to visit TWC for local socioeconomic families and the strategy behind inclusive marketing for TWC.

- TWC offers several options for visitors to attend at a more affordable rate. There are planned community free admission days throughout the year as well as a Library Pass Program that offers free or discounted admission to the Campus. In addition TWC also offers Sensory Free Days to provide a time for visitors who can become overwhelmed by the typical chaos during normal business hours to come and visit in an atmosphere that is comfortable to them.
- The marketing team has also taken the initiative to look across all areas of our advertising to make sure that our images and ads are welcoming and showcase a wide range of visitors. We want prospective visitors to imagine themselves here.

Follow-Up request:

Stats on the current Library Pass Program

Additional Discussion Highlights

- TWC is one of the most diverse attractions in the Adirondacks
- The Adirondack residents are not diverse when it comes to racial minorities
- The local area does have a high percentage of low income families who face many challenges
- TWC free days are deliberately scheduled for days when local residents can take advantage
- TWC staff identifies local residents and community as a priority in planning, coming up with ways to not only welcome them on campus but also ways to support the community through giving drives and other community collaborations and initiatives



The Wild Center Board of Trustees Meeting
Monday, January 24, 2022
1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
Zoom Meeting

- A request was made for a deeper dive into the conversation of accessibility and the cost of admissions
- It is recognized that it is always important to make our local communities feel welcome and realize that the barrier is not just price but our ability to make the community feel like they belong and that TWC is theirs.

V. Financial Reports

J. Beck, R. Kronenberger

A. 2021 Results

Before Robert Kronenberger went into the financial reports, Joseph Beck, Finance Committee Chair stated in reviewing the 2021 financials, TWC finished the year with a record surplus thanks to fundraising efforts and special government COVID relief funding. Moving into FY2022 the goal is to try and go back to normal as much as we are able.

R. Kronenberger then reported on TWC's financials.

2021 Observations:

- 2021 earned income \$723k above budget
- 2021 operating expenses \$162k over budget and \$16k over prior year
- Overall 2021 operating results \$947k better than budget (pre COVID relief)
- 2021 total attendance was 96k and close to 2019 level (93% of 2019)
- Wild Lights attendance was 10,500 in 2021
- 2021 admission revenues were more than double 2020 and were back up to 2019 level
- Earned revenues increased significantly in 2021 with admission doubling and store revenues up 7-fold
- 2021 membership revenues up 8% vs. 2020
- Total annual fund gifts were \$1.5M in 2021
- Board Designated and Permanent Endowment received \$1.7M in 2021
- Current investment portfolio equals \$11.4M
- Investments diversifies to include \$1M in ESG funds

With the surplus from 2021 we plan to:

Reduce the surplus by \$40k for "Inflation Offset" bonuses to staff



The Wild Center Board of Trustees Meeting
Monday, January 24, 2022
1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
Zoom Meeting

Repay \$460k to the Board Designated funds for funding 2019 deficits
Move \$500k to Obie Clifford Fund for operating reserves

B. 2022 Budget for Approval

2022 Budget Observations:

- 2022 attendance is budgeted at same attendance levels as 2021
- 2022 budgeted admission revenues reflect a ticket price increase effective in May (adults \$2+, youth \$1+)
- Forecasting to open the cafe to a great extent in 2022
- 2022 budget revenues are \$4.6M
- Projecting a \$124,800 deficit

Reviewing the 2022 budget operating expenses TWC will be raising minimum earnings for full-time, year-round part-time, and seasonal staff to between \$14-\$15/hr. Also projecting increased salary recovery from NOAA/IMLS grants. TWC will be establishing a 40 hour work week. We will also be expanding the Fellowship program into other departments. Summer programming costs will be increased to support the new *Climate Solutions* exhibition. Youth Climate Program conference and retreats will resume.

- **Linda Rosenstock motioned to approve the FY2022 Budget**
- **Jim Schoff seconded the motion**
- **The FY2022 Budget was unanimously approved**

C. ESG Investing Overview

M. Rutenbar

With TWC now investing in ESG funds, Meadow Rutenbar presented what investing in these specific funds mean to help provide a better understanding for the full board so further in-depth discussions can be made in the future.

Environmental, Social, Governance (ESG) funds are portfolios of equities and or/bonds for which environmental, social, and governance factors have been integrated into the investment process. This means the equities and bonds contained in the fund



The Wild Center Board of Trustees Meeting
Monday, January 24, 2022
1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
Zoom Meeting

have passed tests over how sustainable the company is and governance structures have been reviewed regarding ESG criteria. Currently there is a rapid pace of change with a shift from voluntary to authoritative ESG and climate disclosure. Rulemaking is taking shape around required climate-related and other ESG disclosures. The SEC rulemaking agenda consists of climate, board diversity, human capital management, and cyber. This type of investing is continuing to rise, in 2021 \$1 of every \$4 was invested in an ESG fund. In the future sustainable finances inflows will continue to increase as investors seek standardization and assurance to inform the credibility of ESG reporting.

VI. Development Committee

L. Fox/H. Logan-Dechene

A. 2021 Annual Fund Results

Lynn Fox, Development Committee Chair, began with reiterating K. Thomas message that today is a good news meeting. TWC staff and members of the board worked hard to reach and exceed the 2021 budget goals for the annual fund. Hillarie Logan-Dechene then went into the fundraising highlights for 2021.

Highlights:

- Not one, but two “Why Not Now?” \$1M Trustee gifts
- TWC first sponsored staff position - The Jeanne Hutchins Youth Climate Coordinator
- \$100,000 bequest received from the estate of Trustee Kevin Keane
- \$650,475 Marketing Grant from NY State for 2022-2023
- Operating Support was up 30.6% over budget, on par with pre-COVID
- Membership increased 8%
- Restricted Grants: Cash-in saw 41% increase
- Capital Gifts will fund *Climate Solutions* and vital trail projects

Development Committee member, Charlie Svenson then proceeded to report on the Trustee and Advisory Board (AB) Annual Fund Giving. In 2021 96.5% of Trustees gave and 64.3% of AB gave for an overall donation of \$629,268. C. Svenson noted how



The Wild Center Board of Trustees Meeting
Monday, January 24, 2022
1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
Zoom Meeting

vital Board support is as an indicator of good governance in funding applications and for other prospective donors. He thanked the board for their consistent giving.

B. Take 5 Update

V. Valkenburgh

V. Valkenburgh provided an update on the Take 5 Program and went through her process of how she stays connected with her list of donors and how anyone can join in on this program and begin working with their own set of donors.

First and most importantly, Take 5 volunteers should learn about their list of contacts, who they are, their family, their interests. Once you know who they are and what excites them you can begin sharing news about TWC and information that is related to their interests. Sharing this information can happen via multiple avenues, in person, zoom, email, phone, and mail. Working with the development team messages are released when most effective or around events, campaigns, and seasons. After taking these steps the overall goal is to thank your contacts for their involvement, encourage them to love nature/ADK/TWC, and to ultimately build a stronger relationship with them and TWC.

Currently 16 Trustee and AB members participate in the Take 5 program and the development committee is always looking for more members to participate.

Additional Discussion:

Q: Is there a requirement for 100% Trustee and AB members giving?

No, TWC does not require a 100% give or get donations for our Trustees and AB members, it is a suggestion of give as generously as you are able

- Martha Bullock, Chair of the Advisory Board noted that there will be a post meeting follow-up phone call with the AB members on Monday, January 31, 2022 at 12pm to go over any questions that members may have and to give those who were unable to attend the board meeting an opportunity to hear from K. Thomas, S. Ratcliffe, and H. Logan-Dechene.



The Wild Center Board of Trustees Meeting
Monday, January 24, 2022
1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
Zoom Meeting

VII. Tech Task Force

S. Ratcliffe

A. Summary Findings

Under past Board Chair Nancy Simpkins a Tech Task Force was created to dive deeper into TWC involvement, needs, and goals surrounding technology. After over a year of working on this project, the Task Force has provided their findings. A full breakdown will be provided in the follow-up materials. S. Ratcliffe provided a brief summary on behalf of Task Force Chair George Cigale, of what to look forward to in the near future.

- Digital has become a part of TWC's DNA. Digital components are now and going forward must be integrated into all areas of operations.
- Our digital strategy in the near term (two years) will focus on iterative experiments and continue to do what is working.
- Our vision is evolving with a better understanding of audience needs, the end of COVID chaos, and how tech solutions serve our mission.

VIII. Winter Programming Overview

H. Logan-Dechene

A. Programming Highlights

H. Logan-Dechene presented an overview of Winter Programming at TWC. Starting with Digital Programs, we will continue to present Lunchtime Lives and Virtual School Field Trips. Other digital programming includes Animal Club, Wild Tales, and Science of the Seasons. TWC will be offering Specialty Days throughout the year, themes are Sensory Friendly Afternoons, Homeschool Days, and Community Days. Onsite Winter programs include creature features, snowshoeing, kicksledding, and ice fishing.

Popular winter event Wild Lights is back, bigger and better than ever, this significant event has helped more than double TWC typical winter time attendance and revenue.



The Wild Center Board of Trustees Meeting
Monday, January 24, 2022
1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
Zoom Meeting

Visitors are reporting back with “satisfied” or “very satisfied” feedback of the overall value of Wild Lights. Wild Lights will be on display through the end of February 2022.

B. TWC Board University & New Member Orientation

As a result of the Board Survey that was discussed during the October Board meeting a series of 5 deep dive sessions on Museum and Wild Center Operations will be starting in February 2022. These Zoom session topics, dates and times will be shared with the Trustees and AB members with calendar invites to reserve their spot in the session.

In addition, on February 24, 2022 from 1PM - 4PM EST will be the New Trustee and AB member Wild Center Board Orientation. This orientation will be held via zoom and is for new trustee and AB members as well as anyone who hasn't had an orientation yet or would like a refresher.

IX. Generative Discussion

K. Thomas/S. Ratcliffe

A. How do we define Advocacy?

Coming home from COP26 and preparing for the opening of the new exhibition *Climate Solutions*, K. Thomas and S. Ratcliffe wanted to take the time to discuss advocacy and climate education and bring the board back to our understanding of where TWC stands on this education with Climate Change as this topic has been politicized.

TWC has created its own set of guardrails for climate change programming to keep ourselves in check and to help navigate communicating science and climate science without being perceived as an ‘advocacy’ organization or politically motivated. TWC shares scientific information and employs educational techniques and approaches to promote self-defined action. In providing educational information we want to be welcoming and offer many ‘on ramps’ for our content. One way TWC accomplishes this is convening a group of people together so we can share science and ideas with each other. We want to invite many voices and avoid promoting one answer.



The Wild Center Board of Trustees Meeting
Monday, January 24, 2022
1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
Zoom Meeting

Board members were then broken out into breakout groups to discuss the following questions:

1. What do you think of TWC staff guardrails (no “you should”, share science but not-prescriptive, promote self directed action)?
2. What type of activity would go too far in terms of climate change education? And where have we not gone far enough?
3. Do you have any questions about advocacy given we are an education organization surrounded by many advocacy organizations?

Notes were taken within the breakout rooms and will be reviewed and shared at a later date.

The Board then entered into the Executive Session at 4:32pm