



The Wild Center Board of Trustees Meeting
 Friday, October 8, 2021
 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
 Zoom Meeting

Board of Trustees Attendance

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

Emeritus Trustees

G. Thomas Aydelotte

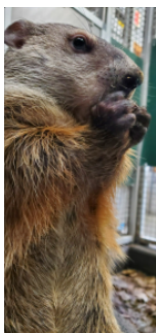
✓ Lynn Birdsong

Advisory Board Attendance

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|--------------|
| Martha Bullock, Advisory Chair | _____ Robin Gosnell | John Sargent |
| Lee Bailey | Ben Ireland | Carl Shedd |
| Sarah Bogdanovitch | David Jones | Anna Sommer |
| Ed Forbes | Mary Beth Reiss | Ross Whaley |
| Emily Hunt-Forbes | Stanley Rumbough | David Youlen |

Wild Center Staff Attendance

- | | | |
|------------------------|----------------|------------------|
| Stephanie Ratcliffe | Amy Harvey | Chelsie Corcoron |
| Hillarie Logan-Dechene | Shannon Surdyk | |
| Robert Kronenberger | Robin Ellis | |
| Jen Kretser | Leanne Favreau | |



Before the start of the official meeting, members from The Wild Center’s animal care staff introduced the museum’s newest Animal Ambassador, Norris the woodchuck.



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I. Administration

K. Thomas

Karen Thomas called the meeting to order at 1:04 PM

A. Approval of July 9, 2021 Minutes

- Charles Svenson motioned to approve minutes
- Sally Hart seconded the motion
- July 9, 2021 Minutes were unanimously approved

B. Chair & Executive Director Reports

a. Announcements/Chair Remarks

K. Thomas introduced two new Advisory Board members, Robin Gosnell and Anna Sommer. R. Gosnell, a retired attorney who resides in Princeton, NJ, is a longtime supporter of TWC and the Adirondacks. A. Sommer, a Principal of Energy Futures Group resides in Canton, NY and was drawn to TWC by the work of the Youth Climate Program.

K. Thomas then announced the amazing news that a member of the Board of Trustees and his family has generously donated \$1M. Portions of this gift will be dedicated to building a new accessible trail and updating the wayfinding at TWC. Funding will also be dedicated to the new Solutions exhibit. Remaining funds will be allocated to the permanent endowment.

b. Executive Director Remarks

S. Ratcliffe

Stephanie Ratcliffe began by sharing the news that NYS Senator Chuck Schumer visited TWC in August. He had a wonderful visit with his family and spent some time with S. Ratcliffe and K. Thomas.

The Solutions exhibit is officially underway. Exhibit design construction has begun within the exhibit space and content development is in progress.



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2022 Board Meeting Dates

- Monday, January, 24, 2022 - 1pm - 5pm - NYC or Virtual
- Monday, April 25, 2022 - 1pm- 5pm - NYS or Virtual
- Monday, June 27, 2022 - 9am - 1pm - Wild Center or Virtual
- Friday, October 7, 2022 - 1pm - 5pm - Wild Center or Virtual

II. Committee on Trustees

T. Birdsong

A. Wild Center Values

K. Thomas

K. Thomas is beginning work on creating a set of values dedicated to TWC that will help guide our actions and future leadership, unite the board and staff, shape our culture and define who we are. This work will be ongoing, but to start the board and staff will collaborate to come up with a list of values that will be reviewed and discussed with the goal of having an official value statement released by the beginning of 2022.

Board members were then asked to enter into the chat some values that they believed embodied TWC. Using the initial chat responses as inspiration, board members were divided into breakout groups to discuss these responses and to come up with their top three values.

Board members were divided into breakout groups and discussed the topic of values for 20 minutes. TWC staff facilitated the breakout session and compiled notes that will be reviewed by K. Thomas and S. Ratcliffe and help aid the staff's own values exercise.

B. DEAI Board Conversation

J. Rodriguez/ K. Colson

Juan Rodriquez introduced the members of the DEAI Sub-Committee and reviewed the committee's charter. The objective of the DEAI Sub-Committee is to establish a board education and discussion program that will identify resources for board member review which will be followed up by meetings that encourage reflection and discussion. These educational materials will include articles, videos, podcasts, books, and speakers.



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J. Rodriguez encouraged that if anyone has suggestions of educational material or speakers to pass along the information to himself or Kathleen Colson.

As the board begins to dive into these educational topics of DEAI J. Rodriguez emphasized that our meetings and TWC is a safe place, a no judgement space and that when discussing and sharing these topics that the word empathy should be kept on the forefront of our minds. We all have our own struggles and our own challenges but we can listen and respect each other's stories and backgrounds and learn to come together as one voice.

It was important to the DEAI committee to share the progress that TWC staff has already made on work around DEAI. Lynn Fox went through the training, workshops, initiatives and partnerships that TWC has completed to date.

Follow-Up Attachment : Full list of The Wild Center DEAI Staff Work

To begin the board's educational work three resources were included in the board's advanced materials. The committee will focus on three main areas: museums, nonprofits, and the Adirondacks. Resources included:

- YouTube Video on Dr. Johnetta Cole
- Article "Why Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Matter for Nonprofits"
- Adirondack Explorer video "Outdoor Afro helps people of color find their Adirondack comfort zone"

K. Colson then briefly reviewed these resources summarizing that the reality is that many people of color do not feel comfortable being in the wilderness and in the Adirondacks. How do we as a board make TWC welcoming for all? It was also highlighted that museums have an important role to make sure that they belong to the community. Do we have a responsibility, as a museum board, to bring new perspectives on this topic and if so how can these unique perspectives advance the mission, improve decision making, and enhance innovation?



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Before breaking out into groups to further discuss the work of the DEAI committee a video from August 17, 2020 titled “How activists are fighting for diversity, equity and inclusion in the Adirondacks” was shared. This video can be rewatched by clicking <https://www.lohud.com/videos/news/2020/08/17/nicky-hylton-patterson-aaron-mair-donathan-brown-adirondack-diversity-initiative-saranac-lake/3288817001/>

Board members were then divided into breakout groups and discussed the topic of DEAI and ideas for what the committee can focus on going forward for 15 minutes. Members of the DEAI Sub-Committee facilitated the breakout session and compiled notes that will be reviewed by K. Colson, J. Rodriguez, and L. Fox.

C. Board Survey Results

T. Birdsong/K. Colson

The Committee of Trustees put together a survey that was sent out to both the Board of Trustees and the Advisory Board. This survey focused on two main areas: overall board effectiveness and a personal assessment of board performance. 45 out of 55 Trustees and Advisory Members completed the survey. Within the survey there were sections for board members to write in answers and provide more thoughtful insight and comments. These verbatims were broken down into three categories: What excites us? What concerns us? And Additional Thoughts. Terry Birdsong reported on these comments.

Follow-Up Attachment: Board Survey Verbatim Summary Slides

K. Colson then went on to summarize the remaining survey results. Focusing first on Board Effectiveness these results were broken down further into three sections.

1. Board Responsibility and Effectiveness - received high marks in regards to belief in the mission, fiduciary responsibility, and ethical values. Moderate response in putting interests above all others, fundraising
2. Board Operations - High marks in meeting agendas reflecting priorities. Members thought that board materials and organization around meetings could use improvement.



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3. Board Relationships - High marks in relationships with ED and Board Chair. Moderate response in listening to board members and respectfully engage different points of view.

Next K. Colson reviewed the results around Personal Assessment of Board Performance.

1. Confident In - Mission, financial statements, relationship with ED and Chair, being an ambassador for TWC.
2. Needs Improvement - Knowledge on programs, fundraising, relationship with other board members, contributions to committees, and bylaws and governing.

If board members have any questions or additional comments regarding the Board Survey the COT committee encourages you to reach out. To submit questions and/or comments please fill out the following google form: <https://forms.gle/TpqVQLPsgm3rHaiA7>

a. Additional COT Announcements

A new onboarding document was created that breaks down the history and the guiding principles of how TWC was founded. This document will be included in the Welcome Book for new Trustee and Advisory Board members.

T. Birdsong requested that members send her nominations for new Trustee and/or Advisory Board members. When submitting nominations please include a biography and/or resume and why you think they would be a good candidate.

Board took 10 minute break - Returned at 2:55pm

III. Finance Committee

R. Kronenberger

A. Financial Reports

Before Robert Kronenberger went into the financial reports, Joseph Beck, Finance Committee Chair wanted to acknowledge that TWC came through the pandemic strong financially and that is an accomplishment to be proud of.



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R. Kronenberger then reported on TWC's financials up to August 31, 2021.

Observations:

- 2021 earned income \$549K over budget
- 2021 operating expenses \$115K over budget
- 2021 total operating support \$30K below budget
- Overall 2021 operating results \$405K ahead of budget before \$775K of Federal COVID support.

Currently TWC is running at 90% of what we were in 2019, with admission numbers at 96% of what they were in 2019. Operating expenses are above budget due to the opening of the indoor exhibits, operating the cafe, and expanding The Wild Supply Co. These operations were not originally budgeted for 2021. In the 2021 budget TWC was preparing for an estimated \$800K deficit before COVID relief. If we continue to stay on budget and with the estimated \$1.2M in COVID support, there is the possibility TWC could finish the year with an \$800K surplus.

B. Environmental, Social, and Governance Investing

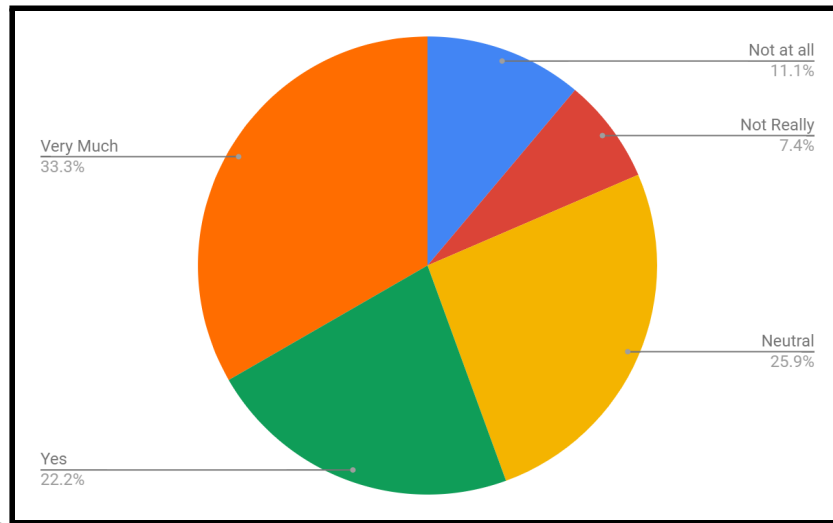
R. Kronenberger

Next going into TWC's investment portfolio as of August 31, 2021 the fund is sitting at \$11M which includes \$2.1M in the Obie Clifford Fund and \$1.1M in the Permanent Endowment. With the investment, the Finance Committee and the Investment Committee has been looking into migrating to Environmental Social and Governance (ESG) type investing. The Finance and Investment Committee recommends taking the initial step of investing \$1M currently held in cash into ESG funds. The investment would be spread over the last quarter of 2021 with 70% in domestic IShare funds and 30% in international IShare funds. This will be the first step into migrating TWC portfolio into an ESG portfolio. The Committees will evaluate the progress of these investments and report back to the board on next steps and if TWC wants to fully move to ESG investing.



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Meadow Hackett will go into more detail on ESG Investing during the January 2022 Board Meeting. According to the poll during the meeting 55% of Board Members are interested in learning more about ESG Investing



C. Budget Assumptions 2022

While it is still early to begin putting together the 2022 budget there are a lot of big projects and plans to consider when looking ahead to 2022. First the Solutions exhibit will be completed both in terms of capital costs and funding. Then we will be looking into Winter and Summer attendance forecasts which will include Wild Lights, launching November 2021 and running through February 2022, these numbers will also be taken in consideration when evaluating admission fees for next year. In addition to evaluating admissions, TWC is also looking at revamping membership. Staffing will be evaluated for 2022 with the consideration of operating at full capacity again. Staffing numbers for 2021 are currently down, full-time staff is down 15% from 2018 (15% is equal to 5 full time staff members), therefore looking forward TWC needs to consider filling staff positions that have been left unfilled due to the pandemic. Lastly, with the surplus of federal relief from 2020 and 2021 those funds may be brought over into 2022 to help relieve possible deficits.

R. Kronenberger



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Questions:

- Have there been volunteers in 2021?
 - Yes, but not to the same extent as past years. The volunteer program will need to be rebuilt as the Volunteer Coordinator position was a staff position that was eliminated during the pandemic.

IV. Operational Update

H. Logan-Dechene

A. Airborne Infectious Disease HERO Act/COVID Policy Update

The Wild Center as a New York State Private Business, is required to have in state an Airborne Infectious Disease Plan as stated by the HERO Act. The Step 3 COVID Plan that was approved by the board during the April board meeting and later adopted by TWC staff already included all the policies and protocols required by the HERO Act. In addition to rolling out this plan to the staff on September 1, 2021, the mandatory vaccination policy was also implemented, as of today 100% of TWC staff is vaccinated. Going forward TWC will only hire vaccinated employees.

V. Development Committee

L. Fox/H. Logan-Dechene

A. Annual Fund

Lynn Fox began by acknowledging that October starts the annual fund season and wanted to thank anyone who has already made a gift towards the annual fund. H. Logan-Dechene then elaborated on TWC's overall plans and goals for 2021's annual fund. While TWC operating numbers are currently over budget it is still important for TWC to stay engaged with our donors and friends, especially with COVID not fully out of sight and the inability to count on federal relief funds in 2022. This year's annual fund letters will start off with a message from Stephanie Ratcliffe followed by a message from K. Thomas.



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Early in the week the Development Committee met and took on the task of selecting names from a list of previous donors in which they would write notes that would be included in the donors annual fund letter. Since the committee was taking on this task it was then decided to invite the full Board of Trustees and Advisory Board to participate in the exercise as well. Through the participation of peer-to-peer fundraising help keep donors engaged as well as elevate the annual fund letter with a personal touch.

The Development Committee invites TWC Board of Trustees and Advisory Board to pick two (or more) names from a list of major donors in which members would write notes that will be included with the donors annual fund letter. If any members are interested in participating, please contact Amy Harvey, Development Coordinator, at aharvey@wildcenter.org.

VI. Program Briefing

J. Krester/S. Ratcliffe/K. Thomas

A. Participation in COP26 in Scotland

TWC Youth Climate Program has been invited to participate in the United Nations Conference of Parties (COP) being held in late October and November in Scotland. Leading up to this event there will be a number of additional events and activities that TWC will also be participating in. The first event that will occur is TEDx Countdown Summit, which will be from October 12th - 15th, 2021 in Edinburgh, Scotland. Jen Krester, Director of Climate Initiatives, and Elodie Link, Climate Communications Fellow, will be representing TWC at this event.

These events will lead up to COP26 which will occur from November 1st-12th, 2021. A total of 197 countries will gather in Glasgow, Scotland to pool their knowledge, experience and resources to help solve the climate crisis. TWC is one of two museums who is an accredited observer with the UN. This classification will allow TWC to be a part of the negotiations and be allowed in more areas than other attendees. J. Krester and E. Link as well as additional Youth Climate Program alumni will be representing TWC at COP26.



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The goals of TWC's COP Delegation are to

- Demonstrate through multimedia storytelling that youth voice, input, and active participation is critical to ensuring that climate targets, goals, and plans result in a liveable future for younger generations.
- Raise awareness of the importance for climate change education at all scales to be integrated as a necessary and foundational component of international climate change policy.
- Use our platform to share solutions that will inspire others to take climate action.
- Prepare our audiences for Solutions exhibit opening 2022.
- Increase stakeholder awareness of Youth Climate Program work and enhance TWC brand.
- Increase stakeholder awareness of TEDx and COP26.

Leading up to COP26, TWC will be participating in a number of events including a teacher workshop that will be run by TWC staff and an event through the U.S. Ace Coalition which will include TWC being inside the "blue zone" the areas where climate negotiation conversations will take place. In addition TWC was invited to speak at the Global Water Partnership at the Stockholm International Water Pavilion.

All of the events happening in Scotland will be featured on TWC and the Youth Climate Program's social media accounts via Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter and will also be accessible through www.wildcenter.org/cop26. It is encouraged to share these websites and social media channels with friends and community members to showcase this amazing work and opportunity.

Questions:

Through this work has TWC been in connection with the Governor of New York?

- Not yet but it is on J. Krester lists to connect with the Governor's office to begin more conversations of climate change with NYS education.

The Board then entered into the Executive Session at 3:55pm