

# Conservation Lands Foundation

## Board Meeting Minutes

### San Francisco, CA

### 24 October 2014

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**Board Members Present:** Elaine Brong, Dayton Duncan, Alex Laskey, Greg Moore, Ed Norton (Chairman), Joe Neuhoof (FGN Representative), Luther Propst, Anne Shields, Jennifer Speers, Doug Wheeler, Rob White and Elaine Zielinski

**Board Members Present via Video Conferencing:** Richard Moe

**Staff Members Present:** Ryan Bidwell, Sam Goldman, Danielle Murray, Brian O'Donnell (Executive Director), Danielle Sandstedt, Julie Thibodeau and John Wallin

**Staff Members Present via Video Conferencing:** Jennifer Bassignani, David Bobzien, Betsy Buffington, Meghan Kissell, Charlotte Overby, Beth Poole, Jeremy Vesbach and Dave Welz

**Special Guests Present:** Diana Hall (Managing Director, WildSpaces) and Jack Stephenson (CLF Donor)

**a. Ed Norton, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 9:10 AM.**

- Ed Norton welcomed Board and staff and thanked Alex Laskey for hosting the meeting at the Opower office.

**b. Approval of Minutes from 21- 22 April 2014 BOD Meeting**

- *Greg Moore moved to approve, motion carried*

**c. National Monuments Campaign Update, Ryan Bidwell, National Monuments Campaign Director**

Dayton Duncan opened the discussion outlining historical importance of Antiquities Act as it relates to conserving America's most spectacular places including the Muir Woods and the Grand Canyon.

Ryan Bidwell gave an update on the current status and strategies for the National Monuments Campaign, including the most recent designations of the San Gabriels in L.A., and the Pacific Remote Islands National Marine Monument. Upcoming and on-going campaigns: Beryessa Snow Mountain, Gold Butte, City, Boulder-White Clouds, Cedar Mesa, Coast Dairies, CA Desert and Browns Canyon. CLF staff feel as though we are currently well positioned to secure designation for most if not all of these areas before the end of President Obama's second term.

Discussion points:

- Struggles with Secretary Jewell, she is not being a strong advocate for the Antiquities Act, but continues to show gradual improvement. With strong leadership from the White House this has become less of a roadblock.
- Challenges - outlook for the makeup of congress. Bills that gut the Antiquities Act continue to be introduced and will require more robust and strategic effort to ensure they are blocked.

- John Podesta has been an ally in the white house, however he is probably leaving soon. Without Podesta, the momentum around monuments could wane. CLF working to gain assurances before Podesta leaves that our priorities are in the pipeline.
- We need more capacity for our monuments campaign internally. Several new positions in the 2015 budget (Wyss Fellow and S. CA Associate) should help.
- Upcoming meeting with the Administration to discuss Cedar Mesa: Dick Moe and Brian meeting with Mike Boots next week. Ryan and Dick meeting With DOI Chief of Staff shortly thereafter. Brian will be meeting with Secretary Jewell in the near future.

The Board and staff moved into a larger discussion about the Cedar Mesa campaign. Ed Norton inquired about the dynamics of the tribes and how are they working together. There have been some bumps in the road, but progress is being made to gain support from multiple tribes for protection of the Cedar Mesa region. Currently the Navajo presidency and government is in transition and progress in facilitating a meeting between the Navajo and Sec. Jewell is temporarily delayed. The Administration has more interest in Cedar Mesa than the nearby Greater Canyonlands proposed monument due largely to the tribal leadership of the effort.

Dick Moe stated that Cedar Mesa has the most unique cultural sites in the nation and are not protected. Dick is impressed with the work that the staff had done to gear up for this campaign, stating that CLF has considerable credibility and the next few months will “tell the tale”.

Ed Norton asked if we were “hitching our success to the Navajo” and if so what happens if we separate from them or disagree with them. Without the support of the Navajo Nation, the White House probably would not act; currently we are relying on the success of our Navajo partners. Growing support from other tribes should also be helpful in empowering the White House to act. There is also a local Mormon coalition that we have reached out to. John Wallin informed the Board that we helped fund a Cedar Mesa gathering that had a Mormon component.

What would the monument be called? The local campaign has agreed to the name “Bears Ears” to move away from a Navajo name. The Bears Ears are a prominent geographic feature on the landscape and also are a sacred site to Navajo people and other tribes.

In the event that the Senate turns after the mid-term elections and there are more attacks on the Antiquities Act, CLF is leading a broad coalition of national organizations that are increasingly focused on defense. The Wyss Foundation and other funders have set aside some funding resources specifically for this purpose.

#### **d. Finance Update and Discussion**

Julie Thibodeau, Finance Director, reviewed the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter financial report. At the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter, CLF has realized over 4.1million. CLF is projected to end 2014 with over \$5.7million- this is \$1.7million more than what was budgeted for in 2014 and because of this success we are recommending to move more money than projected into the Board designated reserves.

**The staff and the finance committee recommends adding \$1.5million to the Board Reserve at the end of 2014.**

- *Rob White motioned to approve, the motion carried*

Julie and Brian O'Donnell then presented the proposed 2015 budget to the Board. The Board was concerned that the budget was too conservative. Brian explained the reasoning for being fiscally conservative. In order for the Board to get a sense of our goals and aspirations, Rob White suggested that we add a column to the budget that shows our goals/aspirational along with our fiduciary goals. The Board agreed to let the finance committee and staff to discuss and develop the best way to show this information.

#### **Vote to approve 2015 budget**

- *Ed Norton motioned to approve, the motion carried*

Rob White led a discussion on our current investment plan and asked the Board if we should take more risk for the possibility of a higher return. Currently, our investment policy is very conservative and allow for little return. Luther Propst recommended investigate what other non-profit investment policy standards are and if other options exist. Ed Norton stated he likes the conservative policy, and that we need a larger cushion.

#### **Rob, Ed, and Brian- will investigate investment options for the spring Board meeting**

##### **e. Campaign for the National Conservation Lands Discussion**

Danielle Sandstedt opened the discussion by thanking everyone for positioning CLF for success with their commitment to the Campaign. The Campaign is nearly halfway over and we have raised \$12 million (60% of goal) thanks to the Board's generosity and willingness to help raise funds. Danielle noted that an additional \$6 million will likely be received through foundation support over the next two years, and emphasized that the last \$2 million will be the hardest to raise, especially because the gifts are smaller.

The discussion turned to the importance of introducing potential donors to our work. The Board agreed that trips and events are the best way to connect new donors to our work. The Board also suggested exploring regions where we've invested in groups in the Friends Grassroots Network as potential markets for new donors. Another suggestion was made to do joint asks with groups in the Network where opportunities exist. This could be a potential topic for discussion during the Friends Rendezvous.

Luther Propst offered to help organize an event in Jackson, Wyoming.

Alex Laskey said CLF has made a good impression on the people he has brought to events; but he noted we have missed opportunities by not being more direct with our asks at events. Alex also recommended that the staff send the Board their travel schedules so Board members can help arrange meetings with prospects.

Danielle concluded the discussion asking for the Board's continued involvement in CLF's fundraising efforts.

##### **f. Strategic Plan Discussion**

Brian discussed the need to update our current Strategic Plan, which was done in 2007 and is now outdated. Ed will form a work group to begin the process, this group should include our newer and younger Board members and Brian. **Draft of new plan should be completed by the fall 2015 BOD meeting.**

**(Dick Moe left the Board meeting shortly after this discussion, therefore there was no longer a quorum for voting)**

## **g. Field Program Discussion**

John Wallin, Senior VP for Programs, opened the discussion seeking clarity regarding the Friends Grassroots Network representative's length of term as a non-voting member of the Board. With Joe Neuhof's recommendation (current representative), the **Board agreed that each Friends Grassroots Network representative serve a two-year term. The representative will be chosen by his/her peers at the Friends Rendezvous every 18 months. The outgoing and incoming representatives of the Friends Grassroots Network will attend one Board meeting together.**

- *Luther Propst moved to approve, the motion carried\**

John Wallin turned the discussion over to Joe Neuhof, Friends Grassroots Network representative, to inform the Board of the complex relationship many groups have with BLM. Joe noted that groups in the Friends Grassroots Network fall into three categories: some groups are primarily stewardship focused; some are primarily advocacy focused; and some of the more sophisticated groups walk the line between advocacy and stewardship. Joe suggested that many groups rely on BLM funds to complete projects on the ground and enhance organizational capacity. Equally, BLM relies on Friends groups to carry forward projects the agency is unable to complete with limited resources. On one hand, groups value this relationship because of the needed financial support and added capacity. On the other hand, this funding relationship causes groups to question their roles as advocates for the National Conservation Lands.

John Wallin transitioned the discussion to grant making. John expressed to the Board that the Field team will make every effort to ensure the majority of grants are considered before the full Board rather than the Executive Committee so all Board members have the opportunity to engage in the process. Two years ago, the Board gave staff permission to approve up to four, \$2,500 grants per year in order to move funds quickly when opportunities arise. John emphasized the importance of being able to rapidly respond to needs on the ground, especially as the Friends Grassroots Network gets more engaged in CLF's expansion and policy priorities. John asked the Board to consider increasing the grant making amount for which the staff has decision making authority.

**Anne Shields recommended the Board allow staff to approve up to \$75,000 in mini-grants annually with a cap of \$7,500 per grant. The Board agreed with Anne's recommendation with caveats: 1) mini-grants must further CLF's conservation goals; and 2) staff must provide a detailed summary of mini-grants awarded at the Board, Executive and Finance Committee meetings.**

- *Anne Shields moved to approve, the motion carried\**

### **Constituency Development Grants for Consideration**

1. **Tuleyome – \$20,000 grant (no match) recommended by Sam Goldman, California Program Director, to build local support for the Berryessa-Snow Mountain National Monument and strengthen the group's organizational capacity.**
  - *Dayton Duncan moved to approve; the motion carried\**
2. **Friends of Browns Canyon – \$9,000 grant with a \$6,000 match (total \$15,000) recommended by John Wallin, Senior VP for Programs, to sustain strong local support for the Browns Canyon National Monument**

- *Rob White moved to approve; the motion carried\**
- 3. **Friends of Cedar Mesa – \$30,000 grant (no match) recommended by John Wallin to build local support for permanent protection of greater Cedar Mesa region.**
  - *Dayton Duncan moved to approve; the motion carried\**
- 4. **Friends of Sonoran Desert National Monument – \$35,000 grant (no match) recommended by John Wallin to coalesce Arizona partners to be advocates for the National Conservation Lands, centralize administrative functions of the Arizona groups; and build memberships.**
  - ***Luther Propst moved to approve; Elaine Zielinski seconded the motion, the motion carried\* with the following stipulations:***
    - *Grantee modifies proposal to include only the deliverables that directly advance CLF's goals for the National Conservation Lands.*
    - *Elaine Zielinski, Luther Propst, Brian O'Donnell and John Wallin meet with Grantee to discuss expectations regarding grant deliverables*
    - *Grant agreement letter explicitly reinforces CLF's expectations as discussed in the meeting with Grantee (see bullet above)*
- 5. **Grand Staircase-Escalante Partners – \$125,000 grant (no match) recommended by John Wallin to continue restoration work on the Escalante River. This grant fulfills a CLF deliverable to the Walton Family Foundation.**
  - *Doug Wheeler moved to approve, the motion carried\**

**\*Motions must be approved by at least one other Board member. An email will be sent to the Board members not present to submit their vote.**

#### **h. Policy Update and Discussion**

Danielle Murray, Policy Director, led the discussion regarding the large amount of turn-over the BLM will be facing in the coming years and what part CLF should play in helping to recommend candidates to fill these vacancies. Need to have good leaders that understand the National Conservation Lands. We are looking to the Board for insight into how much to engage in this process. A small working group of retired BLM leaders has come together to brainstorm on how to help the BLM.

The committee looked into the following:

- Ways to judge staff on conservation objectives.
- Senior Executive Service jobs process should be examined
- Ann Morgan could be convinced to replace Carl Rountree...
- Looking into going outside the agency. Carl thinks it would be a hard sell.
- Gap in age and experience within the agency.

The agency knows that there is a “lost generation within BLM” they are looking for help and guidance. Other ideas include:

- Get different leaders in the agency
- Form a new group to help influence the agency to move forward to replace officials.

- Greg Moore has worked on this with NPS at the field level and the leader in the park service, he believes that change needs to happen.
- We need to look at different recruiting tools, transfer staff from different agencies. NPS staff should be looked at as BLM could have better career opportunities. However, Elaine Zielinski raised that there still remains unique sensitivities.

The committee is focused on State Directors, a couple of candidate ideas are Kate Kitchel and Jenna Whitlock. Final decisions are made by Neil Kornze, Steve Ellis and a screen that is already placed on the candidates.

Carl Rountree retires in December however it has not been announced yet. CLF and the Board should do something to acknowledge Carl's work over the past seven years at our spring Board meeting.

### **i. Diversity Discussion**

Brian discussed the need for our foundation to be more intentional about diversifying our Board and staff. We need to make a change to ensure that our organization is more reflective of what the rest of America looks like and now is a good time to do that. We are starting that with the Wyss fellow position and now we have gone the extra mile to reach out to the correct venue. Advertising in the Navajo Times, etc. We need to recruit in a way that reflects these values. Starting with our hiring process, looking at what platforms we are using to attract applicants is a good place to start. We will have to continually evaluate what we are doing, what can be done different to improve upon these processes. This will be a multi-year process. Doug Wheeler expressed that this is a change that needs to happen from the grassroots and work its way up, not top down.

A committee made up of Board and staff will be put together, Dick Moe worked on this issue at the Trust. Greg Moore expressed interest in being part of the committee. We will add a Diversity plan to the Strategic Plan. Once a plan has been outlined, it will be sent to the Board. A couple of names that were mentioned as prospects to invite to sit on our Board: Jaime Pinkam, Walter Ecohawk and JT Reynolds.

Anne Shields wondered if Kevin Gover, Assistant Secretary on Indian Affairs would be helpful. Brian will set up a meeting with him.

### **j. Communications and Branding Update and Discussion**

Dave Welz, Associate Director of Communications, gave an update and led the discussion from our Durango office about the progress we've made in our communications efforts and what we still need to do. We have had great success with the wordmark that was created by Interbrand in 2012 and officially adopted by the BLM. The wordmark is showing up on signs and other BLM touchpoints. Another great success is the "look and feel" project, also done with the help of Interbrand. This project will help brand the National Conservation Lands and help bring recognition to the lands. The BLM has advised us that they have "several million" dollars to roll-out the new look and feel, and they will start with the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument beginning in 2015.

Elaine Brong, "This is another WOW moment"!

Ed would like Interbrand to highlight this work in their awards. He sees this as an opportunity to get out in front of more funders.

There is frustration that Interbrand hasn't yet promoted the results of this work or linked the project to their corporate network.

On media, Dayton Duncan recommended that we try to work with an editor or reporter to do a series of stories; it would be large and abstract, but a series of stories to explore how people can experience the National Conservation Lands-- like a top 10 list—could be a possibility.

Dave went on to discuss the importance of our communications about the National Conservation Lands and the Foundation, where we are in this effort, and some of our hurdles. We have an internal process to look at our own messaging that incorporates Board and Friends representatives, and we have opened the door to work directly with the BLM so there can be consistent messaging from all of the key partners.

Board Discussion:

- Do Friends Groups benefit? Yes, and we will be training them on the messaging.
- Can the mapping of the places be a role for the groups or something? The design elements, however, could cause confusion between groups and the Fed Gov. The answer to this is to present Friends as groups connected but not part of--a brand extension skillfully done wouldn't be confusing. Mapping may or may not be the outlet for this. Important subject at the Rendezvous.

#### **k. Western Arctic Update and Discussion**

Brian led the discussion about the Western Arctic program. The Administration has approved drilling for Conoco Phillips west of the Coleville River in the National Petroleum Reserve. We have been working to limit/eliminate the building of permanent roads for this project. Since the 90's oil and gas companies have worked on ice roads, Secretary Babbitt wanted to hold them to these standards however they proposed 8 miles of permanent road and a precedent for future development, we wanted to make this get done in the right way.

We think the final decision on road development will be released in the next month that will approve a plan that didn't even consider seasonal drilling or ice roads. Despite it being an uphill battle, some groups will sue and the question is do we want to? Secretary Babbitt would like to sue. This is a supplemental EIS and a lawsuit would be based on not checking out other alternatives.

The Special Areas are mildly protected but they aren't well defined and we think that they can have a detailed conservation plan and we can do that through NEPA to set them aside. Will be important to have these 11 million acres as a recommendation before the end of the Obama term.

White Mountains in Alaska was also discussed as being added to the National Conservation Lands. It would be a collection of BLM special management areas and not conservation areas.

We have had meetings with Campion and Wilburforce, both have said they will increase their funding for the National Petroleum Reserve.

#### **l. Executive Session**

**m. Meeting adjourned at 3:10p**