

MINUTES
PWV ANNUAL MEETING
November 19, 2020 – 6:00-6:30 p.m.
Conference Call due to Covid-19 concerns

ATTENDANCE:

38 people attended the 2020 PWV Annual Meeting, held via Zoom

A. OPENING:

Chair Mike Corbin welcomed everyone to the 2020 Annual Meeting, first noting that he plans to stay on schedule, and will end at 6:30 to start the following Board meeting on time. Mike explained that the Annual meeting is a requirement in the bylaws. Normally in the past it's been combined with the Year End Event, which many members don't approve of. About 3 years ago, the Annual meeting was combined with a regular Board meeting, and only one non-Board member attended. The purpose of the annual meeting is for the Board to share the status of the organization with the members, and more importantly for members to ask questions.

B. RECAP:

Mike provided a recap of the 2020 patrol season:

- The past year has been somewhat difficult and frustrating. The Forest Service asked us to quit patrolling in mid-March with the onset of COVID-19. Later after discussions that lead to agreement, members were able to resume patrolling July 1st. We understand not everyone was comfortable patrolling again, which is a personal decision.
- Spring Training this year was cancelled, therefore we could not bring in new members.
- On August 13, the Cameron Peak fire started, which resulted in trails to be closed. Some of our trails are now open again, but many remain closed (about 20)—some will stay closed possibly for several years; this will not be a one-year turnaround.
- Board meetings have been held remotely via Zoom, which has been working. We're getting more comfortable with the Zoom meetings, which requires more discipline, but we're progressing.
- 391 Trail Patrols were completed this patrol season. Impressively, we removed 1188 trees from trails in a very short season. This is compared to something like 1400 trees last year.
- Early this year, working with Forest Service, we were able to complete and re-open Young Gulch after finishing the 3 bridges. This trail was damaged in 2013, so it took 6 years to rebuild.
- PWV had a trail crew from Rocky Mountain Conservancy for a week which assisted us in August. They had been volunteering all summer doing trail work, so they knew what they were doing, and were hard to keep up with! Mark Snyder helped with the crew, which did a lot of work over a couple of days to improve Bulwark Ridge to address significant erosion damage (it's not fully repaired but significantly better). They also worked a day on the Crosier Rainbow trail and completed some drainage work on North Fork for about the 1st mile or so, as well as some work on the log bridge that had issues.
- Financially, the organization is in very good shape. This is in part because we didn't spend as much last year. Tom and the fundraising committee are planning hard going into next year so we have funds for trail repair.

C. NEXT YEAR:

Finally, Mike discussed initial planning for 2021:

- This coming year will probably also be challenging and frustrating at times, but with our members' help we should be able to accomplish quite a bit.
- The first objective is to get members out patrolling again. Not all members will be comfortable, but we'd like members out on the trail to interface and educating the public again.
- We'll be working with the Forest Service and other volunteer groups to work on the trails. We have about 20 trails that need substantial work, so trail maintenance will be an important focus. We still don't really know what work will be needed until next year after the spring melt. Simple fire damage will mean removing trees, but the spring melt could also cause erosion and even take out some bridges. Alan spoke earlier about a bridge being removed at Roaring Creek. There are two bridges at Blue Lake we'd like to remove as well, but that's a big job. We'll be working with other groups such as WRV (Wildlands Restoration Volunteers) and Rocky Mountain Conservancy for larger projects. The county has put in for a grant to bring in college crews for 12 weeks to assist. Rocky Mountain Conservancy has also been asked for 2 high school crews (normally we ask for 2 but only get 1). USFS is also asking Rocky Mountain Conservancy for 8 weeks with a college crew. We're looking for a lot of help and a lot of labor. It's not likely that these trails will be reopened next year—more likely looking at a 5-year lookout.
- The Forest Service is spending the winter planning and evaluating to put together a priority list, likely to start with the lower trails. North Fork will probably be first worked on since it's lowest for earliest access, and we'll move up the mountain as we can get to the other trails.
- This year we brought in no new members, but we're hoping to bring in at least a minimal number for 2021. In a best-case scenario, we'd be able to have a full Spring Training next year, but that seems unlikely, so alternative options are being discussed to train 20 or more new recruits if possible.
- We hope for a better year next year, though it's still expected to be challenging with issues. We know the virus will continue to be a problem for a while, but hopefully there will not also be any fires.

D. IMMEDIATE PAST CHAIR

Elaine Green noted that we're aware of all the challenges we had this past year, but wanted to cover a few highlights:

- Working with Kristy as liaison, she's always been very supportive and involved with the organization, and active in board meetings. She also often had to communicate information to us from the Forest Service that we didn't particularly want to hear, which she always did with grace.
- Fred Allen was selected by NWSA (National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance) as the Wilderness Champion of the Year, an honor for him and for PWV. He was recognized for his longtime work with PWV and in particular for his work at Stub Creek.
- Our Office Crew is an emblematic symbol of what our organization is about. They stepped up to work the SPOT system out of their homes for check out, going above and beyond.
- Elaine also mentioned that Kristy did all of her work while also working from home.

E. QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Q: Margaret Shaklee - Due to the fires and Covid, how can non-patrolling members help under the current circumstances—needs, suggestions, comments?

A: Mike Corbin agrees this an important question to consider and further discuss. Margaret asked to be kept in the loop, because she's interested in helping. Elaine suggested administrative things, such as mailing, though admitted it's hard to predict what PWV's needs will be next year. Margaret requested that non-patrolling members be included so they can contribute, and suggested newer members who can't patrol could use the opportunity to experience new ways to help. Celia Walker also described how two new recruits who couldn't join as patrolling members in 2020 have come on as non-patrolling members. They are currently contributing and participating in various committees like Kids in Nature, helping to develop curricula, which other non-patrolling members could possibly assist with as well. Celia also suggested that it's possible that local schools with students in remote learning could possibly use and appreciate KIN-provided educational material.

Q: Cathy Morgan - How do members know when trail crews are going out to perform work?

A: Mike said he will add her to the list, and said he will be sending out future emails as projects are planned. He will have a formal sign up, planned dates, and training opportunities once the work is scheduled. Cathy requested to have upcoming trail work opportunities shared with all members, not just those who have initially requested to help with Trail Crew. Celia added that right now because the fire-damaged areas are restricted, we can't announce public work days, but that's something that will eventually be posted to the calendar. Mike explained that some projects are intentionally kept limited to a small group of volunteers due to logistics. Spring trail work will be announced, and there will be training for members who are interested in helping.

Q: Janet Caille - What trails are open? Is hunting being restricted due to the fire damage?

A: Mike explained that the Forest Service website shows what trails are closed, but that he will compile a current list to send out so it's clear. He's been coordinating with Kristy to make sure there's an accurate list. Currently it's mostly lower trails, Red Feather Lakes trails, and others like Lily Mountain and Twin Sisters—Mike will send a list. Kristy Wumkes noted that hunting is state-managed, but forest areas that are closed to the public are also closed to hunters. CPW is issuing refunds to folks who were issued licenses for areas that are affected, and some licenses are being rolled forward to next year.

Q: Chris Slocum - Will spring training cover recertification or will it be delayed by another year?

A: Mike said this has not yet been determined, but likely recertification will be pushed forward another year for practical purposes.

Q: David Bye - Does the Forest Service have any increased funding because of the fires?

A: Kristy Wumkes said not at this time—the Forest Service is getting a little bit of money through the BAER (Burned Area Emergency Response) work for emergency safety resource issues, not for restoration. These funds can't pay for labor, only things such as “Area closed” signs as a stop-gap measure. Mike Corbin reiterated that the Forest Service is asking for funds and hoping to receive some for restoration. Jared Smith with USFS told Mike previously that they expect to know mid-January what funds are coming in. Mike will be applying for grants, and our planning and funds use will need to be flexible based on what actually comes in. It's unlikely we'll get all 12 of the college crews that are requested, but it's also an option to hire them.

Q: Liz Manes noted that Mike was very thorough and covered most of her initial questions. She's very excited to hear that we potentially have extra hands next year to help with the work to be done. She also offered a special thanks to the Year-End team for coming up with what they did this year, and recognized that the organization still exists and thanked the Board for everything they did this past year in keeping members in the loop. She also mentioned that Kristy was very essential in helping the office crew with the SPOT check outs, getting the initial device programming done. The short season meant only a few SPOT devices actually were checked out, but it was an opportunity to see a few members. She noted that Kristy will be missed as she moves on her next journey. Liz asked will there be any Nordic patrolling this year, or will the trails remain closed to keep the public out?

A: Kristy Wumkes explained that she has been asking about this, but since the fire is not yet 100% contained, the Ranger is not comfortable opening any of the closure area up yet. Even though some trails were unharmed by the fire, the trails are so interconnected, so they could lead to fire damaged areas. Once they get permission, the Nordic Rangers will be excited to get up there to begin hazard tree mitigation. We have no idea what the trees look like up there, since right now only satellite photos are being used to identify damaged trail areas. Liz understands that Forest Service hasn't really been up in that area yet either. Celia Walker also mentioned that Larimer County Search & Rescue are very worried about the upcoming season, not only due to hazard trees but particularly due to the increased risk of avalanche. Even if the trails are not officially opened, people are likely to be up there, and they are worried about a heavy rescue year.

F. CLOSING

Mike Corbin reminded members that a pre-recorded video was sent out for the Year-End Event. It's a bit silly but has good information.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:30pm

Sean Orner, Secretary