

Death Valley Natural History Association Member of the Board of Directors

Job Description and Expectations

Purpose: To advise, govern, oversee policy and direction, and assist with the leadership and general promotion of the Death Valley Natural History Association to support the organization's mission and needs.

Mission or purpose statement: DVNHA is a non-profit 501(c)(3) dedicated to the preservation and interpretation of the natural and cultural history of the Death Valley region in cooperation with our government partners.

Length of term: Three years, which may be renewed for one term, pending approval of the board. Following end of two terms, board members can serve in an advisory capacity for one year before being eligible to be re-nominated for board membership.

Meetings and time commitment:

- The board of directors meets twice a year – in Fall and Spring. Meetings are generally scheduled for weekends in November and March in Death Valley National Park or in an adjacent location. Meetings are approximately 3 hours in length. Board weekends also include strategic planning and committee sessions, as well as talks and tours. Board members are expected to attend all of the Saturday events, including dinner. Travel and lodging costs are covered by the board member.
- The board may also meet via teleconference, or have mail-in ballot votes as necessary.
- Committees of the board meet or hold teleconferences as necessary, 2-3 times a year.
- New Board members are asked to attend the Association for Partners of Public Lands Convention once during their first term, preferably right at the beginning of their term. The next Conference will be in Dallas, Texas on Feb. 21-24, 2011. DVNHA will defray the registration and hotel expense.

Expectations of board members:

- Attend and participate in meetings on a regular basis, and special events as able.
- Participate on a standing committee of the board or serve on ad-hoc committees as necessary.
- Help communicate and promote DVNHA's mission and programs to the community.
- Become familiar with DVNHA's finances, budget, and financial/resource needs.
- Help maintain DVNHA's strong partnerships with the National Park Service in Death Valley National Park and the US Department of Fish and Wildlife in Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge.
- Understand the policies and procedures of DVNHA.
- Financially support DVNHA in a manner commensurate with one's ability.

There are four officers for the DVNHA Board:

Chair: Presides over meetings, works directly with executive director, sets meeting agendas, creates subcommittees, acts as spokesperson for the board, and manages annual performance review of the executive director.

Vice Chair: Takes the role of the chair when the chair is absent from meetings; often becomes chair when sitting chair's term is up. This can be seen as an apprentice position, or a way of guaranteeing institutional memory.

Secretary: Responsible for taking meeting minutes or, if that role is done by a staff member, revising them.

Treasurer: Responsible for reporting the fiscal picture of the organization. Ideally, this person will have a background in accounting or finance and receive reports from the executive director to make sure the organization's budget is on track.

Board officers typically sit on the board as regular members before being elected as officers. To fill officer positions, the Board Chair will ask for volunteers or nominations; then have the board take a vote.

A nonprofit board can have standing committees, meaning they are always in existence, or ad hoc ones, meaning they are formed as needed and then dissolved. DVNHA usually has three sitting members on each committee who have an interest and expertise in the specific area they are addressing. A subcommittee should make the board's tasks easier and actions faster. Committee members can meet more often, do more "homework" and then report back to the board at large with findings and recommendations, or with results. DVNHA has the following standing committees:

Executive Committee – Responsible for investigating potential board members and the executive director position. Responsible for advertising, interviewing, and making recommendations regarding new executive directors

Board Development Committee – Responsible for organizing training and strategic planning sessions.

Publications Committee – Review needs for new DVNHA publications. Review submittals from authors.

Death Valley Field School Committee – Develop ideas for field school programs. Locate instructors.

DVNHA often has ad hoc board subcommittees including:

Strategic Planning Committee – Responsible for creating the organization's 5-year strategic plan and updating the rest of the board about its progress

Fundraising Committee – Responsible for identifying potential donors

Bylaws and Policy Review Committee – Reviews and updates Bylaws and policies. Submits recommended changes to board for approval

Finance Committee – In many cases, only a treasurer is needed, but if finances are complicated, an entire committee might be useful

Special Event Committee – Responsible for overseeing the organization's special event. DVNHA organizes the Death Valley Conference on History. The conference occurs every three years, sponsored by DVNHA, Death Valley 49ers, Shoshone Museum, the National Park Service and Xanterra Parks and Resorts

Major responsibilities of DVNHA Board (shared across members):

- Provide organizational leadership. It is the board's responsibility to review the mission statement that articulates the organization's goals, means, and primary constituents served.
- Ensure effective planning. Review the strategic plan. The Board actively participates in an overall strategic planning process and assists in implementing and monitoring the plan's goals. Provide oversight of program planning and evaluation. Solicit and review program evaluations.
- Formulate and provide oversight of policies and procedures. Set the policies for the organization by annually reviewing the Bylaws and determining the organization's programs and services. The board is responsible for documenting policies and decisions to create an organizational memory. The board's members should review the minutes of the last board meeting before arriving at the next meeting.
- Select the Executive Director. Boards must review the Executive Director's responsibilities and undertake a careful search to find the most qualified individual for the position.
- Support and evaluate the Executive Director. The board should ensure that the Executive Director has the moral and professional support he or she needs to further the goals of the organization. The day-to-day management of the organization is the executive director's job.
- Monitor and strengthen programs and services. Determine which programs are consistent with the organization's mission and monitor their effectiveness. Review organizational and programmatic reports. The Board reviews and approves the staff's job descriptions. While the board should take the recommendations of the organization's director, staff, and members into consideration, the board needs to be an independent decision-making body.
- Ensure adequate financial resources. One of the board's foremost responsibilities is to secure adequate resources for the organization to fulfill its mission. The Board must protect assets and provide proper financial oversight, including adoption and oversight of the annual budget and the approval of annual requests for funding from the National Park Service and US Fish and Wildlife. The Board approves major contracts and grants. The board review IRS 990 Form which provides the public with financial information about the organization and also provides significant disclosures on governance and the board of directors.
- Assist with fundraising and outreach, in the Death Valley area as well as the Board Members home area. Provide personal financial support to the organization.
- Build a competent board. All boards have a responsibility to articulate prerequisites for candidates, orient new members, and periodically and comprehensively evaluate their own performance. Nominate members to the board who can make significant

contributions to the work of the board and the organization. Nominate advisory board members. Orient new board members and advisors when a vacancy arises.

- Ensure legal and ethical integrity. The board is ultimately responsible for adherence to legal standards and ethical norms. Take reasonable care when making decisions for the organization (called “duty of care”). Act in the best interest of the organization (called “duty of loyalty”). Act in accordance with the organization’s mission (called “duty of obedience”). Stand aside when there is a conflict of interest (called “recusal”).
- Promote the organization and enhance the organization's public standing. The board should clearly articulate the organization's mission, accomplishments, and goals to the public and garner support from the community.

Current Staff Members:

David Blacker – Executive Director

Candace Lieber – Program Manager

George Lauterbach – Sales Manager

JJ Graham – Office manager

Steve Acton – Warehouse Manager

Bill Pelkey – Bookstore staff

Justin Baldino – Bookstore staff

Charlotte James – Bookstore staff

Wesley Massey – Bookstore staff

Current Officers and Committee Members:

Chair: Mike Rauschkolb

Vice Chair: Maryann Argyres

Secretary: vacant

Treasurer: KC Wylie

Executive Committee – Chair, Vice-chair, and Treasurer

Board Development Committee – Chair, Argyres, Davis, and McGill

Publications Committee – Chair, Wylie, Moore, and Kendziorski

Death Valley Field School Committee – Chair, Rothfus, Moore, and Stephanie Kyriazis

Board Bylaws and Policy Review Committee – Chair, Argyres, Kendziorski

Current Board Members:

Argyres, Maryann – 2010-2012 (2cd term)

Davis, Chuck – 2009-2011 (2cd term)

Freeman, Gerald - 2008-2010 (2cd term)

McGill, Dr. Tom – 2008-2010 (2cd term)

Moore, Kimber - 2010-2012 (2cd term)

Rauschkolb, Mike – 2009-2011 (2cd term)

Rothfus, Ed - 2008-2010 (2cd term)

Rowland, Dr. Steve – 2010-2012 (2cd term)

Wylie, KC – 2009-2011 (2cd term)

Kendziorski, Tim (Advisor) - 2008