

# Death Valley Natural History Association 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 resources 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 such as Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge. 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 weekend's 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.
- New Board members are asked to attend the Public Lands Alliance (formerly APPL) Convention once during their first term, preferably right at the beginning of their term. 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.
- Retain active membership and 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. Serves as a secondary signer on the checking account in case of emergency in which the Executive Director is unable to.

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 - Reviews needs for new DVNHA publications. Review submittals from authors.

Death Valley Field School Committee - Assist with Road Scholar program development. Develop new ideas for field school programs.

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 events. DVNHA organizes and runs the Death Valley History Conference and the Death Valley Science Conference, alternating between the two.

Technology Committee - Support and oversight of DVNHA's Technology Plan.

**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 reviews 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.

#### **Staff Members (Fall 2018):**

David Blacker - Executive Director

Geneil White - Development Coordinator

Renee Rusler - Death Valley Institute Director, Field School and Road Scholar Programs

Sandra Andus-Scheet - Office Manager (Accounts Receivable & HR)

Wesley Massey - Warehouse Manager

Bill Pelkey - Warehouse

Bookstore staff:

Justin Baldino - Furnace Creek Store Manager

Adrian Gonzalez

Nathan Wabbel (and Scotty's Castle Tours & Accounts Payable)

Danielle Wood (and Scotty's Castle Tours & Special Projects)

Anna Verholtz

Serena Revere-Ash Meadows Store

## Officers and Executive Committee Members (Elected Spring 2019):

Chair: Bob Lehmann

Vice Chair: Kimber Moore

Secretary: John Kopczynski

Treasurer: Terry Feinberg

## Board Members:

Kopczynski, John (2018-2020) - 1<sup>st</sup> term, Term Exp. Spring 2021 (\*Served previous Two Terms.)

O'Brien, Dan (2018-2020) - 1<sup>st</sup> term, Term Exp. Spring 2021 (\*Served previous Two Terms.)

Walton, William (2015-2017) - 1<sup>st</sup> term, Term Exp. Spring 2018  
(2018-2021) - 2<sup>nd</sup> term, Term Exp. Spring 2021

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Lehmann, Bob (2016-2018) - 1<sup>st</sup> term, Term Exp. Spring 2019  
(2019-2021) - 2<sup>nd</sup> term, Term Exp. Spring 2022

Moore, Kimber (2019-2021) - 1<sup>st</sup> term, Term Exp. Spring 2022 (\*Served previous 2 terms and six years advisory capacity. Org. 2007)

Moritz, Tom (2019-2021) - 1<sup>st</sup> term, Term Exp. Spring 2022 (\*Served previous Two Terms.)

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Feinberg, Terry (2017-2019) - Term Exp. Spring 2020 (**Elected Fall 2018**)  
(Eligible for two terms after fulfillment of Maryann Argyres' Resigned Term)

Knauth, Paul (2017-2019) - 1<sup>st</sup> term, Term Exp. Spring 2020

Roman, Chris (2017-2019) - 1<sup>st</sup> term, Term Exp. Spring 2020

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## Advisory Board Members:

Argyres, Maryann (former Board Member 2006?-2018)

Benti, Wynne

Frnacis, Nathan (former Board Member 2013 -2019)

Karbus, Tracy

Kendziorski, Tim (former Board Member 2013 -2019)

Macala, Jerry

Rauschkolb, Mike (former Board Member 2004-2014)

Reynolds, Margie

Rowland, Steve (former Board Member 1989?-2013)