

THE WILD ANIMAL Sanctuary

December 15, 2024

Board of Directors - AGENDA

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Attendance:

Board Members Present:

Dr. Ashley Malmlov, George Ellis, Joe Spahn, Maria Glover &

Toni Scalera (Chair)

Staff Members Present:

Pat Craig

Acceptance/Changes

- I. Minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved with no changes.

Approvals/Denials

- I. Members discussed and approved a second year of the fencing project at the Craig, CO Horse Refuge. This \$400,000 dollar project will involve replacing all of the exterior fencing that surrounds the Refuge, so that it meets the standard for holding wild horses. The existing fencing was built to contain sheep and cows and was installed more than 80 years ago and is no longer repairable. Local contractor, Jimmie Waltz, with 4-Wire Fencing will spearhead the ongoing project throughout 2025. An end-of-year assessment will be done to see how much, if any, additional work will be needed going into 2026.
- II. Members completed and approved the Executive Director's annual review.
- III. Members reviewed and approved the organization's annual compensation report, which is derived from matching data from two national charity watchdog groups. After some discussion, members decided there is no need to increase the salary level for any of the corporation's officers at this time.
- IV. Board members discussed the final closure of the Texas facility and subsequent sale of the property. It was agreed that Pat Craig should arrange for the property to be listed on the market and sold for whatever amount the market will bear. The final sale price will likely reflect the unusual nature of the facility, with its numerous large steel enclosures. The enclosures will either bring value to some potential buyers, or they will represent a significant deficit when considering the significant costs of having them removed.
- V. Members reviewed and approved the attached 2025 budget.

Updates

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- I. Successful rescues for 2024 included an African Serval from South Korea, 18 Brown and Grizzly Bears from South Carolina, two Tigers that were abandoned at the Sanctuary's doorstep and more than 50 Wild Horses from within Colorado Horse Management Areas (HMA) that were managed by the BLM.
- II. The Board completed its own annual review and has scored in the excellent range for the 7th year in a row.
- III. The Wild Horse Refuge has continued to rescue Colorado mustangs and is currently accommodating more than 200 mustangs on the property. The Craig, CO facility was approved for a minimum of 240 horses to date and the Refuge will continue to work with BLM officials to increase the capacity while maintaining the property in a responsible manner. Founders continue to purchase land for the horses at \$777 an acre. This program will continue until all of the acreage has been paid for. Executive Director, Pat Craig, is continuing his work with the local Land Trust organization, as well as the NCRS, concerning the protection of Sage Grouse on the Refuge property. Both organizations have the potential to help protect the Grouse, as well as provide significant funding.
- IV. The Sanctuary was able to secure an additional 596-acres of land adjacent to the Craig, CO facility. The land is located at the southern edge of the Refuge and was previously owned by the Cross Mountain Ranch.
- V. The Board discussed the ongoing project to remodel the Lily Farms Events Center into an office for Sanctuary administration. Executive Director, Pat Craig, gave an update on the progress of this important project, but went on to explain the difficulty he is experiencing with finding a contractor that is able to take on the project. In addition, securing the necessary funding for the overall cost has also been a challenge.
- VI. The Board further discussed the progress being made toward a retirement package for Executive Director, Pat Craig. The Board proposed a two-part plan that would help make up for past deficiencies in not having a standard retirement plan in place during Mr. Craig's many decades of service. The first part would include a number of catch-up payments that would fall in the range of \$35,000 to \$45,000 per year served and would rely on the Sanctuary's ability to meet the overall goal. The second part would include an in-kind gift of old bells that have accumulated and been stored at the Sanctuary for many years. Additional discussions concerning the timing and form of payment were carried out, since the Sanctuary's significant budget fluctuations have continually sidelined this important project. Board members recognize past delays have contributed to this problem and realize the time has come to fully commit to funding the plan as soon as possible.
- VII. Having addressed ongoing labor and employment issues at the 2023 annual meeting, Board members followed through by creating a subcommittee for the purpose of finding a solution to the problem. Board Members Scalera, Malmlov and Ellis worked on creating multiple ways for the Sanctuary's Human Resource Department to not only attract better candidates, but also to implement stricter evaluation processes for all applicants. As a result, the subcommittee was able to report improvements within some departments, while other areas saw no improvement whatsoever. The

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subcommittee summarized their work as being difficult to fully understand, since most applicants failed to be open and honest during the screening process. The subcommittee determined the only reliable way to improve the odds of a positive hire was by conducting hands-on interviews. Applicants who spent time working side-by-side with a current employee, even for a short period of time, were much more likely to demonstrate their positive skills and abilities, as well as reveal certain traits and behaviors that may be of concern. Although progress was made toward improving the hiring process, a significant amount of reservation remained with subcommittee members in relation to the viability of working interviews. The subcommittee's reservation stemmed from the fact that many applicants are unable to commit the time that is needed for the revised working interview process. In summary, the subcommittee let the other Board Members and Executive Director Craig know there remains a distinct need to evaluate all applicants on a more personal level if the organization expects to be successful moving forward.

New Topics

- I. Members discussed a number of positive media stories that were published throughout 2024 and congratulated staff for being able to garner significant positive press on a national basis. Members asked if the Sanctuary's Communications Department needed to be expanded in order to continue achieving the same level of coverage. Executive Director, Pat Craig, explained there were a number of contributing factors, which included the addition of Scott Beckstead as the Chief Equine Programs Officer - who had been working tirelessly at gaining national attention for The Wild Horse Refuge - as well as the Sanctuary's Communications Department working hard to gain additional attention. Executive Director, Pat Craig, did state the Sanctuary was looking to hire a new Marketing Director, since the previous Director had failed to fulfill her duties. Once a qualified candidate is found, there would be an expectation for him or her to add to the department's ability to garner even more local and national stories.
- II. Board Members discussed a subdivision that is currently being built adjacent to the Sanctuary, on its eastern border. Two women that used to live on the property nearly 15 years ago had applied for a subdivision permit with Weld County. Even though the Sanctuary vehemently opposed the permit being issued back then, the County moved forward with approving the application. Thankfully, the County did include a requirement that forced the developers to enter into a contract with our Sanctuary that addressed many of our concerns. The list of concerns (and remedies) included in the contract had been derived from historical complaints by other neighbors. As such, the developers agreed to abide by the contract terms. However, before the subdivision could be finished, the two ladies chose to move to Florida and put the project on hold. Now, 15 years later, they had returned to Colorado in order to resurrect the subdivision project. Yet, this time they were blatantly refusing to comply with the terms of the contract and were moving forward very quickly with their efforts to complete the 8-lot subdivision. With great concern for the Sanctuary's future, Board members discussed the situation, expressly addressing the prospect of a newly-formed HOA fighting to have the Sanctuary's Keenesburg facility shut down, or forced to relocate, it was imperative for the organization to secure advice from legal counsel.

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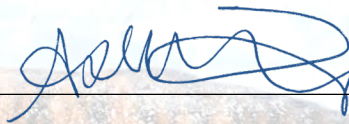
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Assignments

- I. Executive Director, Pat Craig, will work with 4-Wire Fencing to keep the Horse Refuge fencing project on track, while also ensuring the project remains aligned with BLM restrictions and design requirements.
- II. The Board's sub-committee on staffing solutions will continue working with the Sanctuary's HR Director, Natalie Winter, to explore ways to enable working interviews for all positions, as well as other successful hiring practices.
- III. Executive Director, Pat Craig, will continue looking into Sage Grouse habitat protection and restoration grants, and easements, in addition to the appropriate Conservation Easements on the Craig, CO property.
- IV. Board members pledge to execute an executive officer retirement plan for Pat Craig in 2025. Chief Financial Officer Nelly Morgan will assist Board Members with facilitating the agreed plan and commit to completing the process within 12-18 months.

Conclusion

- I. Meeting ended with no unfinished business.



Date 12/15/2024

