

**Southern Off-Road Bicycle Association  
Board Meeting Minutes**

**Telephonic Conference**

(Virtual meeting convened due to COVID-19)

**May 22, 2021**

Meeting brought to order: Saturday May 22, 2021 at 9:15 am EST

**Attending Board Members:**

All Chapters were represented by Board attendees except the following: Chattahoochee Valley Area SORBA (CVA), North Georgia Mountain Bike Association (EMBA), Ocmulgee Mountain Bike Association (OMBA), Pensacola Off-Road Cyclists (PORC), SORBA Athens, Tri-County Mountain Bike Association, and Upper Cumberland SORBA

**Attending Executive Committee Members:**

Mark Arcelle (President, MS Rep.), Mary Anne Swanstrom (Vice President), Terry Palmeri (Executive Director), Kyle Ragan (TN Rep.), Angela Allen (Treasurer, GA Rep), Tom Nelson (AL Rep.), Peter Davis (FL Rep). Jason Scott (SC Rep.), and Jim Grover (Secretary, NC Rep.)

**Attending Staff Members:** Philip Darden, Assistant Director

**Guests:**

Anthony Duncan, Director of IMBA Local Programs  
Deb Caffin, Trails Program Leader, Southern Region, Atlanta, GA with [USDA Forest Service](#)  
**Atlanta, GA**  
Michelle Mitchell, Director for Recreation, Heritage Trails and Volunteer Partners

**Action Items:**

Motion to approve Minutes of prior meeting (November 21, 2020)  
M Arcelle: Motion to Approve  
RAMBO: Second  
The Motion passed unanimously

**Introductory Comments** – Mark Arcelle

Mark emphasized the importance of our bi-annual meetings. He noted the terrific break-out sessions provided earlier in the week highlighting SORBA's increasing membership, the successes of our chapters this year (with emphasis on the "G-5" presentation), the importance of Chapter leadership in this continuing success and our ability to share stories and methods to impact our abilities to advocate for and create new and improved trails.

## **AGENDA ITEMS**

### **1. SORBA Financials – Angela Allen**

Angela reported some high-level numbers for year-end 2020 including a net income overage of almost \$35,000 on the year. She noted Terry is carefully monitoring our insurance cover and the 2 ongoing claims against our insurer.

Stan of NE Georgia asked if we can shop for better coverage/ pricing and the answer was, no, there is not currently any marketplace for the specialized cover we have available to us at this time.

### **2. IMBA – SORBA Agreement**

Terry reported that we are re-negotiating our current agreement with IMBA for shared revenue and services. Based on our historical relationship and the improved finances of both organizations, we propose to have a different sharing and split of SORBA's membership income and for SORBA to begin paying most of its own bills. SORBA would still share payroll and IMBA Local services provided by IMBA. (The discussion is for a reduced cost for SORBA for "Local" services. The payroll and staff benefit expenses under IMBA are less than what SORBA could provide for itself.) Hopefully a new proposal will be introduced to the SORBA Board for discussion and approval at the Fall 2020 meeting. Mark A. suggested this should/ will be a win-win for IMBA and SORBA.

### **3. IMBA Local – Anthony Duncan**

**2021 Membership Drive.** Ongoing through the end of June; "Keep the pressure on"! Largest numbers come at the end of the campaign. QR codes are available on line. Use of the recommended actions will give the best effects to your increased memberships.

**Dig In Program.** Applications are now online and are due at the end of May. A tool kit and webinar are available. Note the 10% administration fee.

**New Advocacy Program.** Is coming in June – final date TBD.

**NICA Workshop.** This will be to closer align NICA and IMBA's missions, Tom Nelson of NEBA will be participating.

**Updates to Membership Platform.** Plans for 2022: You will be able to join several different IMBA/ SORBA organizations in the system; database update and membership

overhaul will be funded by IMBA; brand new Chapter leader dashboard will integrate with the membership platform. The IMBA IT team is busy at work on these upgrades.

IMBA Local New Administrator. "Holly" starts June 16<sup>th</sup> and will reach out to all Local / SORBA Chapters. This new role will free up Anthony and Jen from many admin duties.

#### **4. Insurance Update.**

A Florida claim was recently settled by SORBA's insurer for \$15,000. Our agent suggests not to worry as this claim was filed with a different carrier than our current one. The other outstanding claim is over 5 years old and "hopefully should not" affect our cover going forward. Reminder: we are 48 Chapters strong and share the same type of coverage with the other IMBA Local Chapters who participate – we also have MOU's in place and an Operational Manual and practices to follow to reduce our risks. We continue to work towards new Recreational Use Statutes in the various States to reduce exposure and insurance costs long term.

Q: Piedmont Fate Tire: Do we need contingency funds for insurance in case membership plateaus? Ans.: While insurance costs are foremost in mind, believe we have them under control at this time.

Furter extended discussion on insurance topics, including: need for regular inspections of wooden and technical trail features; technical definitions for trail features; perhaps use of certified training program(s) by IMBA (Anthony suggested an IMBA planned risk management program had to be put on hold for now due to loss of staff), and/ or reliance on professional builders for risk management concerns when building features, and the importance of trail signage. Overall risk management is an ever-growing concern and need for all Chapters!

#### **5. Philip Darden – Formal Introduction as SORBA's new Assistant Director**

Philip has been on board for 4 1/2 months and is deep into his new role. He brings great experience as the past CAMP President, a graphic designer, retail bike shop manager, and photographer.

Philip's comments and focus:

How do we best tell our story to members and others about what we do – through website, social media platforms, and translate that to new sponsorships for SORBA in our communities. We need to be proactively looking for these opportunities.

Our Membership numbers continue upward. Be sure your “trigger” e-mails are customized for your Chapter as this is the best way to engage our members for action and their membership renewals.

He’s working on a retail membership program for SORBA and an IMBA sponsored membership photo contest (“What would we do without Trails?”).

#### **6. Google Drive Update – Mark Arcelle**

This is a great resource for the Chapters to use to store and insure documents are available to the Chapter for regulatory compliance, transitions in leadership and sharing best practices. Mark is working on easier access to this resource for all Chapters.

#### **7. Deb Caffin and Michelle Mitchel, USFS**

Deb reported that she received new funding for educational resources and she’s now working on new workshops for trail user groups and volunteers to help assess trails in the National Forest and to identify what needs to be fixed with new federal funding. Deb then introduced Michelle Mitchell as the new Director for Recreation, Wilderness, Heritage Trails and Volunteer Partners.

Michelle touted the stellar team in place in the Southern Region including Volunteers such as SORBA, which is recognized nation-wide. She discussed:

- Equity concerns for populations not now participating
- Seeking shared stewardship with collective goals with non-public stewards/ volunteers
- The Great American Outdoor Act and its funding is an opportunity to deliver excellence along with a National Trails Strategy and a “10 year challenge”

Deb discussed some “teasers” looking forward:

- While awaiting actual GAOA funding, her initial focus is on deferred maintenance for FS resources such as campgrounds and other improvements that the public will see and support for future funding
- Trail damage and how to make trails sustainable
- Inspection training for trail bridges – what’s important for minor (wood only) versus major (mixed materials) bridges that require engineers
- A Center of Excellence model for sub-regional volunteers/ organizers which will include the need for MOU relationships for all organizations working with the FS
- Finally, a 10 year challenge to build and support sustainable trails (systems and required conditions):

- This plan will include 10 elements beginning with a “Launch and Learn Phase I ... resulting in Peak Performance at Phase X
- These materials will be accessible on-line using a shared model and accessible to all.
- Much of the Challenge will be “Agency-focused” but a lot of the Phases will have the opportunity for cross training, user ethics and outreach and sharing information.
- She is very anxious for the deep dive into this 10 year challenge.
- E-Bike Update – no change (yet) in the FS policy – all classes of e-bikes now considered motorized, but the FS is looking at comments to do further policy making

### **8. Future Meetings**

– **Woodstock GA** October 30<sup>th</sup> meeting with a Halloween theme (bring costumes) and hosts who know how to party!

-**Spring 2022 in Talahassee FL** close to their March trail Festival date

### **OTHER ITEMS**

- General discussion about “one-wheeled” boards on trails and their motorized and/or ADA status. It was suggested if these are an issue on any trails, it should become a discussion with the land manager to make them aware and get their guidance. Deb added that for the FS, ADA accessibility is distinguished by something used daily (in the home) for mobility.

Upon RAMBO’s Motion to close the meeting, seconded by Huntsville, the meeting adjourned at 11:26