

RMAA Annual Report, 2021–2022

The following summary covers the period October 20, 2021 through October 14, 2022 to include the most recent update to the Rocky Mountain Anthropological Association bylaws. Previous annual reports can be found on the “News/Announcements” page of the RMAA website.

RMAA Board Meetings

Three RMAA meetings of the Board of Directors (BOD) were held during the past year, all via Google Meet video conference calls. The first of these meetings took place on October 29, 2021 and was conducted as the annual general business of RMAA for 2021, as required in the bylaws. Dr. Jason LaBelle, co-chair of RMAC 2021, attended at the request of the BOD. Agenda items discussed during this meeting were as follows:

- RMAA Treasurer’s report
- RMAC 2021 cancellation details
- RMAC 2023 planning for Laramie, WY
- Future venues for RMAC 2025 and beyond
- Fundraising options
- Website and social media outreach
- Honoring major past contributors to Rocky Mountain research
- RMAA annual report
- Participation in the SAA Council of Allied Societies
- BOD election results for 2021

The draft minutes of this meeting were made available for review to Board members on November 21 and were finalized on December 10, 2021.

Several weeks later the second meeting of the Board of Directors took place on December 10, 2021. Agenda items discussed during this meeting included:

- RMAA Treasurer’s report
- Fundraising and merchandise sales
- Service award to Bill Eckerle

- RMAC 2023 planning and progress
- Financial assistance to students for RMAC 2023
- RMAC 2025 venue prospects and options
- RMAA Officers for 2021-2023
- RMAA financial investment options other than checking account
- Website and social media outreach

The draft minutes of this meeting were made available for review to Board members on December 31, 2021, and the final version was approved at the next meeting on September 16, 2022.

The third board meeting of the year occurred on September 16, 2022 and was conducted as the annual general business of RMAA for 2022. Agenda items discussed during this meeting were as follows:

- RMAA Treasurer's report
- RMAA/RMAC fundraising, primarily via merchandise sales
- Service award to Bill Eckerle for his long tenure on the Board of Directors
- Planning progress for RMAC 2023 in Laramie, WY
- Future coordination with the Great Basin Anthropological Conference (GBAC) on holding RMACs in odd- vs. even-numbered years
- Assistance to students for presentations and/or attendance at RMAC 2023
- Bylaws update specifying financial assistance to students and others
- RMAA social media outreach
- RMAA annual report for 2021-2022

The draft minutes of this meeting were made available for review to Board members on October 14, 2022 and will be subject to approval by the Board at the next Board meeting in January 2023.

RMAA Officers and Directors

The most current term for the BOD began on October 18, 2021 with the conclusion of an online election. The eight Officers and Directors serving this past year were: Kenneth Cannon, President; Rebecca Sgouros, Vice-President; Spencer Pelton, Treasurer; Kevin Black, Secretary; and Directors Molly Boeka Cannon, Beth

Horton, Jena Sadd, and Matt Stirn. Four of those eight have completed the first year of their four-year terms—K. Cannon, Horton, Sadd, and Stirn—while the other four Directors’ terms expire next year at the end of RMAC 2023.

RMAA Finances

Spencer Pelton, RMAA Treasurer, provided summaries of financial activity at each of the three Board meetings, along with the balance current to the date of this annual report. The checking account balance—on deposit in a US Bank in Laramie, WY—was \$11,998.45 as of October 1, 2021, and finished at \$11,553.45 on October 14, 2022.

As is typical in a “between conferences” off year for RMAA, financial expenditure and income transactions were few in number. The largest of the year’s expenses was \$275 to Labenz and Associates for tax preparation services. Other expenses included the Utah corporation registration fee of \$10, payment of \$78.11 for design and production of a service award for Bill Eckerle, and monthly \$5 service fees for account maintenance. The latter expense was lowered from the previous year with a change from paper to digital statements in November 2021.

During each of the three RMAA meetings held during the year, extensive discussions were held regarding the BOD’s desire to provide some form of financial assistance to students. The number and size of financial awards were among the details debated, but it was also found that the current RMAA Bylaws could be interpreted to prohibit such direct outlays of funds. Ultimately, the addition of a subsection to Article 1.1 of the Bylaws was drafted and approved, explicitly allowing such expenditures to be made [see below].

One other discussion item involving RMAA finances centered on the possibility of investing some of the checking account funds in financial instruments that might generate additional income for the organization. Options researched included Certificates of Deposit (CDs) and mutual funds. Advice from US Bank, Labenz and Associates, and others was sought in this regard. As a result of their guidance and that of the RMAA Treasurer, the BOD decided that our pool of funds was currently insufficient afford such investments given the upcoming obligation to fund RMAC 2023.

RMAA Student Assistance

Offering some form of financial assistance to students presenting at, or attending, RMACs has been a long-standing desire of the BOD. This subject continued to be a discussion item at each of the three meetings as well as in additional email conversations held during the past year. A wide variety of ideas facilitating student participation at RMAC was offered by the Directors, in part based on reviews of how other similar organizations encourage student participation. One of the frequently mentioned ideas focused on financial aid as travel grants to students traveling long distances to a conference. There was also discussion of the relative merits of limiting assistance just to those students who present papers or posters at RMAC, vs. providing free registration to all students wishing to attend the conference.

In addition, from discussions with Labenz & Associates, Treasurer Spencer Pelton urged the BOD to focus on need-based grants rather than merit-based awards. He also noted the need for RMAA to keep awards below \$600 each in order to comply with federal tax rules regarding non-profit organizations. This led to further discussions about the scale of assistance RMAA might be able to afford, given the current size of our checking account and upcoming budget needs for RMAC 2023. A preliminary range of \$2,000 to \$3,000 in total student assistance was offered as a workable budget for RMAC 2023 in Laramie, WY.

A related topic for extensive discussion was the fundraising needed to offset the student aid expenses. For the most part, these conversations considered merchandise sales as one of the more obvious ways to raise funds, along with direct appeals for donations restricted to student assistance. Further details on the results of these discussions on merchandise sales is presented below.

Another critical detail addressed by the BOD involved updating the RMAA Bylaws to include specific language allowing the organization to provide financial aid to students. The need for this step came from careful reading of Bylaws Article 1.1 that reads: “No part of the net earnings of the Corporation shall inure to any individual or organization not qualifying as exempt under §501(c)(3) of the Code, excepting such reasonable compensation that the Corporation may pay for services actually rendered to the Corporation, or allowed as a reasonable allowance for

authorized expenditures incurred on behalf of the Corporation.” A narrow interpretation of this passage would seem to exclude student aid, leading to the September 2022 Bylaws addition detailed below.

Once the Bylaws addition was formally approved on September 16 and posted by the BOD on the website and Facebook page, there soon followed additional postings on those outlets advertising the sale of RMAA-branded merchandise as being a fund-raising effort specific to student assistance for RMAC 2023. These ads included the Bonfire.com website URL where images of the merchandise in various color schemes can be viewed and items purchased, as well as a QR code that links to the same website.

RMAA Bylaws

As noted above, BOD discussions about how to financially support students at RMACs revealed that language in Article 1.1 of the Bylaws could be interpreted to prevent such assistance to students and others whose research meshes with the goals and purpose of the organization. Among the suggestions from the Directors was to limit the size of individual awards to less than \$600 to avoid federal tax consequences. RMAA Secretary Kevin Black was then tasked with drafting a new subsection to Article 1.1 that would enable the BOD to provide financial assistance to worthy recipients.

An initial draft of the Bylaws addition was circulated to all Directors in March 2022, and again in September prior to the annual business meeting. Review of the draft language led to only one minor grammatical correction, after which the BOD approved the following Bylaws addition, a new subsection (a) to Article 1.1, during the meeting on September 16, 2022:

“Notwithstanding the restrictions in 1.1 and in keeping with the primary purpose of the Corporation stated above, the organization may provide financial assistance as allowances, awards, donations, gifts, grants, honoraria, scholarships, stipends, or subsidies not to exceed \$600 to parties that wish to attend a Rocky Mountain Anthropological Conference or whose work is relevant to the Corporation’s research interests and mission.”

On October 14, a copy of the updated Bylaws was circulated to the BOD, followed by posting of this update on the RMAA website and Facebook page. Separately, a copy of the last Bylaws page began to be circulated to the Directors for their digital signatures.

RMAA Fundraising

Discussions about the sale of RMAA/RMAC-branded merchandise as our primary fundraising effort continued throughout the past year, led by Vice-President Sgouros. With the on-line sales details still in progress at the time of the 2021 annual meeting, more detailed planning was deferred to the December 2021 BOD meeting. At that time, it was agreed that sales promotions should begin in earnest in early January, since holiday shipping delays were problematic at that point.

However, direct sales pitches to those on the RMAA email list also required further coordination with our Mailchimp service, and this further delayed significant progress on this objective. During the 2022 annual meeting, the BOD redoubled their efforts to push merchandise sales, and Vice-President Sgouros provided the Bonfire.com website address where the various kinds of merchandise can be viewed and purchased [<https://www.bonfire.com/store/rmaa-merchandise/>]. Goods available for purchase include short- and long-sleeved t-shirts, sweatshirts, pullover hoodies, and coffee mugs.

The September meeting also included conversations about apparel logo designs and colors, as well as whether the emphasis should be on generic RMAA branded items or themed designs specific to RMAC 2023. The decision was made to focus initial sales on items with RMAA logos, and perhaps to add RMAC 2023-specific designs at a later date closer to the time of the conference. The BOD agreed that advertising the availability of merchandise should emphasize that proceeds will be used for student assistance to RMAC 2023. Shortly after the meeting, such ads were posted on our Facebook page and website.

One important detail yet to be finalized by the end of this reporting period is the financial mechanism to funnel sales proceeds to the RMAA checking account. Discussions between Treasurer Spencer Pelton and other RMAA Officers initially

focused on changing the existing PayPal account to a login using our RMAA Gmail address. However, that change may not be feasible and other payment service options were being discussed in October 2022.

RMAC 2021

Prior to this reporting period, RMAC committee members Bonnie Pitblado (University of Oklahoma), Jason LaBelle (Colorado State University), Caroline Gabe and Chris Merriman (both of Adams State University) announced the cancellation of the planned conference in Alamosa, CO due to a resurgence of the Covid 19 pandemic. Dr. LaBelle reviewed the sequence of events leading up to that decision at the 2021 annual business meeting. At that meeting, the BOD requested a final report detailing registration figures for the cancelled conference.

After the annual meeting, Dr. Pitblado sent the BOD an Excel file with those registration details. At the time of the cancellation on August 12, the registration figure for the planned September 9–11, 2021 conference was 41 people, including eight students. Of those 41 registrants, nine had intended to present a poster at the conference. Financially, total RMAC expenditures were negligible because the deadlines to make deposits to reserve blocks of rooms at local lodging establishments had not been reached. Other routine conference expenditures likewise had not yet been made.

RMAC 2023

Planning for the next RMAC in Laramie, WY was on-going throughout the past year. Early discussions among the BOD assumed that the venue for the conference would be in a conference center at the Hilton Garden Inn or at the Rochelle Gateway Center on the campus of the University of Wyoming (UW). Conference committee members at that time included Marcel Kornfeld and RMAA Treasurer Spencer Pelton, but Dr. Pelton also expected that other UW Anthropology Dept. faculty members would participate.

Other discussions about this meeting were heavily focused on the issue of boosting student attendance/participation via some form of financial assistance, as detailed above. President Cannon pointed out that attendance at RMAC 2019 in Logan, UT included 32 students and that we could plan for a similar number next year

in Laramie in consideration of the financial impact of offering free registration or travel grants to students.

At the annual meeting in September 2022, additional issues related to RMAC 2023 were addressed. One of these concerns was about scheduling RMAC so as not to conflict with other conferences in adjacent regions, specifically the Plains and Great Basin events. Given that the GBAC is now scheduled for October 18-21, 2023 in Bend, OR and the Plains Anthropological Conference (PAC) will be in Rapid City, SD but at an unspecified date in 2023, the BOD decided that RMAC 2023 should be set earlier in the fall but at least a couple weeks after the start of university quarters/semesters. A tentative date of September 21-24, 2023 was agreed upon but, unfortunately, shortly after the meeting it was found that the preferred venue was unavailable on those days.

Dr. Kornfeld then pointed out that an additional critical detail to consider was the University of Wyoming's football schedule since local motels are filled on home game weekends. The currently published UW schedule for 2023 is only finalized through September 2023 so the BOD agreed on a second tentative date of October 5-8, 2023 pending final word on next year's football schedule and dates for the PAC.

Also during this year's annual meeting, given that the exact dates for RMAC 2023 have not been set in stone, Dr. Pelton described an alternative venue option near Laramie, but not involving the Hilton Garden Inn as the primary conference hotel. This option is sited at a mountain resort facility near Centennial, WY in the foothills of the Snowy Range. Advantages include the scenic mountain setting during the fall foliage color period, access to nearby archaeological sites for field trips, and a more intimate conference experience with rustic accommodations. Disadvantages would be a lower limit on attendance of 50-60 people, and the resulting lower income RMAA would receive to cover venue rental costs and financial aid to students.

Several of the Directors agreed that the advantages were quite attractive ones, while acknowledging the realities of limited attendance, lower registration income, and the generally more difficult access to the area. Ultimately, the BOD supported the original plan to hold RMAC 2023 within the city of Laramie, dates to be determined.

RMAC 2024/2025

At the beginning of this reporting period, the plan for future RMACs was to continue holding biennial conferences in odd-numbered years, with RMAC 2025 tentatively scheduled for Boise, ID or another location in that state. Idaho has been of interest to the BOD given that none of our conferences have ever been held in that Rocky Mountain state. Toward that end, in late October and November 2021, President Cannon resumed contacting Idaho archaeologists and organizations on the possibility of hosting RMAC 2025 in their state. All those contacts declined his request to help organize the 2025 conference.

With most of the past year devoted to planning for RMAC 2023, the next effort to look at RMAC venues beyond 2023 came in August and September. In mid-August, President Cannon received confirmation from the GBAC president that their organization will be switching the Great Basin conference to odd-numbered years for the foreseeable future. Since it has been the intention of RMAA to hold RMACs in alternate years with GBAC, this news became an important agenda item for the annual meeting in September.

In that meeting, initial discussions examined the degree of overlap in attendance between the GBACs and RMACs, with the number of people likely fluctuating depending on the location of each conference. It was noted that the chances that people might attend both conferences in the same year would increase if the two events were scheduled at least two weeks apart. Further, if RMAA wanted to continue to hold conferences in years alternating with GBAC, the BOD would need to decide to either hold RMAC in consecutive years 2023-2024 or to have a three-year gap between 2023 and 2026. The pros and cons of holding a virtual event in 2025 for posters and/or student presentations to bridge the 2023-2026 gap were also debated.

Despite the current lack of organizers for an RMAC in the traditional odd year rotation for 2025, there was minimal enthusiasm for having a three year gap between RMACs in 2023 and 2026. Further discussions then focused on the possibility of a conference in 2024, with renewed interest in the Alamosa, CO venue that was cancelled in 2021. Several Directors volunteered to contact members of the RMAC 2021 conference committee as well as other archaeologists at Colorado universities

and colleges. The results of those efforts were not available by the end of the reporting period.

RMAA Social Media and Website

Webmaster Mary Sullivan received assistance from her predecessor, David Rockwell, for several months after accepting the position in August 2021. On December 23, she assumed sole responsibility as the RMAA webmaster. However, the tool to collect analytical data tracking website usage was not enabled when she took over in 2021, a shortcoming that was rectified in mid-September 2022. Kevin Black, RMAA Secretary, continued as the lead contact for prospective changes and updates. During the year, eight of the nine web pages were updated. The only website page not updated this year was the “Forum.” Updated pages are as follows:

“Home” page: Changes to this page occurred in three separate updates. The initial change provided preliminary information about RMAC 2023, posted in December 2021. This was followed by an update to the popup screen in January 2022 with more RMAC 2023 details. The third update in September 2022 announced the availability of RMAA-branded merchandise, with proceeds targeting student assistance for RMAC.

“About RMAA”: One change was made on October 14, 2022, updating the link to the revised RMAA Bylaws, version 16 September 2022.

“Member Projects”: Links to two projects from RMAA President Ken Cannon were added in December 2021.

“Past Meetings”: At the end of October 2021, this page was updated with the addition of RMAC 2021 details.

“News/Announcements”: Over a dozen changes were made to this page on seven different occasions. Four edits were made in late October 2021 with the addition of a new annual report, a revised RMAC 2021 cancellation notice, deletion of RMAC 2019 information, and the addition of RMAA Board of Directors election results. In December, a tribute to Yellowstone scientist Ken Pierce was added. The next month, a small revision of RMAA election results was made, along with the addition of an

announcement on BYU's Redd Center grant program application process, and finally the addition of news about the 2022 International Mountain Conference to be held in Innsbruck, Austria.

Two more changes to this page appeared in April with the addition of an 'In Memorium' tribute after the passing of former RMAA Director Mary Lou Larson, and the removal of the Redd Center grant applications announcement, now closed. In September, the news about the 2021 BOD election results was removed, and details were added about the availability of RMAA merchandise to support students at RMAC 2023. The final revisions occurred on October 14, 2022 with the posting of the revised Bylaws, and removal of the announcement on the Innsbruck, Austria conference, since concluded.

"Links": At the end of January, a hotlink to the 2022 International Mountain Conference website was added, and an obsolete link to a Social Science Resource Guide was deleted.

"RMAC 2021/2023": This page was revised late in October 2021 deleting registration and abstract submission links and adding the BOD election results. In January, the updated heading 'RMAC 2023' was posted along with additional details on the Laramie, WY conference. At the end of this report period, an announcement was added on the sales of RMAA merchandise to support students.

"Contact Us": Two changes have been made on this page, the first in late October 2021 providing the list of the new Board of Directors. The second update in December announced Director Rebecca Sgouros as the new RMAA Vice-President.

RMAA's Social Media Committee manages the organization's Facebook page. Their work over the past year involved posting occasional updates about progress in planning for the 2023 RMAC in Laramie, student assistance for that conference, and fundraising via merchandise sales at Bonfire.com.

Miscellaneous

In late Aug 2022 Glenn Stone of Grand Junction, CO emailed Secretary Kevin Black, asking about and requesting a copy of published papers from past RMAC

conferences. Black replied that no such publications exist but did mention the “Member Projects” website page as our only current option. On October 26, 2021, secretary Black distributed the draft of the 2020-2021 annual report to the Board of Directors, and it was posted in final form at the end of that month.

At the suggestion of President Ken Cannon, the BOD approved a small (< \$100) expenditure to give an award to past Director Bill Eckerle for his extensive service to the organization. The design of the award was discussed in March, a final design of a clear acrylic ‘iceberg’ form was approved in June, and the award was made in July 2022. The inscription reads “In highest appreciation for your service to the Rocky Mountain Anthropological Association” along with a list of his roles. Dr. Eckerle served on the BOD in 2013-2021; he was the RMAA Treasurer during 2013-2019, and he volunteered as an RMAC Field Trip Leader in 2007 and 2015. President Cannon ordered the design from Al’s Trophies and Frames in Logan, UT.

No other RMAA business was reported during the year.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kevin Black
RMAA Secretary