

## **RMAA Annual Report, 2022–2023**

The following summary covers the period October 15, 2022 through October 14, 2023. Previous annual reports can be found on the “[RMAA Reports](#)” page of the website.

### **RMAA Board Meetings**

Four 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 January 25, 2023, having been rescheduled from January 20. Agenda items discussed during this meeting were as follows:

- RMAA Treasurer’s report
- Fundraising progress through merchandise sales
- RMAC 2023 planning for Laramie, WY
- Financial assistance to students for RMAC 2023
- RMAA annual report 2021-2022
- Progress with signature page for updated Bylaws
- Social media outreach
- RMAC 2025 scheduling
- Joining the Collaborative Anthropology Network

The draft minutes of this meeting were made available for review to Board members on April 15 and were finalized during the BOD meeting on May 12, 2023.

The second meeting of the Board of Directors took place on May 12, 2023. Agenda items discussed during this meeting included:

- RMAA Treasurer’s report
- RMAC 2023 planning and progress
- Fundraising and merchandise sales
- Website updates and social media outreach
- BOD election planning for 2023

The draft minutes of this meeting were made available for review to Board members on July 9, and the final version was approved at the BOD meeting on September 8, 2023.

The third board meeting of the year took place as a shortened emergency session on July 24, 2023 due to unforeseen developments in scheduling for RMAC 2023. Agenda items discussed during this meeting were as follows:

- Scheduling conflict for RMAC 2023
- Rescheduling options for RMAC 2023 or 2024 in Laramie, WY
- BOD election 2023, nominations progress

The draft minutes of this meeting were made available for review to Board members on August 22, and the final version was approved at the BOD meeting on September 8, 2023.

The fourth board meeting of the year took place on September 8, 2023. Agenda items discussed during this meeting were as follows:

- RMAA Treasurer's report
- Planning progress for RMAC 2023/2024 in Laramie, WY
- RMAA/RMAC fundraising, primarily via merchandise sales
- Website updates and social media outreach
- BOD election for 2023
- RMAC 2025
- RMAA annual report for 2022-2023

The draft minutes of this meeting were made available for review to Board members on September 23, and the final version was to be discussed at the BOD business meeting on October 22, 2023 after the end of the reporting period.

Note that the annual business meetings for 2022 and 2023 required in the RMAA bylaws took place shortly before and after the current reporting period. The business meeting for 2022 occurred on September 16, 2022 and a brief summary of that meeting can be found in last year's annual report, online at

<https://www.rockymtnanthro.org/Forum/>. The business meeting for 2023 occurred on October 22, 2023, and will be summarized in next year's report.

### **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 second year of their four-year terms—K. Cannon, Horton, Sadd, and Stirn—while the other four Directors' terms expire later this month at the end of the 2023 annual business meeting.

With four BOD terms expiring this year, an online election to select four new Directors was planned and conducted. Initial discussions took place during the BOD meeting of May 12, 2023. Several Directors volunteered to assist the RMAA Secretary in recruiting candidates to appear on the ballot. Short biographies and photographs of the candidates were submitted to the RMAA Vice-President, which were made available at the start of the balloting period on October 3, 2023.

The election was conducted using the Mailchimp platform, sent to 537 email addresses in the current RMAA list. There were five nominees listed on the ballot to fill the four open positions, including three of four current Directors whose terms expire this year: Kevin Black, Spencer Pelton, Sarah Rothwell, Rebecca Sgouros, and Aaron Whittenburg. Online balloting concluded on October 20, 2023, just after the current reporting period.

### **RMAA Bylaws**

One Bylaws addition, a new subsection (a) to Article 1.1, had been approved during the general business meeting on September 16, 2022. This updated version was posted on the RMAA website and Facebook page on October 17, 2022. Separately, a copy of the last Bylaws page was signed by President Ken Cannon, and on January 25, 2023 this page began to be circulated to the other seven Directors for their digital signatures. No other Bylaws changes were made or discussed during the year.

## **RMAA Finances**

Spencer Pelton, RMAA Treasurer, provided summaries of financial activity at three of the four Board meetings, along with the balance current to the date of this annual report. The checking account balance was \$11,553.45 as of October 15, 2022, and finished at \$6,032.10 on October 14, 2023. The RMAA checking account was in a US Bank in Laramie, WY for the past few years, but was moved to a branch of the Wells Fargo Bank in Laramie [with a lower monthly fee] on November 11, 2022. In January 2023, our PayPal account was linked to that new bank account.

RMAA financial expenditure and income transactions were limited in number. The largest of the year's expenses were \$5,000 to UW Events as a deposit for RMAC 2023/2024, and \$365 to Labenz & Associates for accounting services. Other expenses included \$78.11 to reimburse Ken Cannon for the cost of the service award to Bill Eckerle, \$20 to the State of Utah for the annual corporate renewal fee, a fee of \$38.24 to purchase checks for the new Wells Fargo business checking account, and monthly \$5 service fees for US Bank account maintenance before moving the account to Wells Fargo.

Under ordinary circumstances, revenue related to the approach of RMAC 2023 in the form of registration fees would be expected during the months leading up to the conference. However, the decision to push the dates for the conference to early May 2024 was made before virtually any such income had been received. Only one RMAC registration fee payment had been received before the date change, and income from merchandise sales to date has totaled \$91.90 in our PayPal account through Bonfire.com.

## **RMAC 2023/2024**

The RMAC 2023 committee is composed of four members, including RMAA Treasurer Spencer Pelton, University of Wyoming (UW) archaeologist Marcel Kornfeld, Marcia Peterson (Wyoming Assistant State Archaeologist), and Amanda Casteneda with the Wyoming SHPO. Committee planning for RMAC in Laramie, WY was on-going throughout most of the past year. They confirmed that the venue for the conference will be the Marian H. Rochelle Gateway Center on the UW campus, to be held on October 5-8, 2023.

During November and December, discussions focused on logistics of the conference such as meeting space requirements, field trip possibilities, and lodging options for registrants. Other conversations about RMAC were aimed toward boosting student attendance/participation via some form of financial assistance such as offering free registration or travel grants, as further detailed below. The BOD considered merchandise sales as one source of revenue to fund student assistance, and the RMAC Committee worked on designs for conference-themed apparel to boost such sales. The Committee also pursued another traditional source of revenue for RMAC: sponsorships solicited from state and federal agencies, and archaeological consulting firms.

Publicity about RMAC 2023 began with brief alerts on the Facebook page and website before many scheduling details were known. Part of the work done to reach as wide an audience as possible was to collate email addresses from as many different sources as possible. Once more information was available, an email blast about RMAC 2023 was sent via this expanded list in late March 2023, along with further website updates and Facebook postings. In April, a conference flyer was developed and distributed as well.

During the BOD meeting in January, a preliminary summary schedule of RMAC events was presented by Spencer Pelton, and he confirmed that schedule in the following BOD meeting held in May. At the time, the RMAC Committee assumed the following to be the final plan for October 5-8, 2023: an Early Bird reception on Thursday evening; a reception in the Anthropology building on Saturday night including food and drinks; campus tours of the museum, repository, and labs; and field trip options on Sunday to Carbon City—a Union Pacific railroad town—west of Laramie, a game drive site south of Laramie, and the Sherman town site near Laramie (another Union Pacific railroad site).

Advance registration fees were set at \$80 for students and \$120 for everyone else, increasing to \$100 for students and \$140 for other walk-ins at the conference itself. Also, the committee decided to not pre-print conference programs for all registrants. Instead, the program will be digital, and it will be made available via a QR code. Printed programs will be offered by individual request only.

However, as early as September 2022, Dr. Kornfeld had alerted the BOD to a critical detail in scheduling RMAC 2023, that being the UW football schedule since local motels would be filled on home game weekends. He noted that Laramie's lodging facilities would not reserve blocks of rooms for RMAC attendees until the UW football schedule was finalized. That schedule was not released until after the BOD meeting in May, and Spencer Pelton reported the bad news to the BOD in late July that the UW football team would host a home game in Laramie on October 7 during RMAC 2023.

With the UW home football schedule in place, lodging prices in Laramie were raised to a range around \$400 per night, well above the level that most archaeologists budget for conference attendance. This news led the BOD to hold an "emergency" meeting on July 24 to discuss the consequences of this news. It was generally agreed that the meeting dates would have to be changed, with two primary options suggested by Dr. Pelton: November 2023 and sometime in the spring months of 2024. The extensive discussion that followed settled on May 2-5, 2024 as the first priority and November 9-12, 2023 as Plan B should the spring dates not be available at the Gateway Center.

In early August, it was announced that the dates for RMAC had officially been changed to May 2-5, 2024. This fact was posted on the website, our Facebook page, and in an email blast to nearly 540 recipients. This meeting will be held in conjunction with the Wyoming Archaeological Society's annual meeting which, it is hoped, will provide a boost to attendance. RMAC will have five rooms at the Gateway Center for 2.5 days and, due to rescheduling, RMAA was required to make a deposit of \$5,000 which occurred on September 21. Earlier estimates put the total expenditures for RMAC at about \$13,000 with a goal of \$8,000 in sponsorships to help cover those costs.

During the May 2023 BOD meeting, the Directors discussed the possibility of conducting a photo contest, with the winning submissions to be announced at RMAC in October. However, with the postponement of the conference, little further action was taken over the summer. The topic was briefly discussed at the BOD meeting in September, and it was agreed that there was still sufficient time to conduct the event before RMAC in May 2024.

## **RMAA Student Assistance**

The Board's long-term efforts to provide some form[s] of financial assistance to students concluded this past year. Discussions focused on the relative merits of limiting assistance just to those students who present papers or posters at RMAC; providing reduced or free registration to all students wishing to attend the conference; subsidizing travel expenses to RMAC; and offering cash awards for the best presentations and posters. Decisions were also made on how to raise funds to cover the costs of all student assistance, given the earlier estimate of \$2,000 to \$3,000 as a workable budget for RMAC 2023 in Laramie, WY.

The BOD has long considered merchandise sales as one of the more obvious ways to raise funds, along with direct appeals for donations restricted to student assistance. Publicity about the availability of RMAA-branded apparel available through Bonfire.com was done through postings on Facebook and the website. A QR code was posted that takes viewers directly to the web page where RMAA merchandise is displayed and can be ordered, with proceeds forwarded to our PayPal account. Postings also emphasized that donations to RMAA would be directed into the fund for student assistance. A "Donate" page was added to the website to emphasize this campaign, and Donate buttons added to other website pages and on Facebook to broaden the coverage.

At the BOD meeting in January 2023, Spencer Pelton reported that the RMAC committee had decided on the following forms of student assistance. There will be four awards for best presentations, two each for graduate and undergraduate students. The proposed award is \$500 for each winning paper and poster. In addition, there will be \$100 travel awards given to 20 students. All other students will be able to attend for a reduced registration fee of \$80 compared to the full fee of \$120. Solicited donations from agencies and businesses are hoped to cover most of these costs.

## **RMAA Fundraising**

Fundraising efforts during the past year involved two different activities. The first, longer-term approach has been with sales of various kinds of merchandise available online at <https://www.bonfire.com/store/rmaa-merchandise/>. Proceeds from such sales help fund RMAC 2023/2034 and financial assistance to students who attend RMAC. Among the items that can be purchased through the website are mugs, long

sleeve and short sleeve T shirts, sweatshirts, hoodies in several styles and colors. Additional merchandise may be added to the current line of goods.

Also, sales are planned, but not yet underway, for similar items specifically branded with the RMAC logo of a cowboy riding a mammoth. Beyond T shirts, conference-specific items may include bandannas, hats, tote bags, etc. Publicity about our merchandise sales began with postings on Facebook and the website, with direct hotlinks to the Bonfire.com website. Updated details were posted in January and February 2023. Thus far, sales have been rather slow, totaling \$91.90 in revenue from Bonfire.com, with the postponement of RMAC contributing to the depressed sales pace to date.

The second approach to fundraising has been direct appeals for donations, both as undesignated cash contributions and sponsorships sold to fund RMAC events and student support. The aforementioned “Donate” buttons appearing on multiple pages of the website and on our Facebook page represent the broad effort to solicit cash contributions through our PayPal account. Initial efforts to identify sponsors for RMAC 2023 began early in the calendar year and are on-going with the delay of the conference to May 2024.

### **RMAC 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, 2022. In mid-August, President Cannon received confirmation from the president of the Great Basin Anthropological Conference (GBAC) 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 2022.

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.

With the postponement of RMAC 2023 to the spring of 2024, discussions renewed during subsequent BOD meetings about holding future RMACs in even-numbered vs. odd-numbered years. Pending identification of a host institution for the RMAC to follow the 2024 conference, it was tentatively decided to revert to odd-numbered years if a host can be secured. The related question about holding a potential RMAC 2025 in the spring or fall months was also debated, with some sentiment for leaving that decision up to those who may host the conference. The resolution of these issues was not concluded by the end of the reporting period.

### **RMAA Social Media and Website**

At the beginning of this reporting period, webmaster Mary Sullivan submitted her first annual report on website activity to the BOD. However, because the website usage tool to collect analytical data was not enabled until mid-September 2022, her

report was necessarily brief. Kevin Black, RMAA Secretary, continued as the lead contact for prospective changes and updates.

During the year, six of the nine web pages were updated, and one new page was added, “Donate.” The three website pages not updated this year were “Member Projects,” “Links,” and “Contact Us.” Updated pages are as follows:

“Home” page: Multiple changes to this page occurred in six separate updates. In October 2022, a link to RMAA-branded merchandise on Bonfire.com was added to the popup screen. The following month, news about RMAC 2023 was posted on both the main page and popup. In February, the merchandising URL was updated, and a “Donate” button linked to our Paypal account was posted. More RMAC 2023 details were added in April. The postponement of RMAC to May 2024 in Laramie, WY was announced in August, and the date of the annual business meeting was posted in early October 2023.

“About RMAA”: One formatting change to this page was made in May, 2023 by moving the page link from its original separate tab to a dropdown menu from the Home page.

“Forum”: Due to continued inactivity on this page, in May 2023 the BOD agreed to discontinue this label and rename it “RMAA Reports.” Links to all available RMAA annual reports were then moved from the News/Announcements page to this tab.

“Past Meetings”: In January 2023, a minor edit was made to the RMAC 2021 listing with the addition of the wording “15<sup>th</sup> Biennial RMAC” to the cancellation notice.

“News/Announcements”: Numerous changes were made to this page on five different occasions. Several edits were made in late October 2022 with the addition of links to the updated Bylaws and Bonfire.com merchandise website, and the removal of the outdated news about the 2022 International Mountain Conference earlier held in Innsbruck, Austria. A news blurb about RMAC 2023 was added the next month, followed by the posting of the RMAC 2023 flyer in April. Then, in May 2023, a link to

the RMAA annual report for 2021-2022 was added [shortly before all such annual report links were moved to the former “Forum” page; see above].

In the spring months of 2023, several email messages among the BOD highlighted current archaeology projects in the news along with the Board’s desire to further publicize such projects with relevance to the Rocky Mountain region on our Facebook page and website. Toward that end, links to five different news articles available online were added to this page in May and July. Finally, the date of the annual business meeting was posted in early October 2023.

“RMAC 2023”: This page was revised many times throughout the year, initially in late October 2022 with the addition of the link to the Bonfire.com web page for RMAA-branded merchandise. The next month, early news about the conference in Laramie was posted. Then, in January, an edit to the RMAC 2023 conference noted that this event will mark our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The next month, a “Donate” button linked to our PayPal account was added, followed in April with posting of the RMAC 2023 flyer. News about registration details and the availability of RMAC-themed T-shirts was added in July, shortly before the RMAC postponement to May 2024 was announced in August.

“Donate”: This new page on our website was created in February 2023. Its main purpose is to lead website visitors directly to the link where they can make donations via our PayPal account, even though identical “Donate” buttons have been added to other pages of this website.

RMAA’s Social Media Committee manages the organization’s Facebook page. RMAA Facebook (FB) currently has a little under 2,500 followers. For the past year we’ve been using our FB as a channel to provide updates about the organization (e.g., conference date change) and calls to action (e.g., board voting, merchandise sales). Our social media tends to ebb and flow based on events, being extremely active when we request calls for action and less so during the interim.

## **Annual Report 2021-2022**

After soliciting information from the Directors, a draft copy of the RMAA annual report for 2021-2022 was distributed to the BOD for their review at the end of October 2022. The report covered the period from October 20, 2021 through October 14, 2022. Minor edits were made to the report, but no major changes were considered necessary. The final version was posted on our Facebook page and website at the beginning of May 2023. All annual reports since 2017-2018 can be accessed on the [RMAA Reports page](#) of the website.

No other RMAA business was reported during the year.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kevin Black  
RMAA Secretary