TCS BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
MINUTES
Hyatt Regency Miami
Sunday, June 3, 2012
8:30 AM – 4:00 PM (EDT)

ATTENDANCE
President Lisa Schiavinato, *President-Elect* Kate Killerlain-Morrison, *Past President* Jeff Benoit, *Treasurer* Jeff Smith, *Secretary* Chris Ellis, *Directors:* Andy Bohlander, Rick DeVoe, Susan Farady, Patrick Lawrence, Rebekah Padgett, Bhaskaran Subramanian, Tony MacDonald; *Executive Director* Judy Tucker; *Ex-Officio Directors* Ariana Marshall, Paul Ticco

Not Present: *Director* Susan White

Welcome and Overview
Meeting began at 8:30 AM Lisa offered a friendly welcome to all of those in attendance and thanks everyone for their service to TCS. Meeting materials are shared and the day's agenda is briefly reviewed. Additional housekeeping matters are mentioned, along with minor changes and adjustments to student events that will be held throughout TCS 23. The meeting is turned over to Chad Nelsen (Environmental Director – Surfrider Foundation) to discuss fundraising strategies for nonprofit organizations.

Presentation:
Nonprofit Fundraising in Changing Times (Chad Nelsen, Surfrider Foundation)
- Surfrider has experienced incremental increases in their budget since 1993. Their budget has grown fast and substantially in past 20 years. They were able to grow their staff with a grant writer, individual giving staff, and a marketing/corporations person. Since 2008, Surfrider's budget has flattened. Chad emphasized that "flat is the new growth."
- There is a need to diversify revenue in Surfrider, so if any one stream goes away, they're still well positioned for obtaining revenue. Revenue streams include grants, membership donations, cause (corporate-level marketing), miscellaneous (mailings), workforce giving (e.g. United Way, Combined Federal Campaign, etc.), and appeals.
- Keys to success: need someone to lead the effort, need goals, need an engaged board, and importantly, avoid pitfalls that waste time (cited example of the *Fisher space pen)*. Avoid "hail marys" where you place all efforts on a single activity.
- Primary revenue streams: individual giving, grants, membership, corporate partner marketing. These account for 84% of Surfrider's revenue.
- Eight-step process for individual giving. On average, this is 12-18 month process:
    - 1-identify prospect,
    - 2-qualifying,
    - 3-proclivity/ability,
    - 4-cultivate,
    - 5-solicit (this is the hardest part),
    - 6-close,

- o 7-steward (let them know what's happening with their money),
  - o 8-repeat.
- Many donors want to give to chapters versus the national Surfrider office. "Local" sells. If the national organization clearly states the benefits it provides to the chapter in relation to fundraising, it can request a share of the funds raised.
- <u>Need to express the **clarity** of results and the **correlation** between their **gift** and results; "What we can do if you give to TCS…"</u>
- Grants: process similar to gift cycle… longer timeline/external timing; grant tracking, writing, and reporting. Keeps you disciplined and organized because it is project management. Downside: funds restricted to a project. Over time, a foundation staff member can become an advisor about what they might want to give TCS money to do.
- **Corporate partnerships**: since 2002 - $15,000 grew to $750,000. 50% come to Surfrider, 50% are solicited. From the corporation's viewpoint, this is cause-related marketing. They are looking for an opportunity to greenwash (use TCS to do things which help the corporation's brand). For TCS, the key factors include fit with the TCS mission and strategic plan, donation size, due diligence, and identifying a win-win. Avoid accepting money only to create more work (i.e., a new program/event) without progress toward TCS goals.
- **Membership purpose**: Raise money? Political weight? Contacts? You must clearly articulate benefits and scale them to price. Consider the model needed to run the membership machine (acquisition, maintenance, renewal).
- **TCS challenge**: how do we RETAIN members, while we continuing to acquire new ones?
- The idea of membership is changing. Individuals used to need to belong and would wait for newsletters and reports for information or go the website to find out what Surfrider was doing. Now some make a donation and feel like a member, but don't become active. They can "like" their Facebook page. Others are activists who join at the chapter level and pay no dues to the national organization. The trick is to know what they need, how they serve the national organization (membership purpose), and to build a relationship with those who have the potential to become individual donors.
- Surfrider readily adopted social media technologies because it realized that corporations view this as "eyeballs" reading about the corporation, which can be measured and used to indicate ROI. It recommends that TCS do the same.
- How to reach success via **social media**?
  - o Need to achieve and communicate clear results. Filling the pipeline (fundraising is constant), you have to ASK for money ("no" often means "not yet"). FOLLOW UP.
  - o Small events at the chapter level are incredibly successful. Big events through the national office are always touch and go.
  - o Surfrider engages supporters through social networking
  - o This is the most essential tool for corporate partnerships. They want to see an increase in the number of Facebook "likes" and posts such as "TCS does a deal with X sponsor."
  - o Overwhelming number of the nation (and Surfrider members!) obtain information through Web and social media (basically word of mouth). Social media is the most used, most trusted, and cheapest way to engage supporters.

- o Activists can be turned into members and then chapter officers. This level of engagement increases the chances of developing them into individual donors or helping to find corporate partners.
- o What do you want to say? Vary your message… promote events, highlight successes, CZM stories, ask questions ("Where can I find an article…?"), important/timely news, videos pictures. This is peer-to-peer learning which gives TCS the brand of the place to go to get the information I need.
- o How much posting? Facebook 2-3 times daily. Twitter 5-8 times daily. Encourage audience to debate. Remove inappropriate postings (drugs, sex, scams).
- o Use Twitter to promote events, livestream events, share stories, pictures. Teach members how to use filters to cut out all feeds except what they want.
- o LinkedIn is not currently used, but it might be good because it builds itself. There may be employer rules about what constitutes professional vs. personal use.
- o Very important to LISTEN! What are people interested in? Ask them questions. Engage them.
- o Hootsuite.com (manages multiple site accounts, schedules postings), bit.ly (shortens links, allows you to track interactions), Facebook Insights gives metrics.
- o TED has found a way to effectively package information.

TCS Fundraising Strategy

- TCS needs to think longer term, needs strong leadership, needs to stick to mission but remain open, and look for more partnership opportunities.
- TCS didn't have resources to conduct a full feasibility study. We did, however, achieve pro bono consulting (Chad Nelsen) and pro bono review of the fundraising strategy (Steve Tremble, Kara Flyg, and Larissa Hotra). Focus groups would be helpful, as well as a review of giving history trends. We should explore individuals and orgs that are unfamiliar with TCS, and identify what would bring them in.
- Need an overall strategy to **diversify funding**. Need for a diversity of campaigns.
- Examples: 1) Competitive grant program- raise $25K over two years; hold back $5K for overhead. 2) Strengthen TCS name recognition and sustainability in the regions- raise $10K between two TCS chapters in next two years. Chapters raise own funds for Chapter activities + contribute to mother ship.
- Need to rebuild relationships with core government agencies (e.g., NOAA, EPA). How to leverage off of Coastal Zone conference going away? Consider access to CZ conference sponsors. Identify specific needs for partners.
- There is a sentiment that we have good relationships with *some* federal offices, but not overall agencies. What is holding back the relationship: mission, activities, budget?
- TCS Board can't necessarily serve as TCS staff. Fundraising subcommittee should include a representative from each committee. Do we need a Board of Trustees? An Advisory Board?
- A strategy timeline has been developed. This does not include specific dates, but does offer a sequence in steps.
- Strategies for maintaining traditional contributors, more "on the ground" projects? What are motivating factors? What are hot issues?
- Consider foundations, such as the Oak Foundation, Packard, etc.

- What about corporate sponsors? Are their missions in line with TCS?
- Stewardship policies are important. How do we communicate with our sponsors? What is our policy going to be?
- Risks and challenges? If we appear desperate, we may appear weak. We may burn out the Board and Committees. How can we avoid money driving our mission?
- Revisit the idea of advocacy… do we want to take a stand on issues? They don't have to be wild and out of the box, but they can be things we support, that can, in turn, lead to more funding. Offer information for civic engagement (action or advocacy). Just don't tell them to go out and do it (grassroots lobbying), but leave it up to the individual to be an activist.
- Mid-career professionals should be considered in the TCS mission, as well.
- We need to think of ways to foster dialogue. This does not require us to take stands on issues. We simply need to "ask the questions" to initiate thoughtful discussion.
- Need to talk to Margaret Davidson as to how to capitalize if the CZ conference goes away.
- Are big meetings and conferences the model for the future?
- The **TCS niche** is training, convening and communicating. It never has been a traditional membership organization.
- TCS members are highly skilled professionals with expertise on interesting coastal issues.
- We have experts, we have pre-professional experts, we have expertise!
- Can we continue with the conference the way it has been, and, take on all of the additional responsibilities? Put another way, can we fundraise more for the same type of conference or do we need to do something different altogether?
- Can we do a virtual conference via live webcast?
- Lots of fundraising tasks are high levels of effort. We're already putting in lots of work through current committee structure.
- We don't have to get new members to get more money… there are other means, as clearly highlighted through Chad's presentation.
- We need to take a more positive tone about our problems. They can be overcome. We need to set high goals and an effective framework to address.
- Will TCS 24 move forward? What additional activities should we consider to reinforce the conference success? Conference would be a climax activity of these efforts.
  - The Board agreed that TCS should move forward with a TCS 24 conference, as our biennial conferences are the benchmark of the organization.
- Need to link fund raising strategy and to our goals in the strategic plan. Pull out those that can be accomplished with a common and most easily accomplished fund raising strategy.

2012 Membership Survey Results
The Membership Committee Chair led a discussion of the highlights of the 2012 TCS Membership Survey. The survey was administered to 249 individuals (all current members) and received 95 responses (38% response). Survey questions focused on demographic attributes of members (professional affiliation, years in coastal field, professional interests), evaluation of current membership benefits, and exploration of future, potential added benefits. Survey data can be found on the TCS Members section of the website.

Financial Report

TCS has enough assets to pay its obligations for TCS23, for budgeted 2012 activities, and for budgeted 2013 activities. Unless corrective actions are taken, TCS will be in a tough financial position by end of 2013.

Profit and loss statement, balance sheet, and cash flow projection:

- For normal income categories, TCS is on track. Conference income (registration & sponsorships) is lower than budgeted ($41,044 sponsorship income year to date of $80,600 pledged in comparison to a goal of $120,000; this is from a $25K loss in funding from EPA and a $18K loss in funding from NOAA OCRM). Events/Programs income (T&F income) is $2,428. Bulletin expense is on track ($1,648). All budget categories are on track, minus the conference. This is the main driver for our current financial position. Total assets and liabilities = $86,373, with an end-of-year cash flow projection $53,507. This is against the 2013 Net income of $49, 205 in the 2013 budget.
- We must also not forget the audit. This will be an additional cost to TCS.
- Will reconvene in July to discuss updating the 2012 and 2013 budget. The most likely place to cut expenses will be Executive Director's labor hours. We also need to discuss membership fees and explore the option of raising them. The Board also should discuss development of online jobs database that is accessible to members only. The Board agreed that the Jobs Listing emails are easily circulated to non-members. The Jobs Listing was cited as a significant benefit in the Membership Survey, and TCS needs to better protect it as a members-only asset. We need to agree to an approach, but focus on the "where" and the "what" later.
- TCS should have a membership drive every year.

Further Discussion of Fundraising Strategies

- What issue-oriented strategies can we use to increase membership, increase revenues, and have an impact in the regions? We also need to develop and implement a fundraising strategy that will help TCS be a more stable organization.
- We need to increase name recognition, enhance our communications vehicles, and develop a package of TCS-run educational events.
- We need to discuss the idea of a dues increase for 2013. This could fund an online jobs database for members only.
- We need to be flexible and opportunistic, as well. Use results of membership survey to inform issues on which TCS will focus.
- We must consider June-December 2012 activities, and 2013 activities.
- Regional events will not be focused solely on attracting new members. We should choose one as a test run.
- An example of a multi-objective regional event would be one held in the Southeast focused on CMSP involving the Governors' Alliance with a corporate job fair attached to it. This would accomplish getting increased recognition of TCS as the experts, attracting quality speakers to add to the brand, attracting sponsors, and converting attendees to members.
- We need to consider the cost-benefit of each of the proposed options. Also, we must determine the schedule and priority of activities.

- A sponsorship campaign and a membership drive, plus a new logo and greater communications, might be enough to buy time and jump start revenue.
- Below is a list of short-term goals:
  2012: membership drive
  2012: individual donor campaign (year-end tax deduction)
  2013: dues increase
  2013: educational events around an issue to demonstrate the value of TCS
  2014: conference
- Education Committee (via chair Rick DeVoe) volunteers to begin exploring a two-year suite of activities culminating in TCS 24 around 1-2 issues, which can be sold to potential sponsors.
- Senior level employees who can buy these support opportunities or fund events need to be brought back into TCS.
- Membership Committee will take the lead on the membership drive and investigating the potential increase in membership dues. This committee will work in cooperation with the Finance Committee to determine cost and benefits.
- Development Committee will take the lead on individual donation mechanisms.
- Tony and Jeff B. to collaborate with Margaret Davidson and David Kennedy around future of the CZ conference and the direction TCS could take (alternative meeting model). TCS currently has $2,500 from the NOAA Office of Habitat Conservation to explore this idea (contact is Tom Bigford re: habitat blueprint).
- How can TCS help the "new" NOS?
- Diversity is a theme that should not be forgotten, and TCS should incorporate its diversity principles in its planning.
- TCS would not want to take over the CZ conference brand and have a joint conference, but would want to hold the event as a TCS event.
- We need more federal agency engagement in the conference. This includes participation, not just sponsorship.
- We could begin to develop a list of prospective candidates to serve as donors.
- What can be done in 2013 to solve the 2014 problem and work towards long-term financial diversity and sustainability for TCS? The Board can:
  - make budget cuts in 2012 and 2013,
  - hold a conference in 2014 because that is what TCS does best,
  - cut the Executive Director's hours, and
  - combine issues of the *TCS Bulletin*.
  - ESRI might sponsor regional job fairs.
  - There may be activities to partner with for the remainder of the CZMA 40th anniversary year.
- Recommendation for Lisa to circulate to committees a list of action items critical to advancing the objectives of the fund raising strategy with guidelines for completion, and request that the committees review, prioritize, and respond about intended actions, with an estimated timeline for completion. Additional fund raising strategies outside these events will be requested.
- Lisa will report these commitments from the committees back to the Fundraising Subcommittee.

- The fundraising strategy, strategic plan, and the budget will be aligned and extended to 2013.

Other Business
The Board circulated a list of all conference sponsors and reviewed sponsor points of contact who would be present at TCS 23. The Board was encouraged to extend a hearty thanks to all sponsors throughout the conference.

A discussion followed on the possible development of a **new TCS logo**. Frank Ruopoli, a graphic artist, on staff at the NOAA Coastal Services Center has provided guidance on the elements of an effective logo and has volunteered to produce a logo for TCS. Next steps are to pass along any design preferences or elements to the TCS Secretary, who will subsequently coordinate with Frank.

A proposal for the use of Twitter and Facebook to promote TCS and TCS 23 was approved, including an email message to attendees and members about how to participate, and a reminder slide shown during the plenary sessions and luncheons.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES
Motion to approve March 27, 2012 Minutes, Motion seconded. **MOTION PASSED.**

Meeting adjourned at 4:43 PM (EST).