

Change is afoot at the Cinnabar Foundation

Two thousand twenty-one was a year of transition as Cinnabar entered the modern age of grant-making by utilizing the grants management software platform of Bozeman-based Foundant Technologies. That platform's robust capabilities already have made our grant processes more efficient while saving applicants precious time to do what they do best — preserving, conserving and restoring our wildlife and wildlands, and helping the citizens of Montana and the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem adapt to a changing environment.

In 2021 we wished former executive director Gary Wolfe the very best on his retirement (or is it his next incarnation as environmental steward?) and expressed our heartfelt appreciation for his role in helping steer Cinnabar towards its future. We then welcomed Caroline Byrd as our new ED with expectations that she would help keep us on a steady course.

In early January 2022, Caroline informed Cinnabar's Board that she would be stepping down as executive director after all 2022 grant applications were received and processed for completeness. In light of Caroline's decision, Board members stepped up to ensure Cinnabar's annual grant decision-making process moved along seamlessly.

Foundant proved, once again, to be a perfect partner by introducing us to one of their clients success managers, Joshua Bernard, who joined the Cinnabar team as a temporary part-time staff member. Joshua works closely with Board members Judi Stauffer and Robin Tawney Nichols to ensure the myriad essential details of grant-making — including grant evaluations, reports, and online grant agreements — go smoothly.

The Board also reassessed Cinnabar's programmatic and administrative staffing needs to align with a more trust-based model of philanthropy. As a result, we are launching a search for a Grants Program Director who will provide day-to-day management of the Foundation, including data and program planning and implementation.

Each of these changes are designed to increase Cinnabar's responsiveness, efficiency, and inclusiveness so that Montana's homegrown conservation fund is better positioned to help maximize the impact of our conservation nonprofit community here and throughout the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.

Supporting the work these organizations do is more important than ever as we face the effects of climate change — effects that become more serious every day. Fires here and throughout the West, and the toxic smoke they produce drastically impact our health, communities, and the wildlands and wildlife that are iconic to our region. In addition to the threat of wildfires, this spring found us gearing up for another year of major drought when an onslaught of torrential rains brought devastation to many of our communities,

roadways, and agricultural lands. The closure of much of Yellowstone National Park continues to impact the prosperity and quality of life of gateway communities that rely on the tourism economy.

More than ever, conservation funding is critically needed. Through your continued support — to the Cinnabar Foundation and directly to conservation organizations that are working on the frontlines — we can better protect and preserve our natural resources, and prepare adaptive strategies to live in this changing climate.

As Cinnabar founders Len and Sandy often said: “Joining our resources together, we can do so much more!”

Most recently, after guiding the Cinnabar Board through the pandemic and countless Zoom meetings since 2019, Gordon “Corky” Brittan chose to step down as Board president in May. He led us gracefully, thoughtfully, and collegially as we pivoted from in-person meetings, special events, and field trips to tackle organizational shifts that promise to keep Cinnabar nimble and doing good work for years to come. We are beyond thankful for all Corky has done and so grateful that he will continue to serve Montana and the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem as a treasured Board member. Robin Tawney Nichols has stepped in to once again fill the role of Board president.

As Cinnabar founders
Len and Sandy Sargent
often said:

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together, we can do so
much more!”

Change is constant. Timing and alignment are everything.

For more information on how you can make an annual or Legacy gift to Cinnabar, please contact Board President Robin Tawney Nichols at info@cinnabarfoundation.org.