

Ashley Kaplan

**James Yeramian**

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**From:** Ashley Kaplan <ashleyk@cameldale.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 18, 2023 8:23 AM  
**To:** James Yeramian  
**Subject:** MRCA board seat Bio for Ashley Kaplan  
**Attachments:** Ashley Bio[32].docx

Hi my name is Ashley Kaplan. I am submitting a bio for the MRCA board seat representing SCPA. Let me know what else you may need. Thank you for considering me

January 9, 2023

To the MRCA Board of Directors,

I write to apply for your consideration to be the MRCA board appointee to the Sullivan Canyon Preservation Association. The opportunity to serve as the MRCA board appointee provides a way for me to bring together three of my passions: conservation, charity work, and equestrian spaces.

With regard to conservation, I serve as the vice president of the Dorrance Family Foundation. Our mission is dual but intertwined: improving the quality of life and natural resource conservation. As anyone who lives in California knows, a big part of our high quality of life is the access we have to outdoor spaces. Outdoor spaces are accessible to all socioeconomic classes, with the beach being one of the favorite outings for privileged and under-served, alike.

To help make communities a better place, one aspect we focus on is conservation of the ocean. To this end, our efforts have prioritized California and Hawaii. We provide support to high-performing nonprofit organizations that have demonstrated expertise in improving ocean health through recovery, restoration, regeneration, and protection of marine habitat and biodiversity. As an example, we have a large project on the Big island of Hawaii supporting Arizona State University's effort to rebuild the coral reefs there.

In addition to our direct focus on marine conservation, our foundation supports other land based conservation efforts as well. For instance, we have supported restoration projects in Yosemite National Park and the areas around it. In Yosemite and surrounding areas we supported studies and the reintroduction of vital frogs for the area as well as some restoration work on wetlands in the area. We are also currently working with the National Audubon Society in San Diego to support the restoration of wetlands, education to the youth in the area and working with community on restoring and respecting the open space so it is around for use by animals and humans for a long time to come.

We also have a commitment to improving life for under-served communities and to that end, we are involved with the Chumash tribe in the Santa Ynez valley supporting their work with the government to restore the oceans for the animals and people in that area.

My experience with supporting conservation is part of a larger passion for working with nonprofits to improve aspects of life important for everyone. For instance, I have been on the board of the Arizona Humane Society. I also served on the board of People Acting Now Discover Answers (PANDA), which is a board for the Steele Children's Research Center that supports the science to improve treatments and cures for devastating childhood diseases. As a third example, I served on the board for Feeding Matters, the first organization in the world that unites families, healthcare, and the broader community to improve care for children with Pediatric Feeding Disorder (PFD).

Besides my contributions as a board member, I work to support a number of nonprofits in the LA area including several concerned with animals and open space: Miniature Horse Therapy, the Marine Mammal Center, the Search Dog Foundation, and the Foothill Family California Wildfire Center.

My third passion is equestrian focused. I was born and raised in Paradise Valley, Arizona and began riding with I was 9 years old. Along my horse journey, I benefitted from many ranches and farms providing open and natural spaces to ride and spend time with horses, a truly amazing animal. I now have two daughters who have been lucky enough to similarly experience riding in publicly accessible open spaces such as the SCPA.

In Southern California, there used to be dozens of equestrian communities in places such as Arcadia, Bradbury, Azusa, and Glendora in the San Gabriel Valley to Burbank and Shadow Hills, adjacent to the LA Equestrian Center, and over to Hidden Hills and Calabasas. Children raised in the 1970s rode horses from Calabasas to Topanga and Malibu, people tell me. Today, we see equestrian community after equestrian community getting bought up and replaced with large homes. Chino Hills only has a few streets left; Arcadia has no horses left except the race track; even Hidden Hills has more homes without horses these days than ones with horses. I am committed to working to keep Sullivan Canyon as a place with open space for equestrian use to maintain one of the only remaining places on the Westside of LA where we can see and appreciate horses and have access to ride in open space.

As the MRCA appointee, I would bring these three passions together: I would be able to advocate for our board to utilize our space to do more outreach. Right now, the board has Ahead with Horses which does therapy work with horses to children suffering from autism and other developmental disorders. I believe that we could do more by bringing back the field trips that used to take place at the site where young inner-city children would get the opportunity to touch and communicate with horses, sometimes for the first time. Additionally, Paul Revere Middle School which is a magnet school and is only ¼ mile from our site, has a population of special needs kids who might be interested in what we might be able to offer. Moreover, while hillside development has blocked some of the access our site once had to the larger Santa Monica Mountains, we still have some trail access with native plants that could be used to educate children, particularly those from the inner city, about the critical importance of conservation.

Thank you for your consideration,

Ashley Kaplan  
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310-560-7459

# THE DORRANCE FAMILY FOUNDATION

January 25, 2023

Mr. George Lange  
Board Chair  
Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority  
570 West Avenue 26, Suite 100  
Los Angeles, CA 90065

Subject: Letter of Recommendation

Dear Mr. Lange,

I am pleased to recommend Ashley Kaplan for the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority's Board of Directors. Ashley and I have worked together at The Dorrance Family Foundation for the past twelve years.

Ashley is an active leader as Vice President of The Dorrance Family Foundation Board of Directors, managing director of DFE Trust Company, and owner and president of Bellisima Ranch, which includes two state-of-the-art, full-service horse boarding and training facilities. She is driven by her commitment to the mission and purpose of each organization and is exceptional in her ability to strategize and manage resources, capital and human, and make critical decisions.

As the Foundation's vice president, managing a \$70,000,000 and growing endowment, Ashley plays a key leadership role in annual and long-term planning, implementation of strategic programs and initiatives, budgeting, and grant distributions. She is a member of the Foundation's investment committee, with sharp financial acumen and critical thinking skills.

Ashley is a connected, committed, respected professional and philanthropist who meets people where they are. Her years of philanthropic leadership include engagement with and evaluation of dozens of conservation organizations and efforts in California and Hawai'i with missions focused on the habitat and biodiversity of watersheds and systems, rivers, estuaries and bays, national parks, and protected land and waterways. Engagement in these projects means visiting and understanding these complex and critical natural spaces and the species that depend on them to survive and thrive, as well as the communities, cultures, and individuals they provide for and impact.

She led a three-year conservation program that included the protection of rivers (including the San Diego River and Los Angeles River), watersheds, and open spaces in Southern California and Hawai'i Island, followed by a three-year Sierra Nevada conservation program and is now a leader of the development and implementation of our multi-million-dollar Dorrance Marine Conservation Initiative in Southern California and Hawai'i. In developing these programs and initiatives, she spent considerable time reviewing research, understanding the leaders in each sector and each region and community, reviewing and evaluating proposals, and conducting site visits to understand the threats, opportunities, and projects and make informed decisions. She is hands-on, and as an example, hiked to a frigid meadow and stream to help collar endangered California red-legged frogs and learn more about the research and work to save them and other species vital to the ecosystems and health of the Sierra Nevada. She doesn't hesitate to roll up her sleeves and do the hard work.

## THE DORRANCE FAMILY FOUNDATION

Ashley also stays engaged in her local community through discretionary giving and involvement with non-profit organizations that, in addition to conservation, include equine therapy, animal rescue, animal search and rescue, education, and children's medical research.

She is an experienced, approachable, and collaborative leader who listens, thinks critically, makes sound judgments and quick decisions in difficult situations, and executes successful plans. She is centered on values, puts her values into action, and cares deeply about people, animals, and nature. She would make an exceptional board member and advocate for your organization.

Sincerely,

Carrie Ostroski  
Executive Director  
The Dorrance Family Foundation  
Arizona, California, Hawai'i  
*Direct:* 480-290-1961