

# ANNA KRAMER

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December 2, 2018

Julia Kendrick

Executive Committee, Rocky Mountain Interdisciplinary History Conference

University of Colorado – Boulder

Department of History

Hellems 234 UCB

Boulder, CO 80309

Dear Ms. Kendrick,

I am writing to express my interest in serving as a two-year member of the Executive Committee of the Rocky Mountain Interdisciplinary History Conference (RMIHC) here at the University of Colorado – Boulder. I am a first-year Ph.D. student in the History Department, studying U.S. and environmental history with Dr. Paul Sutter. I am attracted to serving on the executive committee to gain more experience organizing and coordinating events of this nature, as well as the opportunity to help provide an important academic experience to graduate students here at CU Boulder and those attending from other universities.

In the fall of 2017, as I was applying to graduate programs, I attended several sessions of RMIHC in order to gain a better sense of the opportunities afforded to graduate students for professional development and service. I was impressed by the well-run sessions and welcoming atmosphere; having attended the annual meeting of the American Society for Environmental History as an undergraduate in 2016, I had some familiarity with academic conferences, and greatly appreciated the friendliness and student-focus at RMIHC. These feelings were re-confirmed when I attended RMIHC this past September.

During my time as the Policy Coordinator and Grants Manager for the American Alpine Club, I played a central role in organizing the largest advocacy event in the rock climbing community. This annual event, called “Climb the Hill,” brings together nearly one hundred professional rock climbers, climbing advocates, and industry professionals in Washington D.C. for three days of advocacy training, events, and meetings with legislators and policymakers. I was responsible for inviting and coordinating the travel of attendees, coordinating advocacy teams, and handling event logistics. This built upon my prior event coordination experience from working as an exhibit curator for the Claremont Colleges Library Special Collections and at the Outdoor Education Center of Pomona College, as noted in my CV.

One idea I would like to propose for the professional development panel would be exploring the theme of doing public history. While RMIHC falls more within the category of standard academic conferences, increasing numbers of graduate students are interested – because of their own career goals, the realities of the academic job market, or a combination of both – in learning about opportunities outside of the university setting. In addition, there is curiosity even among those interested in staying in academia to figure out how they can also engage publics beyond their students. Panel members might include a museum curator, a secondary school teacher, an independent historian such as Dr. Megan Kate Nelson, a historian working in the private sector such as Dr. Sarah Porterfield, and a university professor who engages in a number of ways with the broader public, such as Dr. Patricia Limerick.

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With regards to the conference more broadly, I am curious to explore ways to get RMIHC attendees off of campus and out into Boulder. I greatly like the hike in Chautauqua, but given that it occurs at a time when many attendees have not yet arrived, I would like to propose an additional “field trip” to some location/locations in Boulder on Saturday or Sunday. If the professional development panel were to include a museum curator, perhaps we could arrange a visit to the new Boulder History Museum, with a behind-the-scenes look at the work that went into preparing the museum to open this year. Alternatively, a more general walking tour of Boulder’s history might be arranged, led by a graduate student or professor with familiarity with the history of this area. Building on my experience in communications and social media from my time at the National Wildlife Federation, I would also like to help advertise and market RMIHC on social media, leveraging the substantial community of #twitterstorians to increase conference attendance and visibility of RMIHC.

Academic conferences can be intimidating and stressful, and I greatly appreciate the role RMIHC plays in providing a welcoming, peer-driven space for graduate students to gain experience and confidence in presenting in these environments. Having spoken with Jason Hogstad about what service on the Executive Committee entails, I would like to offer my time, energy, and skills to creating just that opportunity and atmosphere. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

*Anna Kramer*