

Western Cuyahoga Audubon Society Board Meeting

Monday October 20, 2008 at 6:00 p.m.

Book and Bean, Berea, Ohio

Present: Kit Birch, Liz Clingman, Nancy Howell, Penny O'Connor, Tom Romito (President), Mary Anne Romito, Diane Sigler

1. Finances (Nancy Howell) and updates (all) Treasury has \$14,442.86 total. Audubon Ohio minigrant was \$1,500 and also Zoo grant of \$1,000.
 - a. Before embarking on the rest of the agenda, the Board discussed the Volunteer Appreciation dinner for Important Bird Area (IBA) volunteers, Thursday October 16, 2008. Great decorations were designed and put in place by Diane Sigler. Was low turnout due to the time? It was early for people who might come after work. The fact it was potluck? In future we will ask for RSVP. May have an alternative event.
 - b. Wind Power Public Hearing in Middleburg Hts. The Cuyahoga County Agricultural Society wants to build a wind turbine at the Berea Fairgrounds. Tom Romito, Diane Sigler and Nancy Howell (as citizen) attended. Tom made remarks to the effect that we are in favor of reducing the carbon footprint, but we want to make point counts to assess the impact on birds around the wind turbine once it is in place. Some citizens spoke against the wind turbine; Nancy spoke in favor. The wind turbine is due to be built in 2011.
 - c. Audubon assembly was held October 18-19, 2008 near Belleville Ohio. Seventy people attended, including Kit and Dennis Birch and Tom Romito from WCAS. Tom presented a program on IBAs. Tom made a pitch for chapters to apply for Audubon Ohio Minigrants Kit praised the great speakers and great field trips, including one to the Ohio Bird Sanctuary near Mansfield. Visitors fed birds by hand. Tom found the assembly very inspiring for activists.
2. Fund Raising Opportunity – Bird Watchers Digest. BWD offers birding groups to put a link on their websites for a share of any new subscription made via that link. Board declined, noting that other groups had installed the link and promoted the offer at meetings, but netted no money.
3. Review WCAS Form 990 before filing – Restricted and Unrestricted funds.

4. Mary Anne Romito prepared IRS form 990. She passed copies around for review. WCAS has separated out IBA funds as restricted, reported apart from the general fund. We hope to use these figures in applying for grants, showing what funds are devoted exclusively to IBA activities. As of August 31, 2008 we have \$14,842 in the bank. The Board decided to designate \$7,727 as restricted monies for Rocky River IBA project. The remaining balance of \$7,115 is unrestricted to be used for our operating expenses.

5. Brainstorm questions for Metro parks – what is happening with our data – IBA and Terri Martincic’s.
 - a. Noted that Metroparks has used WCAS IBA data to attach to grant requests.
 - b. Question: Who is doing data analysis?
 - c. What lands are next on Metroparks list for acquisition?
 - d. When Tom Romito and Diane Sigler met with Metroparks John Mack and Terry Robison. Mack asked that we focus on what we know best: Bird surveys.
 - e. Terry Robison asked Tom Romito and Terri Martincic to survey private land near Rising Valley. Other qualified observers were not available. Terri conducted the survey. It was very labor-intensive. Because of the number of points shed did 5-minute point counts instead of 10. There was some confusion between the Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas and WCAS IBA survey. Tom asked for outcome data. Terri’s spreadsheets were much appreciated. Need to clarify survey protocols and purpose, and WCAS role.
 - f. Dan Petit and Greg Smith of University of Akron are writing a scientific paper based on our IBA survey data.
 - g. Tom contacted Terry Robinson prior to our board meeting. Here are the main points of Tom’s conversation with Terry: Terry said that in the future, he will communicate better with WCAS regarding Metroparks’ specific need for data. Funding for bird surveys (i.e., Diane’s salary) is not in the Metroparks’ budget for the next two years. Tom will aggressively seek a matching grant from multiple sources so we can retain Diane next year.

6. Grantwriting for salary for IBA Coordinator –If Metroparks is not able to fund at the same level this year– how will we? Board noted that Diane pulls together the components of the project and ensures quality of data.
 - a. Tom Romito noted that he has several grant proposals in the works. He would like to set aside a portion of WCAS funds for the salary. He proposed that we move \$2,500 from our general fund to

the IBA restricted fund to help cover the salary. Additional revenues in addition to grants include: memberships, sales, annual appeal, and Audubon lifeline.

- b. Mary Anne Romito suggested asking advice and letters of support from Metroparks officials as we write our grants. . WCAS also needs help from Metroparks in helping us find grant sources and support from Metroparks by endorsing us both in letter and in person to the grant sources.
7. Will inquire if Metroparks can administer IBA coordinator's salary if it is funded by WCAS. As an employee on Metroparks payroll there is OPERS.
8. Mary Anne Romito requested \$300. for preparation of IRS form 990 for WCAS. She noted that it is now an IRS requirement for nonprofits, and that it is an organized way to provide information needed in grant applications. Board approved.
9. Hinckley township property: Township has property to be made into a park WCAS will do walking bird surveys in all four seasons with Western Reserve Land Conservancy.
10. Newsletter print run: How many extra copies are needed? We send to chapter supporters, and need some to take to special events and to hand out at meetings. For this issue, the special event is the Christmas Bird Count. Will print 50 extra.
11. Annual appeal letter: Last year's letter made a profit of \$500 once mailing and printing expenses were paid. We discussed the possibility of prizes for donors at various support levels. Also may seek a sponsor for the cost of the mailing.
12. Date of the next WCAS board meeting: Monday, November 17, 2008 at 6 p.m. at Book and Bean in Berea.
13. Coffee e-blast: In order to promote coffee orders, Mary Anne will send an e-mail blast. Buy coffee to support an environment for neotropical migrants, and to support the chapter. How to order. Kit Birch will place a new order in time for the December meeting.