

Western Cuyahoga Audubon Society

Board Meeting

Sunday Nov. 19, 2006 4 p.m.

To order: 4:10 p.m. by President Tom Romito

Present: Kit Birch, Liz Clingman, Nancy Howell, Penny O'Connor, Mary Anne Romito, Tom Romito, Diane Sigler, Kathleen Tiburzi

1. Audubon Ohio State Assembly, November 10-11 in Columbus

Tom Romito, Diane Sigler and Kathleen Tiburzi represented WCAS. Tom led two workshops on chapter best practices. Diane made a presentation on the Rocky River Important Bird Area. Kathleen made a report to the board on the sessions she attended.

Whittier Peninsula (80 acres) will be site of Audubon Ohio Center. It is close to many schools serving low-income families. Audubon Ohio is raising money for the project. Grange Insurance has put up \$4 million for the center on Whittier Peninsula. Conference attendees went on a field trip to the site and spotted a bald Eagle. Another session on mentoring young birders attracted many teachers.

Nancy Howell observed that Dike 14 has similarities to the Whittier Peninsula.

2. Meeting with Gund Foundation:

Tom Romito Stan Searles (Metroparks Zoo) and Diane Sigler met with Jon Jensen at Gund Foundation on Thursday November 16. The IBA grant proposal was submitted in October. Jon Jensen is Senior Program Officer for the Environment at the George Gund Foundation. The problem with Gund giving money is that there has to be a plan to sustain the effort beyond the grant period. Gund has agreed to give a lesser amount than the request, maybe \$10,000 per year. Idea: a challenge grant which Gund will match. Mix and diversity of support is the key. Is Corporate matching a possibility? Jensen asked about the quality of the volunteers in the IBA project. Diane explained the qualifications. He also wanted to assure that WCAS will have diversity of support. He gave ideas for contacts and a book on funding sources. Diane observed that Jensen was positive and realistic. Tom reported that Stan Searles spoke well for what we are trying to do: citizen science. Stan suggested to tom that we invite the IBA volunteers to the potluck on December 5. Stan offered to attend and encourage everyone to contribute financially to the IBA project.

3. Need for Director of Development for WCAS and IBA.

This means fundraising: Can we find a volunteer? Diane Sigler asked what is expected. The answer: Someone who will meet with corporations and foundations.

4. Materials needed for Dec 5th dinner

Kit Birch reported that Earthwords will be open. She will secure sheet plastic, placemats, napkins and table decorations. About fifty people are expected. We will auction off centerpieces. Board members will come early: 5-6 p.m. Liz Clingman offered to make ham and turkey for \$3.50-3.75/lb.

5. Shade grown coffee purchases: Kit reports that we will only be able to have ten percent discount from our California supplier. We will buy the coffee locally.

6. Best use of large bulletin board

At this point it is a good point of introduction for new people. A visual display is great. On the other hand, it is not interesting for people who come regularly. Liz suggested a panel of news.

7. Dike 14 initiative update

Mary Anne Romito met with Nancy Howell, Diane Sigler, Paula Lozano and came up with a “which bird lives where and why” for the kit for Dike 14 Environmental Education Collaborative. Money came from the Dolphin Trust to make activity kits for schools, etc. Cleveland Port Authority was impressive: John Loftus was supportive. Suggested a sign to list collaborative organizations. Front gate improvement?

12. Birding Hotspots

Mary Anne has put about 50 spots on the www.wcasohio.org website. She will add directions to each.

13. Latest environmental news:

Kit Birch reported that Humane Society of the U.S. opposes the Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act. James Sensenbrenner is blocking many bits of animal-protection legislation. The House needs to pass a modest animal-welfare bill.

Kit also reported that there is finally a humane farm animal care certification, that the animals were raised under decent conditions.

Tom reported that at the Audubon Assembly a representative from Ohio League of Conservation Voters talked about the election, which officials won and why. He spoke about the value of contacting representatives and why. Best way to contact them: send phone or hand-written cards to the local Ohio office of the representatives.

14. Strategic Planning Meeting:

January 6, 2007 9-1 p.m. at Rocky River Nature Center. Tom Romito reported that Jerry Tinianow from Audubon Ohio will facilitate. Dan Petit will not be able to attend. Dan will supply input if we can let him know some of the issues. Tom will give Jerry an outline of what we want to accomplish.

Mary Anne Romito explained that we are having the meeting to plan our future. The focus will be on the IBA project, but may also address WCAS in general. In connection with IBA project we will discuss plans for a development director, how to fund the project for coming years, what data should we collect in the future, and what is the tie-in? Diane will write a letter to Dan Petit to ask what thoughts he may have.

Nancy Howell would like to discuss: membership, involvement of members, committees, projects.

Kit Birch asked about Ohio Audubon guidelines for chapters? Tom said that chapters must have: Conservation project, community activities, and annual report. Chapters will not be funded if they do not align with Audubon goals.

Mary Anne asked: “Can we walk out with an action plan?”

Diane would like to see a profile of what some other chapters have done.

Penny wanted to know how we can build on the momentum of the IBA project. Nancy asked what is our visibility. Tom’s answer: high visibility due to Jim McCarty’s

articles in the Plain dealer. Kit observed that we can build on good name and respect of National Audubon Society's good name, neutral prestige. Diane noted the dedication ceremony for Rocky River IBA in the spring.

15. Christmas Bird Count is December 30, notify Nancy Howell, and see the chapter website.

16. Bird Survey e-mail: WCAS received a survey from a student in Mexico. Mary Anne filled it out, based on the Board's positions.

17. Agenda for December 5, 2006 Potluck meeting: begins 6:30: Welcome, Silent Auction, Eat, Second welcome, Talk about Christmas bird count, Membership, Stan Searles, Field trips and program for January, Program, Announce winners of auction. Tom Romito will send a letter inviting IBA participants and all chapter supporters (current and unpaid) to the potluck.

18. Next board meeting: Will be strategic planning event on January 6, 2007. Next regular board meeting will be January 28, 2007 at 4 p.m. at Romitos.

20. Adjourned at 6:35

--Penny O'Connor WCAS Secretary