

MINUTES WCAS BOARD MEETING OF JULY 21, 2003

The board of the Western Cuyahoga Audubon Society (WCAS) met at President Tom Romito's in Cleveland, Ohio. The purpose of the meeting was to assess the work of the past year and plan for the coming year of our chapter. In attendance were Tom and Mary Anne Romito, Andy Hohenbrink, Nancy Howell, Mary Jo Lakner-Segal, Debra and Ralph Siegenthaler, Arlene Acton, Jerry Tinianow, Jason Kassouf, and Kit Birch (secretary).

1. Tom Romito opened the meeting with welcome and introduction of the new board and Audubon Ohio representatives Arlene Acton and Jerry Tinianow.
2. Treasurer Mary Anne Romito shared lists of current members in our chapter and explained the three levels of memberships: basic, enhanced, and charter.
3. Debra Siegenthaler passed around material proposed for new membership kits and explained the Passport concept with prototype booklet. This is a means to stimulate club growth and b participation by providing a vehicle by which members can document all their chapter-related activities and earn points toward certificates, prizes, etc. After discussion it was generally thought to be a good idea, keeping the following in mind: the need to be sure point count is done meticulously; need to have specific activities listed in passport; need to have a sentence in booklet that stresses personal education and satisfaction in participating in this program. Tom will mail a copy of the prototype to all board members for refinement.
4. Relationships with other local Audubon chapters and ways to interact with them were discussed. It was decided that Tom will contact the Akron chapter's president, Mark Purdy.
5. The newsletter mailing list showing the distribution of the members according to where they lived was discussed, noting the wide geographical range of current members. This led to ideas about possible reciprocal web site listings of our chapter to encourage new memberships. Mary Jo volunteered to create a flier to distribute at meetings asking for new website possibilities.
6. It was decided that our chapter's slide projector would be kept indefinitely, and leftover Audubon Club items will be used for prizes or sold to members.
7. The WCAS annual report will be done by Tom and submitted to the Executive Director of Audubon Ohio by August 15, 2003. The National Audubon also expects our chapter to live the "Essential Elements of a Chapter" which were reviewed and discussed. They are:
 - A clear sense of purpose and mission.
 - Environmental conscience in the community and effective advocacy for the Audubon cause.
 - Good fellowship.
 - Outreach to the community.
 - Participation in the broader National Audubon Society Community.
 - Diversity of chapter programs and activities.
 - An attitude of positive feeling. □□□□□□□□

The WCAS Vision and Mission statements were also reviewed and approved as stated. Reviewed the 2002-03 WCAS programs, activities lists, and significant chapter developments.

8. The future of WCAS was discussed in the context of a five-year plan. Some ideas follow:

We could use new chairpersons for membership, member involvement, and armchair activist.

How best to use the Audubon Adventures program that contains four different themes and costs - \$35 per packet (enough for about 35 students) with teacher's guide. Some suggestions were: Adopt certain schools or classrooms; Have members pay to have this program go to the school or class of their choice; Put some of the packet info on our web site for teachers to view and possibly order (Arlene reported to Mary Anne the next day that we can only post excerpts of Audubon Adventures on the website to generate interest in the product). It was noted that this type of program could fulfill multiple needs of our chapter as a fund raiser, a good outreach program, and a membership incentive. We would need to put this information in our newsletter and website in spring of 2004 so that the Audubon Adventure packets could be ordered and received by the beginning of the school year in 2004.

A good fund raising and membership incentive idea called "Pay to Play" was brought forth in which experts would be obtained to teach a workshop for those willing to pay for it. These could be organic gardening and lawn maintenance, hummingbird and butterfly gardening, native plants identification and care, etc.

A silent auction was suggested as a fund raiser and possible entertainment for the Christmas party.

"Bulbs for Birds" as a fund raiser with a 50% profit was also considered.

Ralph the web master suggested that he could do calendars for us on an as-sold basis (as well as note cards) with the help of a photographer. Other chapters do this profitably. Bird seed sales and raffles will probably continue for 2003-04.

9. Arlene Acton (Audubon Ohio Director of Development) suggested we be more involved in the AIM Teams (Avian Inventory and Monitoring) program. This is a good conservation program and offers training for interested members.

10. Jerry Tinianow said that the Council of Ohio Audubon Chapters will meet on Nov.15 and 16 at the Wilderness Center in Canton. WCAS would like to have a representative there.