

MINUTES OF WCAS BOARD MEETING OF OCTOBER 28, 2003

The board of the Western Cuyahoga Audubon Society (WCAS) met at President Tom Romito's home in Cleveland, Ohio. The purpose of the meeting was to continue to assess both the work of the past year and plans for the future of our chapter. In attendance were Tom and Mary Anne Romito, Andy Hohenbrink, Nancy Howell, Mary Jo Lakner-Segal, Paula Lozano, Terri Martincic, Barbara Eaton, and Kit Birch.

1. Tom opened the meeting by having the minutes read and amended or corrected as needed.
2. Tom introduced our guest, Barbara Eaton, who presented two books she has authored and illustrated for her company, Pigwig Press, as a possible fund raiser for WCAS. The title of the books is "My Insect Friends" and "The Biodiversity Coloring Book", the contents of which were deemed environmentally appropriate by the board. It was decided that this might be a means of raising needed money and that Barbara could come to our December general meeting to display and take orders for her books. We would receive 30% of the total sales if she sells at least 6 books. Barbara also gave us 40 fliers to hand out at the November general meeting. Nancy Howell volunteered to make the announcement at the November meeting explaining this fund raiser.
3. Tom read the letter from Audubon Ohio regarding the fiscal year 2004 Safety Net payment of \$2,462.92 from the National Audubon Society. There is some confusion as to why we received this much and how much we will receive in the future. Mary Anne informed us that we now have \$8,240 in our chapter bank account.
4. Two more fund raiser ideas were discussed: Home and Garden show pre-sale tickets and inkjet cartridge recycling. Both these were found to be not worth our time and effort.
5. Nancy gave us some information on the West Creek Preserve and read some of the "Notes From West Creek" newsletter which listed the WCAS as being supportive of their restoration project. She suggested we continue to be supportive of this group and project in the future and all agreed to this. It was also decided that at our next general meeting Nancy will ask for a volunteer to attend meetings of the West Creek Restoration Group acting as our liaison. The Stearns Homestead was also discussed as a possible place for future volunteerism by members of our chapter.
6. The "Take Back Audubon" initiative was explained by Nancy as being a group protesting the move by the National Audubon Society to not share their dues with local chapters anymore. Some board members reported that they have received e-mails about this. The board decided not to support this group's protest.
7. The Audubon Adventures program was again brought up as a worthy cause for our chapter to sponsor. Paula Lozano has been working on this in the schools for a long time and stated it is a good way to fulfill our community outreach goal. Nancy proposed that we spend money on this, and Mary Anne suggested we wait until all our expenses were looked at and decide at the end of the meeting.

8. Mary Anne and Tom announced that our chapter newsletter can be printed using "Publisher" software and that they will therefore be doing it themselves as opposed to being done by Ralph Siegenthaler. Last month's cost was \$385. Nancy voiced disappointment with last month's newsletter format and content. She suggested it contain more info on programs, field trips, maps and directions, etc. She volunteered to work on the next one with Mary Anne. Tom said that anyone wishing to submit a write-up of any of our field trips should send it to him and he will include it in the newsletter.

9. Tom and Mary Anne gave an update on the Passport concept. It will be printed out using "Publisher" software and should be done by the end of this year. Possible prizes were discussed such as leftover Audubon incentives we still have. There may be levels of prizes to correspond to levels of points earned. It was agreed by all board members that this is a good way to stimulate membership activity. A Passport committee was formed consisting of Paula, Nancy, Mary Anne, Tom and Mary Jo.

10. Tom brought up the subject of our chapter becoming involved in the Avian Inventory and Monitoring (AIM) Program in the Rocky River watershed. Three Important Birding Areas (IBAs) are found there: Rocky River; Mill Stream Run, and Hinckley. These areas already have data available in the form of bird check lists handed in by volunteer bird watchers. This data needs to be put into computer databases. Someone has offered to help organize the data from these sites, and Tom and Andy will work on the data bases. Tom Stanley has given us Geographic Information System maps, and Dan Petit may also have more detailed information we could use. John Ritzenthaler, Director of Habitat Conservation for Audubon Ohio, wants this geographical info put into verbal descriptions written down so that it can be more easily read and interpreted. This may also be something our chapter could help with.

11. Terri Martincic brought up the problem of invasive plant species which is a big threat to biodiversity in the Rocky River Reservation. She suggested our chapter might be interested in sponsoring some form of abatement. John Crock of the Cleveland Metroparks needs to be contacted beforehand. Terri will present this topic at a WCAS general meeting and ask for volunteers to do hands-on cutting and pulling. It was noted that the Nature Conservancy group does this all year long in some areas.

12. In field trip updates: Dave Kriska will be leader at the Coliseum field trip; Rich and Jason Kassouf will lead the Conneaut field trip. Nancy said she recently visited the Cleveland Environmental Center at 3500 Lorain Ave. in Ohio City and noted that it had a bird-friendly fence around it.

13. Nancy attended the Environmental Education Consortium meeting and reported that on Oct. 4, 95 teachers showed up for a walk on Dike 14 to assess environmental education possibilities. The city of Cleveland, however, does not seem to want a nature preserve there, favoring a mixed use recreational area instead. This area may be too contaminated with mercury and cadmium for mixed use according to samples taken by Case Western Reserve. Tom asked if the board thought we should be activists in this. Mary Jo shared some of the problems she has had in the past trying to work with Cleveland, but said she would be willing to write another letter stating

our frustration due to the lack of response to all our offers to help create green space in the lake front area. The board agreed we will probably be more effective helping where we are wanted such as in West Creek and Stearns Homestead.

14. Since no other spending needs came up during the meeting, Nancy made a motion that WCAS spend up to \$500 total on the purchase of Audubon Adventure classroom kits; it was seconded and carried. Paula will develop a list of recipients and will inform the treasurer of amount needed.

15. Tom reviewed the agenda for the upcoming WCAS membership meeting on November 4. Nancy volunteered to talk about up coming field trips and the Pig Wig Press fund raiser, and Mary Anne volunteered to talk about Audubon Adventures at our next general meeting.

16. Tom adjourned the meeting at 9:15 p.m.