

Western Cuyahoga Audubon Society
Strategic Planning Workshop Saturday, January 6, 2007
Rocky River Nature Center

Kit Birch, Nancy Howell, Terri Martincic, Penny O'Connor, Pat Poole, Mary Anne Romito, Tom Romito, Diane Sigler, Kathleen Tiburzi, Dan Petit - Cleveland Metroparks, Jerry Tinianow - Audubon Ohio

Tom Romito welcomed and introduced everyone to Jerry Tinianow, who was our workshop facilitator today. Jerry said that working with chapters is a favorite activity,

Recorders for the session were Tom Romito, Mary Anne Romito, Kit Birch, Pat Poole.

First session: Accomplishments

Jerry noted that conservation volunteers are all perfectionists; perfect is the enemy of the good

Accomplishments (Tom Romito Reporting):

- IBA Survey, Hired Diane Sigler

- Training, celebration of IBA project, identification of IBA with signs throughout the watershed

- Dike 14 relationship

- Website is kept fresh and up to date, events, interactive w/casual observations, field trip reports, board comments, each month. Great calendar page and new additions all the time. Links, maps, can track usage (50-70 a day)

- At monthly meetings: bird of the month feature in addition to program, meetings advertised in Sun Newspaper, Emerald Necklace, range of ages attending meetings. WCAS gets great support from the Nature Center, Successful silent Auction at Holiday Potluck, increased it, made money

- Expanded relationship with Cleveland Metroparks, CleanOhio

Jerry noted the importance of relationships with other groups. Funders want to see relationships with other groups

Disappointments, areas to improve:

- Would like to feature Audubon magazine, National and Ohio issues. Weakness in co-branding

- Need more active members, committee members

- Facilitate action on issues, networking

Jerry: Financial status? Nancy reports a surplus

Summary of best practices of other Audubon Chapters

- 1) Actively welcome, recruit and train new members and leaders

- A meeting component to get people talking and sharing their interests

- Sierra used to have a new member welcome meeting

- Recognize members who brought guests
- Make a conscious effort to welcome new leaders
- 2) A chapter project: Land, some have a clubhouse, nature preserve, IBA
- 3) An annual plan, and they follow it

All of these together should create a chapter culture: Welcome, recruit and train your own successor. Suggestion: Universities can be a source of volunteers, energy, talent.
Terri: has attempted to contact Baldwin-Wallace. Jerry: don't limit to environmental group. Business or computer groups may be helpful

New leader does not have to be someone who is already here. Young people can be a good resource.

Tom Romito: Fundraising is really more difficult than that; it does not automatically follow. Two grant proposals, one rejected. Second one may be half of what we asked, but not yet a done deal. Tom is continuing to try. Collaborators: Tom, Diane, Mary Anne, Stan Searles. Tom would like to find a definitive way to raise funds.

Jerry noted that there are chapter resources on National Audubon website.
www.audubon.org/local/orientationAndTraining.html

Terri: Weeders in the Wild will be at Coe Lake. A high school group is involved
Jerry: It is great to have a high school student involved. The chapter will have to provide a mentor for the student, emphasize to the student that there is responsibility, preparation involved.

Action Plan for future goals and activities: Mary Anne is the recorder
Long term goal, 2007 goal

Conservation:
IBA 5-10 years in order do develop data to draw conclusions, so Metroparks has data to make a foundation for land use decisions. Diane: improve habitat and land use management over time. Nancy: forest habitats in the Rocky River watershed. Jerry: habitat in Metroparks and environs. Mary Anne: Metroparks acquire more land. Dan: is it just birds? Diversity of birds? Provide information, advocate? Terry: give the birds a voice in decisions. Jerry: birds added into decision-making?

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Tom: IBA project was proposed in 2003. Two years later no progress. Tom stepped down from presidency to focus on IBA. Culture of the group had been programs and education. Expanded our focus to include a conservation project. Had a strategic planning workshop to develop IBA. The reason: to enable Metroparks to have data to influence wise land use decisions. Tom went to make pitch for parks to buy 47 acres in the middle of Hinckley reservation.

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Jerry: Long term goal could be contribute to conserving the Rocky River Ecosystem for benefit of the diverse bird habitat represented by the Rocky River Reservation (watershed) ecosystem. Promote conservation through information and advocacy. This can be a goal. Goes with Audubon mission to conserve.

Restoration? Terri mentioned Weeders in the Wild. Tom Romito: Restoration on a limited scale only, weeders. Diane: Land purchases can be part of restoration. Jerry: purchase is usually conservation, not restoration. Kit: do other chapters hire people to do restoration work? Jerry: In Ohio most groups do the work themselves. Pat Poole: Restoration is too big a goal for us. Set a reachable goal. Terri Martincic: Weeders in the wild is a restoration project. That is enough. Diane: Don't eliminate it, but keep it in mind.

Proposed goal: 5-10 year to preserve, where possible to restore. Dan Petit: So much of this is out of the hands of the group. Dan: This group should focus on its niche. This group is best positioned to provide information and advocacy. Moving municipalities is a hard road. Terri: we want to be able to say that we gave the birds a voice.

LONG TERM GOAL:

To preserve the Rocky River Watershed and its environs for benefit of birds and other wildlife and their habitats, and restore portions of it. Our role is to provide information and advocacy and hands-on restoration.

FOR 2007:

Jerry: Survey goals and presentation goals:

Continue and expand the Important Bird Area survey. Number of volunteers: additional five points, people, need more observers. Need to qualify more. Had twelve observer teams, need eighteen. Had 60 points, going to 80 points. Possibly look at vegetation and possibly move into other habitat types. Dan: What are the characteristics of the point areas? Train plant observers, have botanists.

Present program to a group of public officials, educators. Pat: could we be on their agendas? Diane: we lose focus. Jerry: NOACA or county or NEORSD could be helpful in planning this. Terri: Rocky River Watershed council.

Maintain IBA coordinator.

Who and when:

Survey: when should the surveys be completed – July 15

Last year, Dan provided science, Tom provided volunteers

This year, Tom and Diane will identify and train point finders: Pat: students can be point finders. Eagle Scouts, St. Ignatius? Have to reflag the existing points and add 20 more.

Timeline: Identify point finders, train point finders, find points.
Vegetation survey should be done by August 15. Takes one hour per point. Pat Poole will help. Diane, Terri.
On survey forms: Terri suggests recording if it is a singing male.

Jerry: Workshop should be fall or summer, since we. Dan: Route presentation through the watershed council. Identify a liaison to RR Watershed council. Tom or Liaison.

Tom: Dedication of RR IBA? Will not commit to that this year.

Tom: one new component per year?

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Education:

Mary Anne: Dike 14, WCAS is doing bird part of Education box. Audubon Ohio is looking to a relationship with the Rockefeller Park Greenhouse. This area is outside the boundaries of this chapter. Cleveland Audubon is interested in their nature preserves in Portage County. This is an opportunity to expand education opportunities for people in the Glenville area. Rockefeller Park Greenhouse is focused on the surrounding neighborhoods.

Jerry: What is the education goal? Tom: the outreach goal is integrated with education efforts. Nancy at Science Olympiad, Edgewater Beach effort. Diane: tables at events. Tom took bird id game to Glenville fest. Jerry: These are activities, what about goals. Tom: education and outreach are part of our goals. Terri: awareness is important.

Jerry: to foster a new generation of conservation leaders? Kathleen: something for the teenagers?

LONG TERM: to foster a new generation of conservation leaders

2007 GOAL: Participate in Dike 14 Education project. Sponsor: Dike 14 Environmental Education Collaborative. Collaborative got a grant to create kits and do education projects at Dike 14. Diane Sigler, Mary Anne Romito and Paula Lozano worked on these. Kits are flexible, can be used in neighborhood or school as well as at Dike 14.

Jerry: Rockefeller Park Greenhouse can be a base for Audubon educator in the Cleveland area. This summer there will be a summer camp. Part will be in the garden and part in the garden. 1525 Foundation, just turned into a trust. Can only give money to groups which had previously been funded by the Foundation. India Pierce Lee at Cleveland Foundation.

Summer camp could do the trips to Dike 14. University Circle Inc has many projects.

Would WCAS like to be part of this?

Tom: We are open to this idea. Would like to check off: Science Olympiad, maybe School Days at Edgewater, Increase number of outreach activities (tables) Glenville Festivals (all of us can help) Pat Poole can help with Glenville event w/Audubon Ohio intern and Jerry Tinianow.

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Partnerships:

Why?

Expertise – We can lend our bird expertise, and draw on their resources. Access to resources, access to expertise, expand influence. We write letters of support. Networking.

Western Reserve Land Conservancy, Firelands.

PARTNERSHIPS: Pursue partnerships for access to resources, access to expertise, expand influence, publicity.

Action item: To develop a distribution list of contacts. Maintain existing relationships. Do we need additional relationships? Board will take action on these relationships. What is the relationship? *WCAS already has a relationship

- *Western Reserve Land Conservancy
- *Ohio Bird Conservation Initiative
- *Friends of Wetlands
- Ohio Young Birders
- *Friends of Big Creek
- Ohio Ornithological Society
- Black Swamp Bird Observatory
- West Creek Preservation Committee
- *Natural Areas Program at CMNH
- Doan Brook Watershed
- Kirtland Bird Club
- Las Galarias Foundation (Ecuador)
- *Teaming with Wildlife Coalition
- *Ohio Environmental Council
- *Medina Raptor Center
- Columbus Audubon Center
- *Rocky River Watershed Council
- *Dike 14 Environmental Education Collective
- *Rockefeller Park Greenhouse
- *Other Audubon Chapters

*Cleveland Metroparks and Metroparks Zoo

Jerry: can spell out relationship in a memo of understanding.

FUNDRAISING:

Goals – to support coordinator, do support programs,

Support presenters at our programs, to support people who represent the chapter at events or meetings out of town.

Support newsletters, brochures, website, training,

Need creative ways to raise money, supplement Metroparks support. Foundations demand that we diversity our funding sources.

What can we do on our own? Jerry: call it resource raising.

Long term goal of resource raising: Generate resources to support conservation and education efforts.

For 2007, what do we need?

How rich chapters get rich: very old, put away a few thousand dollars per year. Work with the interest. Also, get individual gifts, planned giving.

Goal could be a number of donors, or could be an amount, or could be a type of donation. Tom would like to target the totality of the coordinator's salary.

Dan Petit: Metroparks sees this as a valuable program.

Source of current money? Support from Ohio Audubon, Petty cash. Silent Auction.

What is included in the Salary: Other half of Social Security, Unemployment. For 2006 Diane did IBA. Next year there will be presentations, publicities, etc.

Goal is \$20,000 more than last year.

Bird-A-Thon? Have it on property of a big donor, or at a corporate site. Tie into a project. i.e. IBA

Bird-A-Thon committee, explore mechanics. What would it take? Mailing list, participants, donors. Tie into casual observations. Look toward 2008.

To find out more:

Call Columbus Audubon, Darlene Sillick

Nationally Lynn Tenefoss

Annual appeal as a fundraiser. Springtime?

Earthshare via Combined Federal Campaign generates a bit of money. Earthshare is like United Way. Or if this chapter introduces an employer to Earthshare. The chapter will get 80% of what is generated in the first year. If someone donates via EarthShare, you cannot solicit them directly.

Other fundraising: Bill Deininger offering video as a fundraiser. Split proceeds? Board follow up with Bill.

Grants: Great Lakes Aquatic Habitat Network, Gund

Tom: Need a development director Goal: to form a development Committee.

Business Volunteers Unlimited?

ADMINISTRATION:

OTHER:

What else?

Kit Birch: Sell shade-grown coffee?

Committees:

Partnership

Bird-A-Thon

Development

Point Count Committee

Summary:

Defined goals, good mission statement on project and education objective, defined partners, rudiments of a fundraising plan, excitement about birdathon plan. Just three things for a successful chapter.

IBA goal: To preserve the Rocky River Watershed and its environs for benefit of birds and other wildlife and their habitats, and restore portions of it. Our role is to provide information and advocacy and hands-on restoration.