

Western Cuyahoga Audubon Society
“Vision 2020” for the Rocky River IBA
November 16, 2009

DEVELOPMENT

The goal is to organize a development plan that will provide for the implementation and continuation of conservation in the Rocky River IBA, and be, in turn, a driver of economic support for eco-tourism and land conservation. We will know when we have achieved this goal when a centralized source of potential funders exists, a cadre of trained and motivated fund-seekers is in place, and a target of annual revenue with associated target programs has been established. Measurable objectives to achieve this goal are as follows:

1. Form a development committee comprised of people from the other IBA committees.
2. Recruit a cadre of fund-seekers to train and motivate to raise earned income and seek grants
3. Coordinate with other IBA committees for target projects and funding requirements.

LAND ACQUISITION, CONSERVATION, AND RESTORATION

The goal is to conserve and restore the riparian corridor of the Rocky River IBA, its associated high-quality habitats, and critical headwater catchments. In addition, this plan will acquire appropriate habitats that will maintain healthy ecosystems and stable bird and wildlife populations in the IBA. We will know when we have achieved this goal when protected lands of high ecological value are connected along the entire IBA; the area of protection has expanded; invasive species have been removed; and significant restoration of wetlands, meadow, and stream corridors has been completed. Measurable objectives to achieve this goal are as follows:

1. Develop a land acquisition plan that preserves critical land, identifies willing sellers, and works in partnerships with other agencies.
2. Develop a conservation and restoration plan that specifies management goals and collects baseline ecological data.

EDUCATION AND STEWARDSHIP

The goal is to foster personal responsibility through awareness of each citizen being a part of the IBA and the Rocky River watershed. We will know when we have achieved this goal when there are consistent conservation and education programs in the schools, training programs for volunteers are in place, and there are many opportunities for public involvement in IBA programs. Measurable objectives to achieve this goal include:

1. Ensure that state schools have relevant curriculum.
2. Neighbor activities for public involvement are in place.

PARTNERSHIPS

The goal embraces various governmental agencies, community groups, and concerned citizens. By 2020, all parties interested in the health of the Rocky River IBA will, using their various talents and special interests, be working toward a greater appreciation and awareness of this special ecosystem by the general public. We will know we are moving toward our goal when the watershed is healthier tomorrow than it is today, and the public embraces and joins our efforts. Measurable objectives to achieve this goal include:

1. Enlist community organizations and citizens in working toward this goal.
2. Enlist governmental bodies in working toward the goal.
3. Conduct outreach efforts to schools, scout groups, and other special groups.

PRACTICES AND POLICIES

The goal is to involve communities in practices and policies that protect and promote habitat conservation. We will know when we have reached this goal when regional boards of governance have been set up with their own conservation goals, and state-wide land use planning policies that promote these conservation goals have been established. Measurable objectives to achieve this goal include:

1. Identify common community goals for riparian setbacks and open space planning and zoning.
2. Identify complimentary stakeholders with a similar vision who will mutually coordinate goals, objectives, and projects.
3. Work with counties and the state on actions to implement policies.

APPLIED RESEARCH

By 2020, we will have assessed habitats throughout the IBA by increasing volunteerism to expand our research and monitoring. We will use the results to inform and persuade decision makers, such as legislators, city planners, and public and private landowners. We will know when we have reached our goal when this set of data is cited as the determinate factor in wise land use decisions. Measurable objectives to achieve this goal include:

1. Identify and prioritize habitats to be surveyed.
2. Hire a person to coordinate volunteers and interface with communities.
3. Continue the collection of data through bird surveys.
4. Hire researchers to analyze the data and publish results (such as a graduate student project).
5. Convert the published results into sellable ideas.
6. Disseminate the ideas broadly and strategically to target audiences.

MARKETING THE IBA

By 2020, we will have a marketing plan that identifies who's in charge, what we do, where our money comes from, and how we communicate. We will know when we have achieved this goal when a document exists and we routinely follow it. Measurable objectives to achieve this goal include:

1. We are recognized nationally as a model IBA.
2. Everyone who lives and recreates in the IBA knows what it is and why it is important.
3. We make use of up-to-date technology to communicate with stakeholders.