

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

Flip chart material created during session by participants.

I. What Next?

Attending organizations take this back to your boards
Type up strategy and distribute
WCAS Board to get this group back together
WCAS Board review and digest this
Poll Groups as to what they are already doing
Identify “low hanging fruit”/”slam dunks” to get started on right away

**II. Material from Flip-Charts from each group:
Strategic Goals --- Strategic Tactics**

Development Plan

The goal is to organize a development plan that will provide for the implementation and continuation of conservation in the 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, motivated fund-seekers is in place; and a target of annual revenue with associated target programs has been established.

Development Objectives

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

Land Acquisition, Conservation, and Restoration

Protection, via fee simple and/or conservation easements, of the entire EBRR riparian corridor and its associated high quality habitats, and critical headwater catchments.

Manage, restore, create appropriate habitats in and around the RR IBA to maintain healthy ecosystems in the EBRR and stable bird populations.

Land Acquisition Strategic Tactics

Develop a strategic plan for land acquisition in the EBRR corridor considering:

- Critical lands to preserve (wetlands, high quality headwater, rare/end/threatened species, etc.)
- Currently preserved land holdings
- Identification of willing sellers, funding programs
- Consideration of natural resources, steep slopes, vernal pools, wetlands, etc.
- Prioritizing lands to preserve (high resources, high risk)
- Working in partnership with other agencies (Cleveland Metroparks, WRLC, CSWCD, Cleveland Museum of Natural History, etc.)

Conservation Strategic Tactics

Formulate ecosystem management plans for various EBRR land corridor segments considering:

- Current ecosystem quality (pristine or degraded?) to determine management goals (preservation, restoration, enhancement).
- Collect baseline biological data (if needed), and then collect on a cyclic basis to identify trends.
- Develop strategic actions and acquire appropriate funding.
- Working in partnership with other pertinent EBRR agencies and organizations
- (Details on Post-Its!)

Education and Stewardship

Fostering personal responsibility through awareness of each citizen being a part of the IBA and the greater watershed.

- IBA-related educational outreach programs for the general public. (Events, speakers, news, bird trails)
- Consistent conservation education programs in the schools. (Collect relevant curriculum state standards)
- Develop/implement training programs for volunteer involvement. (Backyard habitat, birding 101)
- Many opportunities for involvement and key IBA initiatives exist. (Neighborhood activities, bird trail).

School Program

Collect relevant curriculum (National Audubon
Field trips around school – low cost, low impact
State standards – relevancy and what grade level
Teacher workshops with credits
IBA stewards club
Establish Junior Audubon in elementary, Middle school, ‘Young birders’

IBA Outreach

Birding events
Speakers Bureau – Develop short program; Identify groups
General media blitz
Monthly press releases “tidbit”, print, electronic, web
Newsletter – e-news, hard copy
IBA tours
Promoting birding trails

Stewardship

Backyard Habitat – certify home owners/businesses/ schools
Neighborhood level activities
Training programs: Habitats, plants, birding 101
Identify (create) birding trails
Provide habitat improvement projects

Public Involvement

By 2020 the vision the vision/goal is to have the communities within the RR IBA (watershed) support conservation in the following ways:

- Public support of preservation efforts on public and private lands
- Bird conservation would be the focus of the efforts
- Have the public directly involved with habitat preservation, conservation
- Provide birding events that focus on habitat preservation

Partnerships

Our vision embraces various governmental agencies, community groups, and concerned citizens.

We hope that all parties interested in the health of the RRWS would work using their various talents and special interests towards a greater appreciation and awareness of this special ecosystem by the general public.

We will know we are moving towards our goal when the watershed is healthier tomorrow than it is today and the public embraces and joins our efforts.

Who are we and why are we here?

1. A. People/groups will join if they believe in your cause.
B. Government will join if #1 occurs or it is in their interest.

Goals

Community outreach

- A. Schools
- B. Scout groups
- C. Special interest groups
- D. MDAPS

Government Role in Conservation.

By 2020 communities will be more involved in practices and policies that protect and promote habitat conservation.

We would look to establish regional boards of governance to set up the conservation goals of each specific region.

These goals will be furthered by establishing state-wide land use planning policies that promote conservation goals.

Policies

Identify common community goals.

- Riparian setbacks
- Open space
- Planning/zoning

Identify complimentary stakeholders with similar objectives.

- Mutually coordinate objectives and goals and projects

Work with county and state on examples of productive actions in regard to policy implementation.

Applied Research

By 2020 we will expand our research and monitoring by increasing volunteerism, to encompass the whole watershed with a goal of assessing habitats. WCAS will use the results to inform and

persuade decision makers such as legislators, city planners, public and private landowners. We will know we have reached our goal when the WCAS data is cited as the determinative factor in wise land use choices.

Tactics

- Identify and prioritize the habitats to be surveyed (by joint researcher decision).
- Get a volunteer coordinator + craigslist + existing volunteer network like “Cleveland volunteers,” RSVP, + interface with other committees.
- Continued collection of data through bird surveys.
- Identify researchers to analyze data and publish results – grad student class project?
- Create a biological index.
- Convert published results into sellable ideas.
- Disseminate the ideas broadly and strategically to target audiences (identify and prioritize target audiences as indicated by the data) + website.

Marketing the IBA

Focus points were identified during the brain-storming sessions and used to create the Marketing plan. There were no flip charts generated for this during the session, as all participants were on other topics, but the Marketing plan text was generated from the focus points indicated by the participants and reflect the views of the participants.