

Audubon Ohio Advisory Board Meeting
Saturday, April 1, 2006
CanalWay Center, Cuyahoga Heights, Ohio

Board Member Attending: Lyn Boone, Greg Cunningham, Barry Hunlock, Jackie Light, Katy Mercer, Pete Precario, Tom Romito, Jack Rupert, Jack Smith, Will Sogg, Liz Woedl, Burch & Ellen Zehner

Board Members excused: Frances Beasley, Sam Fitton, David Jenike, Guy Mercer, Jan Rodenfels

Chapter Presidents/Guests: Nancy Brundage, Alan Dolan, Delle Nadler,

AO Staff attending: Jerry Tinianow, John Ritzenthaler, Christie Vargo, Cathy Raymond, Marnie Urso

AO Staff excused: Ellen Armstrong, Casey Tucker, Heather Starck

Birdwalk: 9-10:30am, 10 Attended

Meeting Start Time: 11:00 AM

1. Will Sogg called the meeting to order and welcomed all for attending.
2. After a round of introductions, the Minutes of the Advisory Board Meeting of February 12, 2006 were approved with no changes.
3. A Birding moment, followed by a slideshow of the woodcock, was presented by John Ritzenthaler.
4. Tom Romito, Chair of the **Communications Committee**, opened with a brainstorming session discussing issues about an action plan for the improvement of Audubon Ohio communications, identifying who our “constituents” were, and why they are important. Board members suggested that the Audubon Ohio web site include: reports from Chapters, health and government reports, more links, interactive features, a guestbook, and action boxes. The web site should also include: PDF’s of Audubon At Home brochures, educational materials and contacts for teachers, Christmas Bird Counts, and Audubon Adventures. There is a need to promote free “earned” media to cultivate news about Audubon and it was determined that identified specialty papers or inserts would be easier to get articles published.

Audubon Ohio should work to attract new members and partner with like minded organizations. WOW moments are to be sent in by each member as a way to attract new blood. Several members gave their WOW moments.

5. A brief recap was given of the Board Retreat and lessons learned. The next event is the **State Assembly**. The State Assembly will need to include sponsors and partners to make it a success. Jerry shared the theme of the Assembly – “Birding with a Purpose”; to be held November 10-12, 2006; at Holiday Inn on the Lane; \$89.00 room rate; with the same general schedule as last assembly. The outings will be a little different by having people meeting at the site and then travel on to the Assembly. Special dinners will be held on Friday and Saturday night with dynamic speakers, Pete Dunn and Jerome Jackson. Both are well known and should generate interest. There will be workshops on Saturday, and meetings on Sunday (AO Board, COAC). Awards will be done on Saturday night. There are several good activities beside the Assembly; the Olentangy River Bike path is nearby, and there is a nice walk to the OSU wetland center. The goal is 300 attendees!
6. **Development** issues were presented by Christie Vargo and Lyn Boone. Christie announced there have been 2 grant proposals had been submitted and required ratification by the Board. The Board ratified both submittals unanimously. DVD’s for board use in promoting Audubon were given out. An announcement was made that Jerry and Christie met with executives of the Longaberger Company and received a 30K promise. Christie stated that when gifts of stock are directly made to NAS it is important to let her know so they get credited appropriately.
7. **Donor Cultivation** by board members was presented by Lyn Boone. She ran over items in the Development report, the board role in prospect relations, and reviewed a list of prospective donors. These are the friends of Audubon and we need to make a concerted effort to show that we appreciate them beyond the monetary value of their gifts. Board members were asked to select 3 names with whom they could make personal contact. The Capital Campaign will be done for Board members at the same time this year as the regular annual giving board campaign, so this makes for a “Double Ask” year.
8. **Birdathon and Ecotour** were presented by Greg Cunningham, who stated this was a good opportunity for raising funds. Being new at this, Greg gave an example of a “Derby Day” pot to bring in funds (Barry gave him \$10 and wants horse #2). Board members can create something similar to bring in funds.
9. Pete Precario spoke about recruiting new board members, stating that we need good people to represent the state – diverse (recruiting, for example, from Central State and Wilberforce), each sector of the state, possible past donors. Most Board members have been referred by other members. New board member should have good accounting skills, marketing skills, and financial skills. Jackie

stated that she wanted to make sure that ALL sectors are represented. Debate about term limits verses none was brought up. This issue will be considered again by the Governance Committee.

10. The **Columbus Audubon Center Update** was presented by Christie Vargo (Jan Rodenfels was absent). Christie reviewed the project background of CAC from inception. We are now trying to identify major donor prospects.

Tiered gifts are:

250K upward gifts

25 – 250K gifts

up to 25K gifts

The role of the board is to support the campaign leadership team. (100% participation from board is needed in the Capital Campaign). Our Development Counsel, Goettler Associates, will never ASK for money but will advise us to keep on track. The Campaign will pay for their services and updates will be sent regularly to Board. Will Sogg said the key in dealing with donor prospects is honesty. We should not hide the fact that we'll be asking for money. If you're squeamish about asking for money – call Christie – she'll do it! Build a relationship with a prospect then let us introduce the prospect to Christie and Jerry and others. We need to invite them to events and get them involved.

11. Pete Precario of the **Conservation Committee** reported on the cormorant situation and the concern for killing of cormorants on West Sister Island. Legislation was written to kill cormorants anywhere in the state of Ohio. Audubon Ohio opposes giving carte blanche to kill cormorants and believes that ODNR must be required to account for what the overall effect will be by this killing of cormorants. With respect to Middle Bass Island and the large new marina, there's now talk of building vernal pools and wetlands to mitigate harm caused by the marina,, but we are unsure of the schedule for development on the island. Our prestige is high and many are receptive of what we have to say. The grassroots power of Audubon is highly respected. ODNR will extend deer season for one weekend which conflicts with the first weekend of the Christmas Bird Count. Pete touched on the avian flu issue and promised that the Committee will continue to monitor the issue. The Clean Ohio fund is a pot of gold and is up for reauthorization.

12. The remaining Committee reports were presented:

Chapter Relations (Jackie Light) The Committee is studying how to help at-risk chapters. Delle Nadler invited members to COAC's annual meeting on April 8.

Education (David Jenike) Jerry reported that the Committee continues to work on creating a local supplement for Audubon Adventures.

Governance (Pete Precario) Nothing more than previously stated.

Planning Committee (Liz Woedl and Tom Romito) Liz reported that planning efforts are under way with Tom acting as facilitator. Outside groups have been invited to work with the planning committee.

13. Executive Director and staff report

- Marnie Urso reported on chapter work going on in her area. An IBA Monitoring Training program will be held on April 29th, where hopefully we can pull in volunteers for watershed stewards. The Washington DC training session in March was to educate folks on Great Lakes issue.
- Jerry reported that the grant to the Ohio Environmental Education Fund for 50K was turned down and therefore still need to find 20K in order to do school-year project for which funding was sought.

14. Financial Reports and budget update: During the year it was assumed that we would NOT reimburse our operating budget from the Capital Campaign. We just found out we can reimburse ourselves after all. At a minimum, this virtually assures us of making our budget goal for the year.

15. The next meeting is August 26th, 2006 which will be held at the Holiday Inn on the Lane in Columbus. Our final meeting will be Sunday, November 12, 2006 at the State Assembly (Holiday Inn on the Lane).
In August, we'll talk about next years' schedule.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:55 pm by unanimous consent.