

## MINUTES OF COAC MEETING OF 03042018

1. CONVENING. The Council of Ohio Audubon Chapters (COAC) met at 11:00 a.m. on March 4, 2018 at Novak Education Center in Auburn, Ohio. Attending were Tom Romito, Mary Anne Romito, Suzanne Aldrich, and Nancy Howell of Western Cuyahoga Audubon Society (WCAS); Betsey Merkel, web consultant to WCAS; Amanda Piccirillo, WCAS volunteer; Jackie Augustine of Tri-Moraine Audubon Society (TMAS); Liz Woedl and Linda Williams of Audubon Society of Miama Valley (ASMV); Carly Zeis, ASVM volunteer; Penny Borgman of Audubon Society of Ohio (ASO); Linda Chen and Connie Rubin of Canton Audubon Society (CAC); Mary Ann Wagner, Trevor Wearstler, and Laurie White of Blackbrook Audubon Society (BBAS); John Lillich, Carol Lillich, and Jim Tomko of Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland (ASGC); Jan Kennedy of Greater Mohican Audubon Society (GMAS); and Jim Jablonski of Black River Audubon Society (BRAS).

2. BIRDWALK. Seven COAC members attended a birdwalk before the meeting.

3. HACH-OTIS SANCTUARY PRESENTATION. John Lillich made a brief presentation on the Hach-Otis Sanctuary in Willoughby Hills, which ASGC acquired and has preserved through the Western Reserve Land Conservancy.

4. WEBSITE PLATFORM PRESENTATION.

a. Betsey Merkel explained that WCAS has been instrumental in resusitating the Council of Ohio Audubon Chapters since 2017. She said this involves connecting the chapters together in a network with the use of an online platform.

b. Betsey said the importance of networking the chapters is that in 2006, there were 19 Audubon chapters in Ohio that reached 60 percent of the population, whereas by 2017, there was a 30 percent reach, due to the loss of five chapters.

c. Betsey said that the growth of mobile device users since 2006 presents a potential audience of 18 to 44-year old people who are on these devices. Reaching this audience with a network can help the existing chapters grow. Betsey termed this phenomenon “adapt or die.”

d. Betsey outlined how a platform will enable COAC to conduct business on line by performing the following tasks:

1) Organize and secure the data that we enter into it.

- 2) Brand the network.
- 3) Create libraries of the information from all of the chapters.
- 4) Contain content, such as documents, pictures, video, and sound.
- 5) Feature the chapters on social media.
- 6) Provide the service of sharing projects among the chapters.
- 7) Conduct e-commerce, such as on-line ticketed events.

e. Betsey said that the platform could help COAC to:

- 1) Connect new people with chapters.
- 2) Be found by a search.
- 3) Use collaborative technologies.
- 4) Centralize communications.

5) Become a valued National Audubon Society connection and a force for bird conseration in Ohio.

- 6) Add value through leadership service.
- 7) Have a business model.
- 8) Band together to find resources.

f. Betsey said she would be the project developer and manager.

g. Betsey said the platform would be more than a website. It would be a buisness plan to manage the network.

h. Betsey explained the first-year expense of the platform would include a one-time cost of \$2,500 to construct the platform, \$300 per year for fixed technology expenses, \$500 per month for skilled labor, and a one-time cost of \$300 for an external hard drive, totalling \$9,100.

5. LUNCH. The attendees enjoyed lunch, which was provided by dabofclass.com catering service in Aurora. We each paid for our own lunch.

6. BIRDS AND BEANS COFFEE. Suzanne Aldrich made a brief presentation about Birds and Beans Coffee, which WCAS is marketing as a fund raiser.

7. VOTE ON FUNDING THE PLATFORM.

a. Tom Romito noted that 21 people were attending the meeting and they represented nine of the 14 Audubon chapters in Ohio.

b. Tom invited input from the participants relevant to the platform project. He began by reviewing items that people posted to the flip charts in the room earlier in the day and noted input from the floor. They were:

1) Will we still need a domain name. Chapters may retain their own.

2) How will we interact with the project? By e-mail, phone, and by working together.

3) Where have COAC funds come from in the past? From chapter assessments when COAC was once active.

4) Will chapters be assessed dues for COAC? We don't know.

5) Will the chapter stores keep the money they make? Yes.

6) Will COAC store money go through chapter Paypal accounts? No.

7) Nametags should be provided for everyone at workshops like this one.

8) Where will first-year funding for the platform project come from? From COAC.

9) What about second and third-year funding? John Lillich said we need a written business plan that explains where the money will come from beyond year one, including milestones.

c. Using parliamentary procedure, Tom asked for a motion to use COAC money to fund the platform that Betsey described. Jackie Augustine made the motion, which was "to fund the platform project, subject to the writing of a plan to fund the years beyond year one, to include

milestones.” Liz Woedl seconded it. Tom opened the floor for ten minutes of discussion. He ensured that everyone had the opportunity to say whatever they wanted. Nancy Howell noted that she is the COAC treasurer and that the COAC bank account holds \$17,000.

d. Tom explained that each chapter present had one vote to cast. He said that in cases where chapters had more than one member present, they should quickly reach a consensus on how their chapter would vote.

e. Tom polled the chapter spokespersons for their votes. The motion carried, seven chapters for the motion and two chapter against with no abstentions. Tom ended the procedure by stating that chapter representatives may provide inputs on creating the business plan for funding the years beyond year one. They should send their inputs by e-mail to [info@wcaudubon.org](mailto:info@wcaudubon.org).

8. JACKIE AUGUSTINE PRESENTATION. Jackie made a presentation that Tri-Moraine Audubon Society is launching, called Environmental Education Weekend. TMAS is collaborating with the Girl Scouts to protect Myeerah Nature Preserve near Bellefontaine, Ohio (located centrally between Columbus, Lima, and Dayton). There will be a celebratory event and fund-raising on September 16.

9. FUND-RAISING WORKSHOP. Jackie then polled participants for ideas on how they raise funds for their chpaters. Following are the ideas they generated:

- a. Annual appeals. It is best to offer specific projects to fund.
- b. Silent auctions.
- c. Bird-a-thons.
- d. Planned giving.
- e. Bird seed and coffee sales.
- f. Collaboration with other organizations. Examples given were Trust for Public Land, Americorps, Clean Ohio, ODNR, Cleveland Foundation, electric companies, co-ops, Land and Water Conservation Fund.
- g. Proposals to foundations and National Audubon Society for on-the-ground conservation projects, not operating expenses.

- h. Communication to potential funders of our successes, needs, and collaborative efforts with personal and business contacts

10. CARLY ZEIS PRESENTATION. Carly made a presentation about a youth birding group at Maimi University that she is organizing. She is doing it in collaboration with partner organizations. Carly explained how the social media are attracting members and volunteers.

11. FUTURE COAC MEETINGS. Liz said she needs the support of ASMV board to host a COAC workshop in Oxford in June. Jackie asked for support from the chapters to fund a facility for a workshop in Bellefontaine in Sepember. She said the cost would be \$200. The chapters present expressed support to provide this cost from the COAC account.

12. ADJOURNMENT. The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m. Three people attended a bird walk afterwards.