

MINUTES OF COAC CONFERENCE CALL OF 01-22-2018

1. CONVENING. A conference call of the Council of Ohio Audubon Chapters convened at 7:00 p.m. on January 22, 2018. Attending were Betsey Merkel, web consultant for Western Cuyahoga Audubon Society (WCAS); Tom Romito, Mary Anne Romito, and Kurt Miske, all of WCAS; and Mary Ann Wagner of Blackbrook Audubon Society (BBAS).
2. Betsey began the call by reviewing data related to the COAC mission, the proposed network project for COAC, the decline in reach by Audubon chapters in Ohio from 2006-2017, and the impact of content marketing on WCAS's growth and activity.
3. Betsey explained that the purpose of the COAC network project is to build a sustainable network and conservation legacy in Ohio. She explained that WCAS is incubating a COAC network on the WCAS website and proposes to build a separate website for COAC. Skilled labor is necessary to build and manage a COAC site, and the cost of doing so for the first year is \$9,100.
4. Mary Ann Wagner asked where the money to do this will come from. Tom noted that the COAC has a bank account of \$19,000. Mary Ann asked if the chapters will be expected to pay dues into this account, and Tom said they will not.
5. Mary Ann Wagner asked if the COAC website would be separate from the individual chapter websites. Betsey said it would be separate and would serve all of the chapters.
6. Mary Ann Wagner asked if there would be costs for the follow-on years. Betsey said there would be an ongoing cost of project technology and director's fee, and she expects grants to be sought for this purpose.
7. Mary Ann Wagner added Ashtabula County is assigned to Blackbrook Audubon. She asked how Ohio compares to other states in terms of reach. Betsey said she doesn't know because she has been focusing on Ohio.
8. Kurt said the some of the Audubon chapters in Ohio are floundering because they don't have a link to National Audubon Society, and that the COAC network project could be such a link.
9. Mary Ann Wagner said BBAS endorses the project because the chapters will not have to pay dues into the COAC account. Mary Anne Romito said we need more chapters to support the project before we can release funds for it. Tom expressed appreciation for BBAS's endorsement, but noted that one endorsement does not represent a consensus of the Audubon chapters.

10. Betsey said she would schedule another conference call and try to get as many chapters on the call as possible in order to get a consensus on the issue of funding the project.

11. The conference call ended at 8:00 p.m.