

MINUTES OF COAC CONFERENCE CALL OF 01-29-2018

1. CONVENING. A conference call of the Council of Ohio Audubon Chapters convened at 7:00 p.m. on January 29, 2018. Attending were Betsey Merkel, web consultant for Western Cuyahoga Audubon Society (WCAS); Tom Romito, Mary Anne Romito, Nancy Howell, and Kurt Miske, all of WCAS; Mary Ann Wagner of Blackbrook Audubon Society (BBAS); Linda Chen and Connie Rubin of Canton Audubon Society (CAS); Linda Williams, Liz Woedl, and Carly Zeis of Audubon Miami Valley (AMV); Jim Jablonski of Black River Audubon Society (BRAS); Jim Tomko of Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland (ASGC); Jackie Augustine of Tri-Moraine Audubon Society (TMAS); and Nancy Brundage of Mahoning Valley Audubon Society (MVAS).

2. Betsey began the call by making the following points:

a. The purpose this conference call was to renew friendships and get ready for presentations at the March 4 COAC workshop.

b. COAC is a service organization that helps Audubon chapters in Ohio to succeed.

c. Betsey's research shows a decline in chapter engagement from 58 percent in 2006 to 30 percent in 2017. We want to reverse this trend.

d. One objective is to revitalize COAC.

e. A second objective is to create a website for COAC. In the meantime, the WCAS website is hosting COAC.

f. A third objective is to establish a COAC board.

g. A fourth objective is to identify chapter representatives for the COAC board.

h. A fifth objective is to conduct quarterly workshops and monthly conference calls to share ideas to combat challenges. Jim Tomko said ASGC will host the March 4 workshop at Novak Education Center in Aurora. Betsey said various chapters will host subsequent workshops.

3. Nancy Howell asked which chapters were absent from the conference call. Betsey said they included Dayton Audubon Society (Liz Woedl said they are getting back together); Audubon Society of Ohio in Cincinnati; Firelands Audubon Society (Linda Chen will contact them);

Columbus Audubon Society; Clark County Audubon Society; Greater Mohican Society; and Akron Audubon Society (Betsey will follow up with AAS).

4. Betsey said that chapters may make presentations at the March 4 workshop on membership successes and challenges and fundraising. Betsey wants abstracts of presentations by February 12. Chapters can present as long as they desire, depending on the number of chapters that are going to present. Jackie said TMAS wants to present on land purchases and Carly wants to present on young birder initiatives. Mary Anne said that at the October 1 workshop in Parma, the chapter representatives present said they wanted to have a roundtable discussion on membership growth and involvement and volunteer recruitment. Tom offered to facilitate such a discussion for two hours. Others said that would be too long and it would be better to have a shorter roundtable discussion so chapter representatives could offer whatever insights they have.
5. Betsey said the next COAC board meeting would meet by conference call on a date during the first week of February to be determined by responses to Betsey from the chapters on which date is most convenient to them (February 4, 5, 7, 11, or 13).
6. Nancy Brundage asked who is on the COAC board? Nancy Howell said that presently, Alan Dolan is President, Nancy Howell is Treasurer and Jeff Harvey, until recently was Secretary. Mr. Harvey had to resign from COAC. Presently there is no Secretary. Mary Anne Romito suggested that the COAC Board should be comprised of a representative from every chapter so each chapter has a vote/say on issues. Tom Romito supported this idea.
7. Tom said the new COAC board needs to reach a consensus on how to spend the existing COAC funds. Betsey said this would be the focus of the February conference call.
8. The conference call ended at 8:00 p.m.