



This is the report of the SWOT Strategic Planning conducted from 11:45am-12:30pm during the COAC annual business meeting at Novak Education Center in Aurora, Ohio on March 3, 2019.

Jackie Augustine, President of COAC, introduced the activity as a great way to get feedback from a diverse audience on the priorities and direction of COAC.

Facilitators recorded comments from small groups asking about the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) related to COAC. The following paragraphs detail the ideas that participants generated for each topic. The COAC Board of Trustees will use these comments to formulate a strategic plan for COAC.

1. Strengths

a. Questions used to spark the discussion

- i. What advantages does COAC have?
- ii. What does COAC do better than anyone else?
- iii. What unique resources can COAC draw upon that others can't?
- iv. What do people outside of COAC see as your strengths?

b. Responses

i. Scope/Unifying organizations

1. Leadership
2. Magnitude of what is needed is beyond the scope of individual organizations: ability to collaborate is leveraged by a network, beyond chapters and affiliates

3. Collective power of chapters & affiliates
 4. Broad reach - cover region
 5. COAC seeks to 'access in' by all organizations who seek common ground
 6. Unite organizations
 7. Networking potential/capacity
 8. Stronger together
 9. Unifying different chapters
 10. Pitch ideas to a broader base of like interest
 11. Welcoming community
 12. Statewide resources to a diverse state
 13. Inclusive, understands differences
 14. A bridge between National & Chapters
 15. Outsider: sees state-wide a plus; gets everybody at the table
- ii. Passion
1. We look outside our own organizations for opportunities to help us grow, provide opportunities to let people do what they love to do
 2. Passion/diversity/how chapters can work together such as join speaker programs
 3. Help establish common goals
- iii. Communication
1. Communications are key, especially for young people to bring their needs forward
 2. Chapter reps get together to share ideas
 3. Everyone is disconnected - not speaking - opportunity to share ideas
 4. organization/communicate/mission statement
 - a. What works in your chapter - list, ID members
 5. Central communication - utilizing technology
 6. Unifying through internet
 7. Leads to collaborative efforts
 8. Hear from urban and rural chapters
 9. Centralized place to keep info
- iv. Talent
1. Skill set with deep knowledge - it's currently unknown
 - a. Birders, photos, industry, work-related
 - b. Talent base - LTV steel secured financial future

- c. Skill sets - ID who they are within COAC
 - 2. Find a unique talent pool
 - 3. Experience/expertise (diversity of level of experiences)
 - 4. Bring resources to chapters
 - 5. Wide knowledge base - Knowledge about birds, wildlife, habitat, wildlife needs
 - v. Management
 - 1. managerial/organization knowledge/organize
 - vi. History
2. Weaknesses
- a. Questions used to spark the discussion
 - i. What could COAC improve?
 - ii. What should COAC avoid?
 - b. Responses
 - i. Need to reach out to more groups
 - 1. Excluding groups
 - 2. Reach to have more younger people [2 groups]
 - a. Find out what appeals to younger peeps
 - b. Build contact with youth groups
 - c. Where society is for young people
 - 3. More communication/networking with
 - a. State parks
 - b. University groups
 - c. Gun & hook organizations
 - 4. We are excluding higher education by not giving them 'access in'
 - ii. Unifying vision needed
 - 1. Need central issue to unify around
 - 2. Need to identify a central issue (water/habitat)
 - 3. Divided state - Ohio River vs. Lake Erie
 - 4. More than just birds [two different groups]
 - 5. Don't pigeon hole to birds (or one topic) in programming & activities
 - 6. Part of a network of various concerns
 - 7. Not recognizing Audubon as a conservation organization
 - iii. Communication
 - 1. Strong push for social media might scare older/less tech folks
 - 2. Don't rely on social media

- 3. Word about COAC not getting back to chapters
- iv. Relying on other groups
 - 1. [Can't] depend on state office to do the work
 - 2. Need more power and influence
- v. Managing volunteers
 - 1. Volunteers & managing volunteers
 - 2. Volunteer commitment and over commitment
 - 3. Attract & retain volunteers
 - 4. Aging members/volunteers
- vi. Competition
 - 1. Possible competition with similar organizations
- vii. Change
 - 1. Regimentation, inability to change
 - 2. Political climate
- 3. Opportunities
 - a. Questions used to spark the discussion
 - i. What good opportunities can you spot?
 - ii. What interesting trends are you aware of?
 - iii. Useful opportunities can come from such things as:
 - 1. Changes in technology and markets on both a broad and narrow scale.
 - 2. Changes in government policy related to your field
 - 3. Changes in social patterns, population profiles, lifestyle changes, and so on.
 - 4. Local events.
 - b. Responses
 - i. Mission
 - 1. Look at LEAP's biodiversity vision (don't reinvent the wheel)
 - ii. Collaborative events
 - 1. Create events attractive to diverse groups/diverse ages
 - 2. Hands-on activity that involve community
 - a. Shorter length than traditional bird walk
 - b. Build bluebird boxes
 - 3. Things to do at home
 - a. Group painting
 - 4. Opportunities in environmental field
 - 5. Birds & Botany - interconnected; diverse people to lead tours
 - iii. Expand influence

1. Give opportunities to lead (especially for young people)
 2. Reach out to
 - a. bird banders
 - b. Artists - sketchbooks
 - c. Photography
 3. Move into urban centers - young people/diverse people
 4. Work with youth, children, teens...
 5. Go to audience(s) want to attract
- iv. Revenue
1. Monetizing YouTube
 - a. Virtual bird walks
- v. Communication
1. Outside organizations could know about COAC
 2. Research to fund, support, and collaborate
 3. Celebrate success, informs, educates
 - a. Why - tell them why!
 4. Managing social media
4. Threats
- a. Questions used to spark the discussion
 - i. What obstacles does COAC face?
 - ii. What are your competitors doing?
 - iii. Are expectations of members or potential members changing?
 - iv. Is changing technology threatening your impact?
 - v. Could any of your weaknesses serious threat COAC?
 - b. Responses
 - i. Void in SE Ohio
 - ii. Changing strategy for outreach
 1. Different times
 2. Multiple ways to participate
 3. communicate/use apps that are easy to use
 4. Keep paper newsletters, but need to expand
 5. Tech can be a barrier
 6. "Look and see"
 7. "Kids communicate different"
 8. Outside organizations do not know about COAC
 - iii. Vision
 1. The challenge of finding common ground
 2. Tunnel vision... not seeing "Big Picture"

- iv. miscommunication/no communication
- v. Apathy
 - 1. Lack of joining of clubs
 - 2. People are busy with other
- vi. Stay current, but not lose older members
- vii. Staying current
- viii. Political Climate
 - 1. Politics - Trump!
- ix. Competition from other organizations... should not be competition
 - 1. Resistance to partnerships/collaboration
- x. National Audubon Society needs to look at chapters (grassroots)
- xi. Limited time, limited funds

- *Submitted by Jackie Augustine, Facilitator.*