

MEETING OF COUNCIL OF OHIO AUDUBON CHAPTERS

October 1, 2017

1. **CONVENING.** A meeting of the Council of Ohio Audubon Chapters convened at 1:00 p.m. on Sunday, October 1, 2017 at the home of Bruce Missig at 6522 Olde York Rd., Parma Heights, Ohio 44130.

2. **INTRODUCTIONS.** We introduced ourselves to each other. Here are the participants and their chapter affiliations:

- a. Darlene Sillick, Columbus Audubon Society
- b. Amy Didion, Firelands Audubon Society
- c. Dan Gesualdo, Firelands Audubon Society
- d. Jim Tomko, Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland
- e. Linda Chen, Canton Audubon Society
- f. Connie Rubin, Canton Audubon Society
- g. Al Dolan, Canton Audubon Society
- h. Mary Anne Wagner, Blackbrook Audubon Society
- i. Nancy Howell, Western Cuyahoga Audubon Society
- j. Mary Anne Romito, Western Cuyahoga Audubon Society
- k. Tom Romito, Western Cuyahoga Audubon Society
- l. Betsey Merkel, web consultant to Western Cuyahoga Audubon Society
- m. Bruce Missig, host

3. **REFRESHMENTS.** The participants enjoyed refreshments provided by Liz Clingman of Western Cuyahoga Audubon Society.

4. **GROUND RULES.** Tom Romito led the group in a brainstorming exercise to establish ground rules for the manner in which we would govern our behavior and interactions during the meeting. Here are the ground rules we agreed upon:

- a. Don't talk over each other.
- b. Be concise.
- c. Let others speak.
- d. Treat each other with respect.
- e. All ideas are good ideas; treat them with respect.
- f. Don't be afraid to speak up.
- g. Do not conduct side conversations.

5. **AGENDA.** Tom led the group in a brainstorming session for items they would like to focus on. Here is the first round of ideas:

- a. Share best practices.
- b. Develop relationships.
- c. Foster communications with all organizations.

- d. Interact with other organizations.
- e. How to ask for help for projects.
- f. Recruiting volunteers.
- g. Growing membership.
- h. How to raise funds.
- i. How to involve members in advocacy.
- j. Improving member involvement.
- k. Create and complete conservation projects.
- l. Discuss tax requirements.

6. **AGENDA REFINEMENT.** The group combined some ideas from the first round of brainstorming and came up with this list of items to work on:

- a. How to grow membership.
- b. How to recruit volunteers.
- c. How to improvement relationships, communications, and interaction.
- d. How to improve member involvement.
- e. How to ask for help for projects.
- f. How to create and complete conservation projects.
- g. How to raise funds.
- h. Discuss tax requirements.

7. **BREAKOUT GROUP WORK.** We formed the following breakout groups, then worked for 30 minutes on the items:

- a. Items a.-d.: Betsey, Jim, Connie, Mary Anne Wagner.
- b. Items a.-d.: Nancy, Al, Amy.
- c. Items e.-g.: Darlene, Dan, Mary Anne Romito, Linda.

8. **OUTPUT FROM BREAKOUT GROUPS.** The PDF file attached to these minutes contains photographs of the butcher papers on which the breakout groups recorded the items that they discussed. Following is the summary that Tom captured when the breakout groups reported out to the whole group:

- a. Chapters offer memberships that are different from other chapters.
- b. Poor turnout kills programs.
- c. Chapters offer diverse programs to engage many people.
- d. Chapters can partner with businesses and schools to publicize their activities.
- e. Identifying conservation projects is key to gaining support for them.
- f. Chapters can share fund-raising expertise with each other.
- g. Chapters can publicize their need for help to other chapters.

9. **TAX REQUIREMENTS.** Mary Anne explained that COAC must submit a 990 by November 15 and made a motion to prepare it herself for a fee of \$100. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

10. **NEXT STEPS.** Tom led a brainstorming exercise to identify next steps that the group can take to advance its agenda items. Here are some steps that we identified:

- a. Hold electronic roundtables.
- b. Convene focus groups at nature centers with scheduled bird walks.
- c. Broadcast the content of our meetings to non-participants.
- d. Piggy-back our assemblies on scheduled events.
- e. Hold a weekend retreat at one location.
- f. Hold regional workshops throughout the state.

11. **ACTION PLAN.** The consensus of the group was that Firelands Audubon Society will host a regional workshop in Huron to attract more chapter representation. Tom led the group in developing the following action plan to implement this decision:

ACTION	WHO	WHEN
Host the meeting from 9:00-3:00.	Amy and Dan	Mid-march
Recruit people from Greater Mohican Audubon, Akron Audubon, and Mahoning Valley Audubon.	Al	January 15
Recruit people from Black River Audubon.	Amy and Dan	January 15
Ask Liz Woedl of Miami Valley Audubon to contact and invite representatives from Dayton Audubon, Tri-Moraine Audubon, and Audubon Society of Ohio.	Tom	Upon distribution of these minutes.
Provide final notification of the plan to all invitees.	?	?
Set the agenda.	All chapter reps.	Day of event