

OHIO BIRD



CONSERVATION INITIATIVE

Coordinating Council Meeting Minutes- 11/7/2006 Upper Arlington Public Library

The following members were in attendance: Lynda Andrews U.S. Forest Service, Steve Barry ODNR-Wildlife, Tom Berger ODNR- Forestry, Lynn Boydelatour ODNR- Parks, Jeff Brown- Ohio Bird Banding Association, Suzanne Cardinal- OBCI, Bob Gates OSU- Wildlife Society, John Hollback- American Electric Power, Mike Kravitz- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Steven Lee- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Barbara Revard- Columbus Zoo, Mike Reynolds- ODNR- Wildlife, John Ritzenthaler- Audubon Ohio, Paul Rodewald- OBCI/OSU, Dave Scott- ODNR- Wildlife, Stan Searles- Cleveland Zoo, Julie Shieldcastle- Black Swamp Bird Observatory, Myra Vick- NPS- Hopewell Culture National Park, Kurt Waterstradt- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bill Whan- Ohio Ornithological Society, Pete Whan- The Nature Conservancy, Troy Wilson- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Paul Rodewald started the meeting by introducing the new council members. Myra Vick from Hopewell Culture National Park, Andy Jones from Cleveland Museum of Natural History, and Mike Kravitz from U.S. Environmental Protection Agency are new members of the Coordinating Council. Kurt Waterstradt is the new representative for U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in place of Doug Brewer and Mike Reynolds has replaced Scott Hull for ODNR-Wildlife.

Overview of OBCI Progress

Suzanne Cardinal gave a short presentation on OBCI's new web site, which was redesigned with the help of a web designer, Katherine Koch; it was completed in July. Suzanne showed the features of the new site including online registration for the mailing list and signatory membership. She stressed that OBCI members should have links to OBCI's new site on their web sites and should use the new web site to post bird-related events and submit news articles on bird conservation. Linking to OBCI's new site will increase visibility and visitors. Lynn Boydelatour suggested having a list of all bird-related conferences on the new site in addition to bird events as well as links to ODNR's wildlife references sites. Other suggestions included adding a grants page to acknowledge support received and add a page on grants for habitat restoration. Members suggested adding a volunteer page and links to other important projects such as the Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas.

The Ohio All-bird Conservation Plan was discussed. The rough draft was completed in mid-July. Suzanne explained the basic information included in the plan, which includes information from the Upper Mississippi & Great Lakes Joint Venture conservation strategy plans and the Ohio priority species list. Suzanne

will send out an email requesting feedback from all council and committee members. The final draft for the plan will be finished by July 2007.

Finally, Suzanne provided information on OBCI's newsletter; two have been completed so far- February and June editions. The newsletter is sent out to all signatories and other interested citizens that have signed up for our mailing list. It is a great resource to reach many individuals. Dave Scott, Jeff Brown, Pat Quackenbush and John Ritzenthaler have all provided articles. Suzanne asked council members to submit articles for future editions. Lynn Boydelatour suggested that members recycle articles used for other newsletters. The next newsletter will be sent out in December; Suzanne will send out a request for submissions.

Old Business

Minutes from last Coordinating Council meeting, December 2005, were briefly discussed and approved by council members.

Co-chairs of the Outreach and Education Committee, Barb Revard, John Ritzenthaler, and Pete Whan, gave an update on the committee's progress. The group met in December 2005 and August 2006. They worked to promote International Migratory Bird Day in 2005 and discussed future projects such as Lights Out and Cats Indoors for 2006. In anticipation of the OBCI workshop, Pete Whan had compiled information on all Ohio birding trails. This information will eventually be placed on OBCI's web site. It was suggested that this committee could put together a How-to Guide for birding trails. Also, the idea of forming a current events committee was discussed. A current events committee would be responsible for providing information on current topics in bird conservation such as Double-crested Cormorant control or wind power. This committee would not necessarily state a position but would be in charge of providing information on both sides of potential controversies.

Another important project that was suggested for the Outreach and Education Committee to pursue was to help sponsor or run workshops on the Farm Bill and CREP. There is a need to provide farmers and landowners with information about these important conservation projects and how they can get involved. The interpretation of the Farm Bill is especially complex and providing a workshop to engage landowners would benefit many agencies. Council members suggested contacting Luke Miller from Division of Wildlife, Gary Moore from The Nature Conservancy and Jim Inglis from Pheasants Forever to discuss this idea and find out more about the conservation programs and how OBCI could help to provide such workshops. Providing a similar workshop for private citizens that own large tracts of forest to teach them how to provide bird habitat. Lynda Andrews suggested contacting Rural Action to help with this idea. To improve OBCI's ability to reach consumptive groups, Bob Gates suggested that we advertise

information about hunting events and possibly dedicate part of the web site to fulfilling this role.

Mike Reynolds provided an update on the Conservation Planning and Research Committee. The committee held three meetings in Columbus and conducted some business through email. All meetings were to discuss the all-bird plan. The committee helped with the Ohio priority species list. Mike Reynolds also provided information on BCR 28. The coordinator for BCR 28, Keith Watson took a new position so they have been in a holding pattern. However, BCR 28 may be moving to Joint Venture status to increase funding for the group.

Paul Rodewald updated the group on OBCI's budget. Currently, OBCI does not have enough funding to provide salary for the coordinator position through the end of the fiscal year. OBCI received a \$5,000 grant from The Gund Foundation last year, however, the money will not be accessible until December because the money was brought through the OSU Foundation (to avoid overhead costs); this requires the money to be unavailable for six months. The Division of Forestry will be contributing \$2500 to OBCI this year. Paul and Suzanne have submitted two grants to the US Fish and Wildlife Service and they are in the process of submitting proposals to the Columbus Zoo and The Nature Conservancy. The group suggested applying for money through the Neotropical Migratory Bird grant and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation as well. Kurt Waterstradt suggested that we could write in some funding for the coordinator position through a NAWCA (North American Wetland Conservation Act) grant. Some members suggested having member organizations pay dues. This has been brought up in previous council meetings with no decision one way or another because of difficulties to funneling the money to a specific account. One possibility to get around this issue to open up a bank account in OBCI's name and have an OBCI member be responsible for managing the fund. At previous meetings, someone suggested having Audubon Ohio hold money for OBCI, however, now Audubon would be required to include overhead. Julie Sheildcastle mentioned that assuming that Black Swamp Bird Observatory's board would approve, they may be able to be a repository for OBCI money.

New Business

OBCI is actively pursuing two new project possibilities 1) Western Ohio Borderland Initiative and 2) Ohio Keep Cats Indoors Campaign. The Western Ohio Borderland Project will seek to enhance, restore and acquire wetland habitat in Northwestern Ohio for migrating birds with shorebirds as the major focus. This project was started by John Ritzenthaler who approached Kurt Waterstradt with the idea. Since August, Suzanne, John and Kurt have met three times to work on the project and discuss funding possibilities. If enough matching funds are found OBCI will apply for a North American Wetland Conservation Act grant for this project. Suzanne and Paul reported that they were near completion on a grant proposal to the Columbus Zoo to support the

Ohio Keep Cats Indoors campaign and one month salary for the coordinator position. This project aims to educate the public on the importance of keeping pet cats inside to protect wildlife, especially birds.

The council discussed modifying OBCI's operating procedures to include how to endorse projects that the coordinator spends time to complete. Specifically, Suzanne and Paul would like to make sure that the Coordinating Council endorses projects; this is especially important in terms of building consensus amongst OBCI's members. The endorsement of projects will allow members who are concerned about a given project to voice their opinion. Voting on projects will be done over email with a specific time frame for council members to respond; any member who does not respond will be assumed to be endorsing the project. Also, Suzanne was concerned about being permitted to form new committees when needed, especially important when wanting to form a new a committee for a specific project. The council agreed to allow the coordinator to form new committees when needed. Paul and Suzanne will work to modify the operating procedures and will send out to the council for approval.

New projects were suggested by Stan Searles and Pete Whan. Stan Searles suggested partnering with Western Cuyahoga Audubon to work on their Important Bird Area. Pete Whan wanted to see OBCI members help support the re-authorization of the Clean Ohio Funds bond. Suzanne will meet with both Stan and Pete to discuss these projects.

Paul Rodewald asked the council for suggestions on how to improve retention and involvement of members. He reinforced the importance of each council member's responsibility to represent their organization and to disseminate information about OBCI; this will help to improve OBCI's information exchange. Paul recommended that council members find others within their organization to become involved with OBCI projects if deemed appropriate. Involvement of members may be hindered by most council members being over-committed with other projects and committees. Suzanne has been conducting site visits with all council committees to learn more about each organization and to find out how OBCI could help each member organization.

The Coordinating Council meeting ended with a discussion of the next OBCI workshop. Suzanne would like to set up a conservation-planning workshop with the Upper Mississippi & Great Lakes Joint Venture to finish up the Ohio All-bird Conservation Plan sometime in the spring. The council suggested postponing the next OBCI All-bird workshop until 2008 or when needed. In the past, OBCI was planning on having an all-bird conservation workshop every year; however, council members decided that we should only have a workshop when it appears to be a necessity to accomplish a specific goal. Because there are many similar workshops to what OBCI has put on in the past, council members did not believe it necessary to have a workshop every year.