

URBAN BIRDING CLEVELAND INITIATIVE MINUTES OF 11-07-2019

1. The Urban Birding Cleveland Initiative Design Lab met at the LGBT Community Center on November 7, 2019 for the first time. Seventeen people attended, including guest David Lindo, a.k.a. "The Urban Birder." Tom Romito facilitated the meeting.

2. The workgroup brainstormed the following principles for what an urban birding trail should look like (We decided that the terms trail, route, and space can be used interchangeably):
 - a. Educate people about birds.
 - b. Promote the love of birds.
 - c. Tell people to look out their windows to see birds.
 - d. Tell people to get out of their homes and become aware of birds.
 - e. Explain to people that birding is the gateway to nature and conservation issues.
 - f. Help people learn to identify just a couple of common birds and their songs.
 - g. Know your audience and educate them at their level.
 - h. Natural spaces and housing define the path of the trail.
 - i. Inspire people to pay attention to birds by showing them that they know more about birds than they think they know.
 - j. Conduct in-school programs and provide role models to reach young people.
 - k. Share our own knowledge of birds with people to raise their awareness level.
 - l. Hold introductory bird walks for new birders and have extra binoculars to let them use.
 - m. Conduct family bird walks to engage adults and children alike.

3. We then worked in four breakout groups to brainstorm items for a checklist that we could use to familiarize people about urban birding. Here is the data we collected, with some combining, culling, and clarifying by the facilitator Tom Romito to make it easy for us to work with:
 - a. Welcome everyone on urban bird walks.
 - b. Look for spaces that are green (trees), blue (water), and gray (concrete).
 - c. Look for toxic and hazardous sites to see what birds are there.
 - d. Walk the trail in a circular way to start and end in the same place.
 - e. Walk with eyes open and keep looking up!
 - f. Keep people engaged on the walk by instructing and encouraging them.
 - g. Be aware that the "space" is wherever you are.
 - h. Build awareness of what is there or likely to be there and keep it simple.
 - i. Take learning aids, such as pictures and simple lists and charts, to show people.
 - j. Put handouts about urban birding in libraries and coffee houses.
 - k. Be urban birding ambassadors in neighborhoods to market the birding experience.
 - l. Encourage people to enhance their yards with native plants, water, and bird feeders.
 - m. Expand your own birding group.
 - n. Expand your own knowledge and skills through programs and speakers.

- o. Promote urban birding walks at bird clubs, museums, nature centers, and metroparks.
- p. Be prepared anywhere to help people be mindful and de-stress by giving them a ten-second elevator pitch on how to become an urban birder: Step 1 - Go outside; Step 2 - Listen and Look Up (LOL); Step 3) Pick one bird and learn about it.
- q. Create a rack card that shows basic tips on urban birding, such as: The three steps in paragraph 2.p. above; “layer up” with thermal underwear, coat, cap, and gloves; and plant both feet on the ground when using binoculars.
- r. Put signage in yards and community gardens that identify native plants and what species of birds and butterflies they attract.
- s. Encourage government officials to protect native plant gardens and not let their maintenance crews cut them down.
- t. Start a social media campaign to promote urban birding, for example, #UrbanBirdingCLE.
- u. Locate local hotspots featuring trees, green space, and houses with bird feeders. Ask homeowners for permission to use their yards as stops on the urban birding route.

4. The workgroup created the following action plan to identify further tasks:

| WHAT | WHO | WHEN |
|--|------------------|----------------------|
| Define our goal and decide on strategies, objectives, and tasks for achieving it. | Entire committee | Saturday, November 9 |
| Start a Google Group of our committee to facilitate communicating with each other. | Betsy | As soon as possible |
| Finalize a checklist we could use to familiarize people with urban birding. | Entire committee | Saturday, November 9 |
| Schedule follow-on committee meetings. | Entire committee | Saturday, November 9 |

5. Our next Urban Birding Cleveland Initiative Design Lab is on Saturday, November 9 from 2:30-4:30 at Bethany Church on W. 65th St. in Cleveland.

Lab Notes submitted by Tom Romito.