



# *Wachiska* Audubon Society

**Strategic Focus for 2020-2023:**  
Building Relationships  
Advocating for the Environment  
Caring for Tallgrass Prairies  
Strengthening Internal Operations

## **Mission Statement**

The mission of the Wachiska Audubon Society is to bring people together to preserve and restore native tallgrass prairies and other natural ecosystems, promote birding, support native wildlife, provide nature education opportunities, and advocate for sustainability of the natural community of which we are all a part.

### **Strategic Focus for 2020-2023:**

Building Relationships  
Advocating for the Environment  
Caring for Tallgrass Prairies  
Strengthening Internal Operations

#### **Focus Area 1: Building Relationships**

Wachiska Audubon Society more fully achieves its mission through relationships. We will focus on increasing membership, utilizing technology, improving communication, and engaging volunteers.

#### **Focus Area 2: Advocating for the Environment**

Wachiska Audubon Society desires to utilize its resources and people to advocate for care of the environment. This will be accomplished through educational programs, formal advocacy efforts, and

#### **Focus Area 3: Caring for Tallgrass Prairies**

Wachiska Audubon Society is responsible for managing and conserving 32 pieces of land, totaling approximately 920 acres throughout 16 counties. A plan for sustaining this important effort includes funding and hiring a professional Prairie Manager.

#### **Focus Area 4: Strengthening Internal Operations**

Wachiska Audubon Society seeks internal operations that will support current objectives and long-term sustainability for the organization. Operations will be strengthened through a review of internal policies, procedures, and governance. Expectations are also to begin the process of hiring an Executive Director.

## **Focus Area 1: Building Relationships**

**Owner(s):** Lana Novak, Linda Brown, Arlys Reitan

**Objective:** Increase the number of Wachiska Audubon Society Friends from 300-400.

### **Year One Priorities (June 2020-June 2021)**

- 1) Make Birdseed sales online before October 2020.
- 2) Call every Friend to establish a “get to know you” database that includes volunteer interests.
- 3) Create a list of volunteer opportunities including during and after COVID-19.
- 4) During general meetings, remind people to invite others to events and meetings.
- 5) Consider general meeting structure variations to improve attendance (led by Arlys).
- 6) Online renewals and donations with credit cards and PayPal (in progress).
- 7) Email thank yous.
- 8) Research how the existing membership database can be more effective and efficient (Linda B. to compare/contrast by end of December 2020).
- 9) Improve social media presence. Include mobile operations for payment and to get information.

### **Year One Action Steps (June 2020-June 2021)**

- 1) Call every Friend to establish a “get to know you” database (Lana to make calls; Theresa to draft script; determine how to compile).
- 2) Online renewals and donations with CCs and PayPal (Nancy working on).
- 3) Improve social media presence. Include mobile operations for payment, get info
  - Find social media help that might include a media/computer science expert or student; radio station. Theresa and Dave to contact Ben Vogt possible. Ethan Friese may know someone.

### **Year Two Priorities (June 2021-June 2022)**

- 1) Collect Wachiska history stories from people for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in February 2023 (signed charter with national). Could use an interview format/questionnaire that could be completed at the interviewee’s own pace.

### **Year Three Priorities (June 2022-June 2023)**

- 1) Improve social media presence. Include mobile operations for payment, get info. Possibly volunteer or hire college student.
- 2) Identify potential funding for updated membership database.

## **Focus Area 2: Advocating for the Environment**

**Owner(s):** Marj Kennedy, Linda Brown, Marilyn McNabb

### **Year One Priorities (June 2020-June 2021))**

- 1) Make climate work part of the mission of the whole organization.
- 2) Invite Board of Directors (BOD), staff, Legislative Committee and Population and Environment Committee to participate in a Citizens Climate Lobby (CCL) education experience to empower people to communicate effectively with elected officials on climate or other areas of concern. If Board agrees, Linda to talk with Becky Seth.
- 3) Invite Population and Environment Committee to house climate work for the chapter (Patty).
  - a. Possible tasks for the committee include:
    - i. Coordinate with Legislative Committee on state legislation.
    - ii. Coordinate with Marilyn McNabb on newsletter information on the climate.
    - iii. Coordinate with Marilyn on possible action steps. This might include a group that is willing to support Citizens' Climate Lobby in making sure elected representatives received a daily request about climate, from telephone, email or letters.
    - iv. Familiarize chapter on federal climate related "ag" legislation.

### **Year One Action Steps (June 2020-June 2021))**

- 1) CCL workshop opportunity for BOD, Staff, Legislative and Population/Environment Committees.
- 2) Find a home for the work (most likely a committee).
- 3) Let committee prioritize their work.

### **Year Two Priorities (June 2021-June 2022))**

- 1) Review progress on year one and set priorities for years two and three.

### **Year Three Priorities (June 2022-June 2023))**

- 1) Review progress on years one and two and set priorities for year three.

### **Resources Needed**

- 1) Becky Seth to offer CCL Workshop.
- 2) We will need an intentional effort to invite more people into the work (Lana to include in calls to Friends).
- 3) National Audubon resources
- 4) Resource people: Becky Seth, Ken Haar, Gene Hanlon

## **Focus Area 3: Caring for Tallgrass Prairies**

**Owner:** Conservation Committee (Ross Scott, Chair), Elizabeth Nelson

### **Year One Priorities (June 2020-June 2021))**

- 1) Secure financial resources for a prairie manager.
- 2) NET Grant application due September.
- 3) Seek matching funds for a prairie manager position.
- 4) Explore partnership options available. (Spring Creek Prairie is a natural partner)
- 5) Stu had started a job description. Develop an interviewing scoreboard that includes characteristics of the person we want to hire (talents, skills, knowledge, abilities, etc.).
- 6) Develop hiring documents.
- 7) Develop a training and supervision process through the Conservation Committee.

### **Year One Action Steps (June 2020-June 2021))**

- 1) The Grant Committee will include Elizabeth, Tim, and Stu.
- 2) Currently have a preliminary draft of the grant application, and Stu has distributed a three-year budget to the Conservation Committee.
- 3) Elizabeth is working on the narrative portion of the grant application. It is important for the application to focus on the work we are doing: habitat restoration and habitat conservation especially for at risk species. Eliminate language about easements.
- 4) Tim to work on the grant details on the application.
- 5) Meet with Marilyn Tabor or Mark Broman about the application early in the process (End of June).
- 6) The NET board will be voting on current applications on June 11. Follow up to better understand what has been approved.
- 7) Spring Creek just got a grant for a Prairie Manager position on private land. Kristal has a copy of the application that she will share with Elizabeth, Tim, and Stu.
- 8) Document key contractors, volunteers, and other relationships for the prairie manager position.
- 9) Tim is working to secure donors of matching funds. Will help chances of getting NET grant. (Woollam Foundation. NRDs success in the past).
- 10) NET grant decisions would be approved in April 2021.
- 11) Job posting in April and interviewing to follow.
- 12) Hire a prairie manager by June 2021.

### **Year Two Priorities (June 2021-June 2022))**

- 1) Successful hire of prairie manager.
- 2) Training of prairie manager.
- 3) Prioritization of job responsibilities (focus on specific prairies).
- 4) Set goals for year one of the position.

**Year Three Priorities (June 2022-June 2023)**

- 1) Evaluation of the prairie manager's effectiveness.
- 2) Apply for additional funding for years 4-6 (long term funding plan).
- 3) Proof that it is working.

**Resources Needed**

- 1) Financial support for the position.
- 2) A good grant application.
- 3) Good documentation.
- 4) Additional funding for matching dollars (NRDs, Northern Prairie Land Trust).

**Team Members**

- 1) Tim - Matching gifts
- 2) Ross - Matching gifts
- 3) Elizabeth - Hiring documents, grant application
- 4) Kristal - list of possible donors/funders, can review grant application
- 5) Tim and Elizabeth - NET grant application
- 6) Conservation Committee - overall direction for the position
- 7) Arnold - past chair/past president
- 8) Ethan Freeze - practical experience with conservation efforts
- 9) Don Pepperl - legal counsel for the organization (easements and property acquisitions)
- 10) Point Person - Conservation Committee Chair

## **Focus Area 4: Strengthening Internal Operations**

**Owner:** Theresa Pella, Current Vice President

### **Year One Priorities (June 2020-June 2021))**

- 1) Create a central depository for policies/procedures.
- 2) Update bylaws.
- 3) Review and update the committee structure as needed.
- 4) Implement a board calendar that includes regular strategic planning review.

### **Year One Action Steps (June 2020-June 2021))**

- 1) Develop a small committee to review bylaws, policies, and procedures.

### **Year Two Priorities (June 2021-June 2022))**

- 1) Begin the process to hire Executive Director with the goal of having someone in place by January 2023.
- 2) Build a funding model to hire an Executive Director.
- 3) Develop a job description for the Executive Director position.

### **Year Three Priorities (June 2022-June 2023))**

- 1) Hire an Executive Director by January 2023.

### **Resources Needed**

- 1) Funding for the Executive Director position.
- 2) Legal expertise to help with bylaws review.