



Centennial Campaign – ASWP Regional Initiatives

\$1,000,000

New Conservation Initiatives

Bird Friendly Community Director

\$150,000

This senior level position will conduct and coordinate a suite of projects designed to help make our communities more bird friendly. They will proactively seek out opportunities to influence policy, ordinances, and community conservation throughout western PA. Emphasis would be placed on zoning, habitat enhancement, and helping to make our urban and suburban communities a better place for birds and people. *(Budget includes 2 years' support)*

Habitat Certification Program

\$100,000

Focusing on backyards, ASWP will utilize a science-based approach to help landowners enhance their property to support native insects and wildlife. Baseline studies will be conducted and through multiple Citizen Science programs, improvements will be documented and aggregated. Interns, working under the supervision of the Bird Friendly Community Director, will conduct the field component of the program and coordinate with the landowners. *(Budget includes 2 years' support)*

Bird Friendly Community Recognition Program

\$120,000

A tiered municipal certification program that encourages and recognizes communities for their environmental efforts. Using Audubon's Bird Friendly Community Matrix, municipalities will be scored in five categories. ASWP will provide support to meet the initial requirements of certification and to advance from lower to higher rankings. Community signage will be developed for display at primary entryways to the community or other public locations. Twenty communities will be advanced over the 1st two years. *(Budget includes 2 years' support)*

Carbon Neutrality Program

\$50,000

Audubon Society of Western PA has been donated a 75-acre parcel of property in Buffalo Township, Butler Co. Part of a former, larger farm, approximately 50 acres is still leased by a neighboring farmer for planting corn. That lease expires in 2015 and Audubon plans an afforestation project that maximizes both carbon sequestration and wildlife value. Initial estimates are that we can sequester approximately 6.0 metric tons of CO₂ per acre per year for a combined site amount of approximately 450 metric tons. Based on national reforestation costs, we estimate a per acre cost of \$625. This project is part of ASWP's centennial goal of being a 100% carbon neutral organization by the end of 2016.

**** - Funded - ** Chimney Swift Towers**

\$200,000

ASWP has established a goal of erecting 100 Chimney Swift nest tower habitats by the end of 2016. Twenty five towers have already been initiated or completed on ASWP property and in local parks and trails. These were installed by ASWP staff and volunteers or as service projects (mostly Eagle Scout projects) using materials purchased through a private foundation grant.

A collaborative project with Allegheny County Parks Foundation will have ASWP install 100 Chimney Swift Towers in the nine County Parks and develop a mobile app to track tower utilization.



One of four Chimney Swift Towers installed along the Riverfront Trail in Millvale Borough.

New Education Initiatives

Citizen Science on the Schools Grounds

\$150,000

Citizen Science: “the systematic collection and analysis of data; development of technology; testing of natural phenomena; and the dissemination of these activities by researchers on a primarily avocational basis”. In other words, Crowd-sourcing for Science.

The educational literature suggests that citizen science cultivates citizen development. This means that while youth are engaged as citizen scientists they are also being engaged as participants in the democratic process of decision-making in their local communities. This participation equates to civic responsibility later in life when children become voters. In other words, when youth are engaged in tangible opportunities to develop as citizens, they are more likely to participate in making choices about adverse environmental issues.

Audubon will create 15 new Citizen Science on the School Ground locations over the next three years by creating outdoor classrooms and providing both the teachers and the students the skills necessary to participate in meaningful research and conservation.

Pigeons and Doves Over Pittsburgh

\$75,000

Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania has a unique opportunity to enhance Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) education programs and reach out to hundreds of visitors with our Pigeons and Doves Over Pittsburgh project (PDP). This project encompasses many Audubon hallmarks including teaching about birds and conservation, and engaging children and adults in research and data collection.

ASWP will take advantage of new GPS and satellite tracking technologies to trace in real time the flight of birds from our dove loft. The GPS transmitter is very small and lightweight and will be affixed to the back of our doves. These GPS transmitters fix the location of a bird every 15 seconds and are accurate to within two meters. In addition to location, the transmitters provide ground speed and altitude measurements, enabling us to model precise characteristics of the flight path as the doves fly back to our property. Through this technology, students can participate in a wide variety of STEM learning, with a nature twist.

Doves are exceptionally suited for use in educational programs because of their versatility. Their natural homing instinct provides a variety of education opportunities. Potential educational topics include, species diversity and evolution, biology and genetics, mythology and history, navigation and migration, and species extinction.

Citizen Science at Senior Centers

\$120,000

Citizen Science at Senior Centers emboldens seniors to stay mentally engaged and active while involving them in real scientific analysis. Seniors contribute their observations of a particular thing—birds at a feeder, pollinators in a garden, or the changing of the seasons, which stimulates the mind through active learning.

Audubon's Citizen Science at Senior Centers encourages seniors to keep notes, record their observations, ask questions, and socialize while providing endless possibilities for fostering new interests. Even those who may not be able to get out of bed can become involved by watching birds at feeders outside their windows. These birds can provide that spark that helps healing and transports excitement into their lives. Audubon wants to encourage seniors into the role of active observers and participants in science by engaging 12 centers over the next two years.

Audubon E-Connect

\$85,000

While technology will never replace the experience of an actual walk on a trail or the social connection of a live meeting, there are many ways it can enhance how environmental education is delivered and contemporary Audubon Chapters engage with their constituents. Many people today have grown accustomed to gaining information or participating in activities on their own time schedule. Streaming media enables us all to be our own “schedulers”.

Audubon proposes to begin streaming and archiving many of our public programs. Programs delivered by our invited guests and in-house educators will be broadcast live via the internet and recorded for later viewing. Two-way interactive communications will enable people to pose questions in real time. Our success with “live chats” and other electronic media surrounding the Bald Eagle web camera phenomena demonstrated the appetite for this type of programming in schools.

ASWP will equip all three of our locations with two-way audio and video equipment and employ cloud-based production and storage systems. Audubon’s award-winning Volunteer Naturalist Training program will be digitized for remote participation and a new Bald Eagle learning portal created.

**** - Funded- ** Master Birder Program**

\$60,000

A program in ornithology skill development that is modeled after the very successful Master Gardener programs, ASWP Master Birder Program will enhance intermediate birders birding skills to reach a pre-designated level of proficiency. Once the participant achieves this proficiency, they will be certified by ASWP as a “Master Birder”. Ongoing training and community service will be a requirement to maintain their Master status. This program is designed to provide participants with techniques to enhance their existing avian identification skills and general knowledge of birds, local ecology, and habitat requirements in southwestern Pennsylvania.

Participants will also receive training in communications and other skills necessary to share their information with the general public. ASWP Master Birders will be made available to other organizations and municipalities to lead birding activities. ASWP also envisions the proceeds generated from this program to help fund our Junior Birder programs, as well as using these Master Birders as mentors for the next generation of birders.

Why Birds Matter

Why do birds matter? All living things are interdependent. And birds are, arguably, the most visible and measurable indicators of a healthy environment, both near at hand and in the faraway places from which they migrate. The metaphor of the canary in the coal mine is as true now as it was when mining was a pick-and-shovel affair. Where birds thrive, people prosper. Declining bird counts tell us we are damaging the environment through habitat fragmentation and destruction, pollution and pesticides, and introduced species, all of which affect our homes, our communities, and our lives.