

Grange Insurance Audubon Center: Connecting People and Nature in Columbus, Ohio



GRANGE INSURANCE
CENTER **Audubon**

Bird Friendly Community Plan

**The Grange Insurance Audubon Center is Central Ohio's
urban oasis where discovery inspires conservation.**

The Challenge

Birdwatching is one of the world's foremost hobbies, and 85 million Americans identify as bird watchers. Even so, many Americans live separated from the out-of-doors and disconnected from nature—particularly children. As a society we are plugged in and interconnected through electronic devices, but do not look up to see our surroundings or engage with life around us. The Center provides an **urban oasis** in the heart of downtown Columbus for birds as well as people; making it a go-to destination for all.

Birds are an amazing way to engage—they spark the imagination and provide a vehicle for kids, families, and adults to discover their interconnectedness with nature. When individuals learn the impacts of human activity on the environment, and witness rapid declines in both habitat and bird populations, they are moved to personal action. Uniquely positioned within the Scioto River-Greenlawn Important Bird Area, GIAC's strides in habitat restoration have a tangible and immediate impact on the environment.

Our work is also about **people**. Urban children are more nature deprived than children in the suburbs. Our programs include diverse student participants from low-income families and low-performing schools. With a focus on STEM-based education, the Center's partnership with Columbus City Schools significantly connects classroom instruction with authentic learning.

Connecting people and nature, restoring and creating bird-friendly habitats, and inspiring the next generation of conservationists.

Programming

- ▶ Year-round STEM-related education for students/children in the heart of urban Columbus
- ▶ Community engagement in habitat restoration, data collection, and land stewardship at the Audubon Center and Scioto Audubon Metro Park
- ▶ Property owners enlisted in backyard conservation to benefit birds and other wildlife

Outcomes

- ▶ Improved student performance and interest in STEM subject areas
- ▶ Increased habitat quality and acreage throughout Central Ohio
- ▶ Growing population of Columbus residents engaged in conservation action and advocacy
- ▶ Habitat restoration within the Scioto River-Greenlawn Important Bird Area

The Vision

- ▶ A diverse conservation constituency and environmental leaders of the future
- ▶ A quilted patchwork of backyard habitats that provide contiguous acres benefiting birds and pollinators
- ▶ Significant habitat restoration on the Scioto River
- ▶ Columbus recognized and celebrated as a Bird-Friendly Community

Results to Date

Free and Open to the Public:

- ▶ With the Center's promise to the community to be free and open to the public., it has seen more than 200,000 visitors through its doors

Conservation Classroom:

- ▶ More than ### children K–12 have participated in Conservation Classroom and school visits since 2008, of these ##% visited four times or more
- ▶ Comprehensive, in-depth, and hands-on experiences in small groups reinforce the scientific method, a connection with nature, and the motivation for future careers in the conservation field

Habitat Restoration:

- ▶ Removal of invasive plants and river cleanup have been the focus of more than ### volunteer workdays
- ▶ Nearly ### volunteers have helped improve the land and water habitat within the Scioto River-Greenlawn Important Bird Area

Partner Camps:

- ▶ In partnership with social service agencies, our summer program provides small groups science-based activities; bridging the summer gap in learning
- ▶ Participants increased from ### in 2014 to ### in 2015 and the number of partner agencies from ### to ###

Our Vision Needs You

Developing a **diverse income stream** to sustain the Center is a top priority. Current revenue sources are contributions (50%), facility rentals (25%), endowment income (19%), and program fees (6%). We are successfully implementing strategies to grow contributions and earned income, as well as strengthening our partnerships to expand our reach and increase efficiencies.

- ▶ A **\$10,000** donation will offset the cost of Partner Camp summer visits for **1,500 children**
- ▶ With **\$50,000** of support, **four inner-city neighborhoods** can participate in the **backyard conservation** program
- ▶ An investment of **\$92,000** will sponsor **27 classrooms** for **four visits** to the Center
- ▶ **\$100,000** in gifts or sponsorships will allow the Center to expand backyard habitat education through **interactive exhibits, additional demonstration gardens, workshops, online planning tools and lectures**

With additional support and funding from our invaluable donors, we can continue to grow our community impact and programs. To find out how you can help, please visit: www.grangeinsuranceauduboncenter.org.