

St. Louis Audubon Society Strategic Plan 2024-2029

Process

Five working groups based on primary activity areas of organization:

- Conservation
- Education and Outreach
- Bring Home Conservation (BCH)
- Management and Operations
- Finance and Membership

Each working group included multiple board members, along with other individuals from committees. Working groups met month to month of 2023. Each group conducted a SWOT analysis focused on issues related to the activity area. Members of each group then proposed draft goals and action items based on those analyses.

The board met in person in February 2024 to discuss, prioritize, and integrate the goals and action items of the working groups. The plan was approved by the board on April 29, 2024. This plan statement pulls together the ideas generated into organization-wide goals for the coming five years.

(Note: Action item benchmark timelines serve as guides for sequencing of action items and target dates, as well as to gauge progress on goals, rather than strict deadlines. Some action items may require adjustments to timelines.)

Goals

Goal 1: Reassess the organization's identity to ensure it is aligned with the values, interests, and needs of the individuals and communities it engages and serves.

- a. **Action item:** Review and potentially revise the organization's mission statement.
Benchmarks: Ad hoc committee convened by Board President by June 2024
Draft revision, if any, presented from committee to board by September 2024, followed by additional revisions as needed.
Update on progress/revised mission statement with next steps in process presented to membership by December 2024, including solicitation of feedback.
Process to decide on adopting changes to mission statement implemented by February 2025.
- b. **Action item:** Review and potentially change the organization's name.
Benchmarks: Ad hoc committee (to include members of prior name-assessment committee, as available) convened by Board President by September 2024.
Recommendation presented from committee to board by February 2025, followed by additional work if name is to be changed.
Update on progress/revised name with next steps in process by April 2025, including solicitation of feedback.
Process completed by June 2025.

Goal 2: Assess and update organization operations to promote a healthy organizational culture and ensure responsibilities are appropriate to skills and capacity. This includes clarifying the scope and processes of the organization as whole, and of board members, staff, committees, and volunteers.

- a. **Action item:** Review and revise bylaws.
Benchmarks: Ad hoc committee convened by Board President by June 2025.
Draft of revised content in Articles I-IV for board review by December 2025, followed by additional revisions as needed. Draft of revised content in Articles V-XVII by June 2026, followed by additional revisions as needed. Board vote on bylaw revisions by September 2026, followed by implementation of any changes.
- b. **Action item:** Review and update the documents related to personnel.
Benchmarks: Draft of revised documents by the Human Resources Committee provided for board review by February 2025, followed by revisions as needed. Board votes on updated documents by April 2025, followed by implementation.

Goal 3: Assess outcomes of organization’s component services and contributions and resources to community to determine if/what changes are needed; plan and/or implement changes to operations as needed.

- a. **Action Item:** Education and Outreach will develop and assess its programs and use of its online resources.
Benchmarks: Education and Outreach will develop an assessment plan by January 2025. Assessment activities will be on-going starting by May 2025 (following a K-12 school year), with an initial analysis and report presented to the board by February 2026. Subsequent cycles of assessment will be based on committee’s assessment plan, which is expected to be modified as appropriate.
- b. **Action Item:** Bring Conservation Home (BCH) will modify systems to track assessments and long-term outcomes, including a database or data management system, revised intake form, and a follow-up steward survey.
Benchmarks: BCH will revise intake forms by December 2024.
BCH will create a steward survey and process for distributing/collecting by December 2024.
BCH will enhance systems by December 2025.
- c. **Action Item:** Bring Conservation Home (BCH) will hire a staff member to reduce consultation and reporting wait times.
Benchmarks: BCH will identify potential funding sources to support an additional staff member by October 2026.
BCH will secure the funding to support the additional staff member by October 2027.
BCH will recruit candidates with intent to hire by February 2028.
- d. **Action Item:** Ad hoc committee to develop and assess bird walks, birding trips, and bird-focused events.
Benchmarks: President convenes ad hoc committee by June 2027.
Committee will develop an assessment plan by September 2027. Assessment activities will be on-going starting by January 2028, with an initial analysis and report presented to the board by July 2028. Subsequent cycles of assessment will be based on the committee’s assessment plan, which is expected to be modified as appropriate.

Goal 4: Enhance engagement with individuals and the community more broadly and develop organizational capacity for providing greater services and value to the community, with particular attention to underrepresented communities.

- a. **Action Item:** Evaluate membership and community needs and interest, with particular attention to underrepresented communities.
Benchmarks: Conduct an analysis of members, donors, and volunteers to better understand the community being engaged and served, and to inform planning and other action items. Board member(s) work with Executive Director and others as needed to collect and analyze information June 2024 through February 2025. Submit report to board by April 2025. Based on analysis, identify communities for targeted outreach and develop a plan for programs, events, or services to those communities. Board member(s) work with Executive Director and others as needed to develop plan and submit to board by December 2025. Possible implementation to begin 2026.
- b. **Action Item:** Increase participation and engagement on the board, with attention to skill sets and to inclusion of underrepresented groups.
Benchmarks: Led by Board Member Recruitment Committee as on-going process through 2029: Recommend an optimum size range for the Board and continue to seek Board members who possess skills needed by the organization, a level of commitment necessary to carry out the board member duties which are outlined in the Board Member Orientation Manual, and, when possible, a background that helps us better represent the entire community we wish to serve.
- c. **Action Item:** Increase capacity to support volunteer interest and volunteer engagement.
Benchmarks: Ad hoc committee convened by President by June 2026. Committee in collaboration with Executive Director develops SLAS volunteer manual and incentives program by January 2027. The committee in collaboration with Executive Director evaluates potential Volunteer Coordinator position (as a volunteer-filled position), to lead initiatives related to supporting, placing, training, and valuing volunteers. Recommendation on position (with position description if appropriate) presented to board by June 2027. If appropriate, recruitment of candidate(s) to occur by December 2027.
- d. **Action Item:** Clarify and strengthen regional organization-level partnerships.
Benchmarks: Executive Director, with collaboration from board and committee members as appropriate, develops documentation on partner relationships, including key contacts, joint activities, and resources shared. Guiding document/directory of information completed by June 2028.

Goal 5: Improve organization's fiscal stability and independence. This includes increasing revenue overall and securing on-going or long-term funding in support of staff positions, including funds to retain existing staff and to support new Urban Conservation Specialist position.

- a. **Action Item:** Formalize and strengthen a Development Committee, to provide support to the Executive Director for development and fundraising responsibilities.
Benchmarks: Executive Director in collaboration with the Board President develops description of Development Committee by August 2024. Proposal to board to include Development Committee as a standing committee in bylaws by December 2024.

Executive Director in collaboration with the Board Recruitment Committee recruits up to 2 individuals external to the board as members of Development Committee by April 2025.

- b. **Action item:** Secure on-going, stable funding for Urban Conservation Specialist (UCS) position from renewable grant opportunities, government, or other external partnerships.
Benchmarks: Executive Director to identify potential funding sources for position by December 2024.
Responsibilities to pursue/apply for funding will be determined based on potential sources.
Secure funding by December 2025.
- c. **Action item:** Increase total amount of donations to the organization from individuals to meet or exceed target inflation rates, through growing paid memberships, and other giving opportunities that also help members (e.g., contributions linked to RMDs and community foundations).
Benchmarks: Development Committee to identify/review at least 2 opportunities for alternative contribution pathways by August 2025.
Develop plan to increase paid memberships by October 2024.
SLAS to share information on new opportunities to members (newsletters, website, etc.) starting September 2025.
- d. **Action Item:** Diversify funding sources for organization as a whole and/or in support of specific activities (municipal sources, corporate sponsorships, sustainer program, merchandise).
Benchmarks: Development Committee to lead effort to identify at least 3 new potential funding sources by August 2026.
Include 2 new revenue line items in operating budget with positive net income potential by March 2027.