

President

General Functions

Audubon chapter presidents are leaders of the chapter membership they serve. One of the most important things the chapter president can do for the chapter is ensure that the appropriate talents and skills are built into each of the active committees. In addition to this important role, the president's duties are many and in some cases, more than one person can accomplish. In order to serve the chapter members effectively, presidents must be able to prioritize the needs of the chapter. The following list of duties should serve as suggestions to help new chapter presidents define their roles.

Duties

Preside over meetings of the board and, in consultation with the board, develop agendas for those meetings.

Lead the board in developing goals, objectives, annual plans and budgets.

Be sensitive to board members' needs. Offer encouragement and praise when needed and help resolve board disputes if necessary. Promote a sense of fairness and trust within the board.

- Provide encouragement and recognition to volunteers.
- Ensure that committees have chairs and members and are fulfilling their mandates. Consult often with other board members and committee chairs.
- Identify and cultivate emerging leaders. Be sure they are provided the training needed to move into positions of responsibility.
- Act as a spokesperson for the chapter in the community. Be prepared to field a wide variety of phone calls that come from members of the community, the press and elected officials. Stay abreast of national and regional issues through the *Chapter Networker* and regional *Leader* newsletters, the *Audubon Activist* and other Audubon publications. Work with the conservation chair to be properly briefed on issues that may require response or press work. Meet with reporters and editorial boards.
- Encourage involvement in Audubon's programs and participation in national issues. Maintain a relationship with Audubon by keeping up with correspondence from national headquarters.
- Fill Out and return the annual chapter Recertification Report. Be sure the treasurer assists with the financial information.

Make sure the chapter has legal assistance as needed. Stay alert to any activities that may be in appropriate for a 501(c)(3) organization. See the "Chapter Business Management" section in the "Chapter Tool Box" for details.

Oversee administrative matters of the chapter. Delegate appropriate responsibilities to other officers

and members.

A word on *burnout*. Audubon people tend to move into leadership positions of greater responsibility because they want to respond more actively to growing environmental challenges, and to serve the Audubon Cause. Overextending oneself and the resulting burnout is, perhaps, an Audubon president's greatest nemesis. The trick to maximizing your contribution, while avoiding burnout, is to have a healthy respect for your special talents and your limitations, and to focus those talents where they will have the most significant impact.