

# Tips to Help You Get Certified

## 1. Take the first step!

We are eager to begin working with you, and the sooner we have your *Site Assessment and Environmental Plan*, the sooner we can begin making recommendations that will help you improve your local environment. The *Site Assessment and Environmental Plan* is right in the front of your *Certification Handbook* and it only takes about an hour to fill out.

Many of our members begin to complete the *Site Assessment and Environmental Plan* and find that they have not done some of the projects on the environmental checklist. They put off sending in the materials because they want to have more accomplished first. *Please don't make that mistake! You don't need to already be doing all of the management practices or projects prior to sending in your plan!* The whole point of the *Site Assessment and Environmental Plan* is to help you develop a plan of action. We have information that can help you prioritize, organize, and maximize your efforts.

## 2. Delegate.

Members who are successful in gaining certification rarely go it alone. Identify people who you can delegate tasks to—like filling out the *Site Assessment and Environmental Plan* for starters. How about an assistant, a student intern, or an enthusiastic patron? By delegating responsibilities, you are offering great on-the-job environmental training.

## 3. Get help and expert advice.

Identify local resource people and organizations and develop a Resource Advisory Group in the early stages of your ACSP involvement. Not only will this group help you with planning and implementing projects, they will share your enthusiasm and provide good support for your efforts. Resource people can provide technical advice as you implement specific projects (*e.g.*, a local birder can help develop a wildlife inventory), volunteer time or labor (*e.g.*, youth organizations can plant a garden), help with monitoring (*e.g.*, local high school or college students can monitor water quality), and work on public, employee, and member relations (*e.g.*, staff or patrons may have hidden talents, such as photography, writing, or display design).

## 4. Start monitoring.

To achieve certification, you'll need to submit a variety of documentation that shows your efforts and results. The way to do this is to keep track of various aspects of your environmental stewardship efforts. This includes recording various birds and mammals that you see, testing the quality of the water, and taking pictures so that our staff can see what you've done. Your *Certification Handbook* tells you just what types of monitoring and documentation you'll need.

Don't wait until you're about to submit a request for certification to gather this information. Start monitoring and taking photos. Take *before* and *after* photos of projects, and take pictures when things are growing and blooming; then submit your certification requests during the off season, when you have more time.

## 5. Call us!

Audubon International staff are available to provide additional information, support, and guidance to help you implement environmental projects and achieve certification. If you have questions, need more information, or are encountering problems with your management efforts, you can contact Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary staff at (518) 767-9051, extension 12, and Audubon Signature staff at (270) 869-9419. We can also be reached by e-mail...see our addresses on page 2.