op·ti·mism /ˈäpta, mizəm/ noun 1. hopefulness and confidence about the future or the successful outcome of something.

The approach of a new year generates feelings of hope, renewal, and most importantly, optimism. This past year the COVID pandemic created challenges that forced many nonprofit organizations to rethink how they conduct business. The restrictions on Buffalo Audubon operations, reduction of programming, and the resulting financial impact required some dramatic changes. We have faced these trials head on, and the board, staff and volunteers have been working diligently throughout the year to make improvements to the organization, our programs and properties in anticipation of better times ahead.

The past few months have been very busy, and we have used this time to continue to review Buffalo Audubon’s internal strengths and weaknesses, and the external opportunities and threats we face. Professional facilitator Harry Kangis was engaged to help us review our strategic plan and to synthesize our ideas into a one-page document. You may recall that a plan was created in 2018 but considering the current situation and our new executive director the decision was made to take a step back and conduct a thorough assessment of how we could grow Buffalo Audubon. Members of the board, the executive director and staff will continue to work together into the new year to redefine the goals, strategies and tactics that will provide us with a clear and measurable roadmap through 2023.

2020 has been a year like no other and a yearning for something better is only natural.
From a personal standpoint, I long for a return to some sense of normalcy and although I am not exactly sure what that will look like, I am optimistic that it will be an improvement over the past several months. From a Buffalo Audubon standpoint, I look forward to the nature center being open without restrictions, programming that reaches people in new and innovative ways, and welcoming new members into the Buffalo Audubon fold. As Helen Keller has been quoted, “Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement. Nothing can be done without hope and confidence.”

I wish you a happy new year filled with hope, confidence and lots of birds.

VOLUNTEER WITH US

Every Wednesday is volunteer day at Beaver Meadow! Join us from 9am-2pm for coffee and donuts and then help maintain the trails, work in the office or take on the “project of the day.” There’s no need to register but bring a lunch. Everyone is welcome — even first timers! Please call us if you have any questions. Volunteers make all that we do at Buffalo Audubon and Beaver Meadow possible! Thanks to all those who give so generously of their time and talents. Face masks are required to be worn by all volunteers.

Seeking Board Members

The Buffalo Audubon Society Nominating Committee is seeking dedicated member leaders to serve on the Board of Directors. If you are passionate about and want to join the team while will drive our Strategic Plan forward, please consider nominating yourself or a colleague for one of the following open positions:

At-Large Directors
Candidates should meet the core competencies listed below.

Organizational Knowledge and Stewardship – understands and embodies the Society’s mission and strategic priorities.

Strategic Thinking and Leadership – Demonstrates leadership attributes that allow them to positively influence the decision-making process by effectively aligning tasks, priorities, and resources in a thoughtful and strategic way.

Communication – Demonstrates skills and leadership in communicating efficiently, respectfully and transparently.

Collaboration – Appreciates the unique views and opinions of others when building consensus.
I was recently reading an article in TIME about what you can be doing outside for your health. It started...“ Spending time outdoors, especially in green spaces, is one of the fastest ways to improve your health and happiness. It’s been shown to lower stress, blood pressure and heart rate, while encouraging physical activity and buoying mood and mental health.”

Today is the winter solstice. The longest day of the year. For many, seasonal affective disorder (SAD) is a real thing. Thirty percent of people in the northern U.S. states struggle with the winter blues each year. It’s so dark outside. I’ve always welcomed the solstice, as it brings back the light into our lives. Albeit, seconds at a time, but the days will be longer after today. Winter is often a time for staying indoors and keeping cozy. I don’t know about you, but I’ve been cozy the entirety of 2020 because y’know ... COVID.

In winter, my solution to getting motivated outdoors is snowshoeing! All you need is 5-6 inches of snow and you too can go snowshoeing at Beaver Meadow! It’s a wonderful cardiovascular workout! You can burn up to 1,000 calories per hour. Snowshoeing is low impact and helps with balance strengthening and agility. Did you know that we have snowshoes to rent for just $5 and miles of trails to use them on. Members of Buffalo Audubon can use them for free! Don’t know how to snowshoe? That’s OK, we’ll help you out and we even have a limited amount of poles to borrow too if you’re worried about falling down.

We actually have snowshoes for ages 3 and up, so it could be a family outing too! I mean, a 3 year old on snowshoes is So. Much. Fun. to watch. Still not ready to go it alone? You can book a guided tour with your family or group. See our new Private Family Programs for more information.

Snowshoeing is just not your thing? That’s ok. If the snow is low, a hike in winter is an excellent way to clear the cobwebs and get away from screens.

Choose a day when the sky is blue and the wind is low. Dress warmly and just enjoy the sunshine. Crisp winter air is invigorating! Take a moment on the trails to breathe it all in. Listen to the sounds of the forest. Bonus benefit! Vitamin D is made in our bodies after exposure to the sun. Vitamin D plays important roles in immune function and decreases fatigue. We all need a little immune function and energy right now, am I right?

Have your own cross country skis? We welcome you to use our trails to ski on. We do not groom the trails, so you’ll have to break it on your own, but the scenery at Beaver Meadow is quite lovely. Make sure to dress in layers! You’ll get a workout!

February is American Heart Month. It’s funny how things that didn’t seem that important to me when I was younger are now starting to make a lot more sense now that I am receiving AARP mailings. Things like – heart health. Getting outdoors year round is a great way to maintain wellness of the entire body. Mind, heart, and soul. Now that I am writing this, I can’t wait until we have enough snow to snowshoe! It came close last week, but not quite. Wanna join me? I’m down. Just give us a call at 585-457-3228 to ask about snow conditions. If the nature center is still closed to general visitation, you can still rent snowshoes. Just let us know when you are coming. I’m thinking beautiful winter day. Blue skies, Sunshine. Lots of snow. Fire in the fire pit. Snowshoeing. A feeling of contentment. And you! Join us!
All programs require pre-registration and space will be limited to a maximum of 10 people per program including the instructor(s). Face masks are required. To register and pay in advance, please call (585) 457-3228.

Friday, January 8th
Climate Watch Introduction
7PM - 8PM Webinar
The number one threat to birds is habitat loss due to climate change. Learn what you can do to help Audubon and scientists across North America predict how birds will adapt to a changing climate by participating in this annual community science project. Pre-registration is required. Donations gratefully accepted.

Saturday, January 9th
Flyway Birding
10AM – 12PM – Fort Niagara State Park
The winter of 2021 is expected to be a great year for winter finches moving south from Canada. Join us for a morning hike in search of these irregular visitors as they navigate the mouth of the Niagara River and the southern shore of Lake Ontario. Meet at the swimming pool parking lot. Pre-registration is required. Donations gratefully accepted.

Friday, January 15th
Buffalo Audubon Travels - Virtual Algonquin
7PM - 8PM – Webinar
Our Annual trip to Algonquin Park in Ontario will be virtual this winter! Join others who have been on our past Algonquin trips for a presentation stories and photos from one of Canada's most famous Parks. Learn what this park has to offer for winter birding and mark your calendars for 2022! Pre-registration is required. $10 Non-Members/$8 BAS Members. Link will be provided.

Saturday, January 16th
Beaver Meadow Birding
10AM - 12PM – Beaver Meadow Audubon Center
Join us for a winter birding hike around Beaver Meadow! We'll search for the usual winter residents as well as any Winter Finches who might have found their way south to us. Binoculars are available. Meet at the Arboretum Parking Lot. Pre-registration is required. $10 Non-Members/$8 BAS Members.

Monday, January 18th
Family Winter Play Day
1PM – 3PM – Beaver Meadow Audubon Center
Join us for an afternoon of outdoor play! If we have snow, we'll make winter sculptures and forts. If not, we'll go on a winter scavenger hunt and end with a hot cup of cocoa to go! Fun for the entire family! Pre-registration is required. $10 Non-Members/$8 BAS Members.
Tuesday, January 19th
Toddler Time – Backyard Buddies
10AM - 11:30AM – Beaver Meadow Audubon Center
So many animals visit our backyards! Join us as we search for common winter wildlife, read a story and learn about some backyard birds as well as with a fun craft! Pre-registration is required. $10 Non-Members/$8 BAS Members. Ages 2-4.

Saturday, January 23rd
Flyway Birding
10AM - 12PM – Devil’s Hole State Park
Join us for a hike into the Niagara River Gorge for an up-close view of the gulls on the “roosting rocks” downstream from the Whirlpool. Many different species of Gulls can be seen each year on the Niagara River, and we’ll try to find as many as we can. Binoculars are available. Pre-registration is required. Donations gratefully accepted.

Saturday, January 30th
Flyway Birding
10AM - 12PM – Niagara Falls State Park
Come see one of the biggest congregations of Gulls and Waterfowl in the world at Niagara Falls! We’ll Hike around Goat Island and the 3 Sisters Islands area in search of Glaucous Gulls, Iceland Gulls, and Harlequin Ducks. Binoculars are available. Pre-registration is required. Donations gratefully accepted.

Friday, February 5th
Great Backyard Bird Count
7PM - 8PM – Webinar
Learn everything you need to know to participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count February 12-15! We’ll show you how to complete an eBird checklist and talk about the history and importance of this annual community science event. Pre-registration is required. Donations gratefully accepted. Link will be provided.

Saturday, February 6th
Virtual Superb Owl Saturday
Join us for Superb Owl V! We’ll be hosting an afternoon of online activities, and live animal presentations celebrating everything about our favorite Owls! Pre-registration is required. $40 includes all virtual programs and 1 owl pellet dissection kit delivered in the mail. $5 for each additional pellet. Links will be provided.

Owl Pellet Dissection with Lauren – 12PM - 1PM
Owls of WNY with Tom – 2PM - 3PM
Live Owls with Messinger Woods Wildlife Care and Education Center - 4PM - 5PM
Owl Prowl with special guest Chuck Rosenberg 6PM - 7:30PM

Birds on the Niagara see Tom Kerr’s article for more information!

Friday, February 12th
Saturday, February 13th
Sunday, February 14th
Tuesday, February 16th
Toddler Time – Oh Deer!
10AM – 11:30AM – Beaver Meadow Audubon Center
Let’s learn about our furry forest friends – deer! We’ll read a story, go on a hike to look for deer and make a fun craft! Pre-registration is required. $10 per child.$10 Non-Members/$8 BAS Members. Ages 2-4.
Saturday, February 20th
National Birdfeeder Month
Birdfeeder Livestream with The Field Guides
10AM - 12PM – Webinar
Join Buffalo Audubon with the hosts of the popular podcast The Field Guides for a livestream of the birdfeeders at Beaver Meadow. We’ll talk about everything we love about our backyard birds and what we can do to attract more birds to our feeders. Pre-registration is required. $10 Non-Members/$8 BAS Members. Link will be provided.

Saturday, February 27th
Beaver Meadow Birding
10AM - 12PM – Beaver Meadow Audubon Center
Join us of a winter birding hike around Beaver Meadow! We’ll search for the usual winter residents as well as any Winter Finches who might have found their way south to us. Binoculars are available. Meet at the Nature Center. Pre-registration is required. $10 Non-Members/$8 BAS Members.

Saturday, March 6th:
Beaver Meadow Owl Prowl
6PM - 8PM – Beaver Meadow Audubon Center
Join Naturalist Tom Kerr for a nocturnal hike at Beaver Meadow in search of the Eastern Screech-owls and Barred owls that make their home at Beaver Meadow. We’ll also meet Zelda, our non-releasable Screech-owl ambassador for an up close opportunity to learn about these amazing nocturnal raptors. Pre-registration is required. Ages 8 and up. $15 Non-Members/$12 BAS Members.

Saturday, March 13th
North Tonawanda Owl Prowl
6:30PM - 8PM – North Tonawanda Audubon Preserve
Join Naturalist Tom Kerr for a nocturnal hike through the Klydell Wetlands in North Tonawanda. We’ll be looking and listening for the Eastern Screech-owls that make their home in the forested wetland. Waterproof footwear is required. Meet at the corner of Raymond Ave. and Birch St. Pre-registration is required. Ages 8 and up. $15 Non-Members/$12 BAS Members.

Tuesday, March 16th
Toddler Time – Silly Shamrocks
10AM - 11:30AM – Beaver Meadow Audubon Center
The word “shamrock” refers to many species of three-leafed plants, including common white clover and wood sorrel. Join us in celebrating the shamrock at Beaver Meadow with a story, themed craft and snack. If the snow has melted, we’ll search for some of our own shamrocks on the lawn outside! Pre-registration is required. $10 Non-Members/$8 BAS Members. Ages 2-4.

Saturday March 20th
Flyway Birding - Strawberry Island Eagle Watch
10AM - 11:30AM – Aqua Lane Park
Join Buffalo Audubon Naturalist Tom Kerr and check out the Bald Eagles nesting on Strawberry Island in the Niagara River. This nest has been active for over a decade and is a great spot to see eagles year-round! We’ll also look for Gulls, Ducks, Peregrines, and other birds that spend their time on the Niagara River this time of year. Meet at Sheridan Boat Launch in Aqua Lane Park in Tonawanda. Pre-registration is required. Donations gratefully accepted.

Saturday March 27th
Saw-whet Owl Search
3PM - 5PM – Beaver Meadow Audubon Center
Join us for an early spring hike in search of migrating Northern Saw-whet Owls. Saw-whets are the smallest owl in New York State and can be difficult to find. We’ll search for them in some of the densest part of the forest at Beaver Meadow in hopes of finding one! Meet at the Arboretum Lot. Pre-registration is required. $10 Non-Members/$8 BAS Members.

SAVE THE DATE! June 4-6, 2021
63rd Annual Allegany Nature Pilgrimage
The Allegany Nature Pilgrimage is an annual outdoor learning experience. It combines fun with a variety of nature-oriented activities. This traditional weekend of natural history and outdoor education welcomes both the experience naturalist as well as the inquisitive beginner! For more information, visit: http://www.alleganynaturepilgrimage.com/
This President's Day Weekend, the Buffalo Audubon Society is partnering with several other Environmental Education and Advocacy Groups to bring you the Birds on the Niagara Festival. Birds on the Niagara is an International Celebration of winter birding in Western New York and the Niagara Region of Ontario. The Niagara Region is the winter home of up to 16 different Gull species and over 30 species of waterfowl, with numbers of some species climbing to over 100,000. Designated a Globally Significant Important Bird Area, the Niagara River hosts one of the biggest congregations of migratory birds in the world every winter. The Birds on the Niagara Festival was created to celebrate and bring awareness to this spectacle of nature right in our backyard. Because of the continuing Coronavirus Pandemic, we will be holding this festival virtually, with over a dozen programs, workshops, and speakers broadcast over Facebook Live. We will also be working to connect people with birds that are being seen along the Niagara River Corridor with live updates from the biggest Niagara birding hotspots. Birds on the Niagara will feature Keynote Speaker Dr. J. Drew Lanham. Dr. Lanham is a professor of wildlife at Clemson University. His research focuses on Songbird Ecology and the African American Role in natural-resource conservation. Dr. Lanham is also an Audubon Board Member and published his book *The Home Place: Memoirs of a Colored Man’s Love Affair with Nature* in 2016. Although this year’s festival will be held virtually, there are many chances to enjoy birds across the Niagara region. Many of the workshops will be focused on getting individuals out to enjoy birds on their own time, teaching them how to identify different species, how to keep track of their sightings, and what tools they can bring with them into the field when they go birding. We hope to host a full in-person event next year in 2022! For more information about Birds on the Niagara, visit the website at: http://www.birdsontheniagara.org/
New! Private Family Winter Programs

If you want to get outdoors with your family this winter, but would prefer to stay separate from other groups, we have a solution! Introducing our new private programs for groups of up to 6 people. Each program is guided by our education staff for your group. $120 includes a guided program, equipment rentals, and hot cocoa afterwards! Your program can be scheduled by calling 585-457-3228.

Snowshoe Hike
You and your family will enjoy a guided snowshoe hike through the trails at Beaver Meadow (must have at least 5” of snow on the ground). Snowshoes will be provided to use. No experience necessary. Snowshoes run from young child (age 3) to Adult XL (225 pounds). A super fun way to bond with your family, enjoy the outdoors, and get in some cardio!

Owl Prowl Tour
Take a nocturnal hike in search of the Barred Owls and Screech Owls that make their homes at Beaver Meadow. Meet Zelda, our non-releasable Screech-owl ambassador, and learn about these fascinating creatures of the night. (up to 4 people. Friday or Saturday nights only.)

Beginner Birding Workshop
Learn everything you need to know to get started in the world of birding from Binoculars to eBird, and take that into the field to start finding birds with your family. Winter is one of the best times of the year to start birding! Binoculars will be provided to use. (up to 4 people.)

Winter World Hike
What do the animals at Beaver Meadow do in the winter? Do they hibernate? Are they active? What do they eat? Enjoy this educational guided tour as we discuss how wildlife manages to survive in winter. A fun activity for everyone to share knowledge!

Evening Campfire Hike
Enjoy a leisurely guided hike at Beaver Meadow, ending with a cozy campfire and s’mores. Breathe in some fresh air and just enjoy!
This summer the governance committee completed the process of revising the Buffalo Audubon bylaws and received acceptance from the board at the October meeting. The primary reason for the comprehensive review and revisions of our bylaws was to assure compliance with legal and statutory requirements for not-for profit organizations. Our bylaws were last updated in May 2015 in response to the 2013 New York State Non-Profit Revitalization Act (NPRA), and since then, there have been revisions to the New York Not-for-Profit Corporation Law. The revision was prepared by attorney Christine Young of the New York Council of Non-Profits Inc. (NYCON) utilizing the 2015 bylaws. Compliance with many of the revisions will require modifications to procedures but will not significantly change our operations. However, some changes will have a potentially greater impact on the way we do business. They are briefly described in the following sections.

**Membership**
The biggest change relates to quorums for member meetings requiring the lessor of 10% or 100 members to be in attendance. The new version allows for the Board or members (10%) to request a special meeting. There are also several requirements for electronic meetings including electronic elections (e.g. web based) which are not allowed unless there is 100% participation by the membership.

**Board of Directors and Officers**

**Number of Directors:** Specifies between 3-15, including officers.

**Terms:** 2-three-year terms including time as an officer. One exception: Past president may serve one-year ex-officio and without vote after their term is over.

**Officers:** President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary. President serves for three years, no provisions for President-Elect

**Committees**
Differentiates between Committees of the Board and Committees of the Corporation. Committees of the Board are limited to Directors only. Committees of the Corporation are advisory in nature and may contain non-director BAS members.

**Committees of the Board: Governance, Finance, Audit**

**Committees of the Corporation: Advancement**
There are provisions for ad-hoc committees and special task forces. They can be either Committees of the Board or Corporation depending on the task/responsibilities.

**Fiduciary Duties, Statutory Compliance, and Prohibited Conduct**
These are new sections that articulate Board member fiduciary duties, conflict of interest/related party transaction policies, whistleblower protection protocols, audit oversight protocols and anti-harassment and discrimination policies.

The revised bylaws will be distributed to members in the new year with a vote for acceptance scheduled during the May 2021 annual meeting.
What is the Christmas Bird Count?

The Christmas Bird Count (CBC) is a long-standing program of the National Audubon Society, with over 100 years of community science involvement. It is an early-winter bird census, where thousands of volunteers across the U.S., Canada, and many countries in the Western Hemisphere go out over a 24-hour period on one calendar day to count birds.

The Christmas Bird Count relies 100 percent on donations to provide support to compilers and volunteers on count day, to manage the historic database, and to fund the technology to make historic data available to researchers. The data collected by CBC participants over the past century and more have become one of only two large pools of information informing ornithologists and conservation biologists how the birds of the Americas are faring over time.

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4593 Individual Birds (42 Species +3 Additional Taxa)
Welcome to Our New Members!

100 Club
Lawrence Brooks
Empire Environmental Partners
Del Sharry
Michael and Zerline Snyderman
Steve and Debbie Turkovich

New Members
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Jared Aldstadt
John Amershadian
Barbara Arber
Laurie Bacon
Bethany Balkins
Bryan Banas
Bryan Bassett
Ann Black
Nick and Maria Bond
Sheila Chong
Heather Christie
Joseph and Elaine Cusker
Tilda Doscher
Jill Favata
Gary Flagg
Gary Goldman
Annie Griffin
Heather Gullo
Sergio Hernandez
Christy Hibsch
Michael Keller
Karen Kerr
Tim Klein
Carmon Koenigsknecht
Christine Koziol
Kitty Mann
Rachael Metz
Mark Metzger
Evan Moritz
Charles Negley
Ariel Nereson
Kevin Oakley
Kathy O’Hara
Caroline Parrinello
Leni Pearl
Alli Pelletrcan
Margaret Phillips
Beth Reilly
Colleen Ryan
Natalie and Steve Shaffer
Laura Smith
Diane Smith
Anna Sotelo-Peryea
Darcy Sowyrda
Ursala Strong
Becky Sullivan
Kara Sweet
Ellen Tomczak
Steve Turkovich
Elizabeth Turner
Eileen Walh
Christine Wheaton
Jonathan Willard

Thank You 2020 Volunteers

Our volunteers contributed over 1600 hours of service to Buffalo Audubon in 2020! For those volunteers that snuck past our sign-in books, we saw you and thank you for all you do to make us great!

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Catherine Burkhart
Alli Chertak
Narcy Czajka
Karen Czajka
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Ruby Wilson
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Anonymous (4), Mary Canfield, Barbara Delenkitis, Judith Hoffman, Susan and Allen Ott Sr., Dorothy Rapp, Amy Choboy and Pamela Rossotto, Dr. Scott W. Phillips and Ms. Mary C. Carroll, Mr. and Mrs. Vernon Stevenson, Annette and Richard Komroy, David M. Rote and Gloria Merritt Rote.

The Legacy Society recognizes individuals who have made a bequest or other estate plans to benefit the Buffalo Audubon Society, and who have let us know of their intent. We would like to extend our sincerest gratitude to these individuals for the wonderful commitment they have made to the long-term success of the Buffalo Audubon Society.

If you have made such a gift and would like to be recognized in this and other listings, or if you would like information about how to make such a gift, please contact us at (585) 457-3228 or email info@buffaloaudubon.org

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Peter and Peggy Christensen

In Memory of Gordon Everette
Tom and Christine Beck

In Memory of Raymond J. Franz
Ronald Hefner

In Memory of Rosemary Hackathorn
Benjamin Prescott Chapter of the D.A.R.

In Memory of Dorothy Sojda
Rick and Elaine Werner

In Honor Of Mary Berhalter
Mary Zuk-Domanski

Gifts in Kind
All the Crafty Basket Makers For our October Online Raffle
Ed Sirianno
Jerry Thurn
The Wednesday Warriors

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