

Bird Conservation Network

MINUTES

April 20, 2002

Ryerson Conservation Area

In attendance: Barbara Burns (DBC), Suzanne Cecchia (ENSBC), Donald Dann (TNC), Bob Fisher (DBC), Mary Anne Harrison (IAS), Walter Marcisz (COS), Lee Ramsey (NAS), Terry Schilling (at large), Wayne Svoboda (Ft. Dearborn), Karen Glennemeier (guest)

Bob Fisher called the meeting to order. The minutes of the January 19 meeting were approved.

ADMINISTRATIVE: Amendments to bylaws

Since it was determined that a quorum was present, Donald Dann moved and Lee Ramsey seconded the adoption of the following amendments to the bylaws:

Article III, Section 5. At all meetings of the BCN (excluding committee meetings), a minimum of at least one representative from at least half minus one of the Organizational Affiliates shall constitute a quorum for conducting the BCN's business.

Article III, Section 6. In the event that any general meeting of the BCN fails to achieve a quorum, the President may call for a paper or e-mail ballot to be distributed on any issue judged to be sufficiently important. The Secretary will then distribute the ballots, with any necessary explanation, to all the active BCN members and set a deadline for return of the ballots two weeks after the date of distribution. On such a ballot, the quorum requirements described in Article III, Section 5, shall apply.

Article III, Section 6, renumbered to Section 7.

Article IV, Section 4, deleted.

The amendments were adopted by a vote of 8 yes, 0 no.

Lee moved and Donald seconded the adoption of the following amendment to the bylaws:

Article VIII, Section 2. The fiscal year shall begin on the first day of January and end on the thirty-first day of December.

The amendment was adopted by a vote of 8 yes, 0 no.

CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES

Lake Calumet

Walter Marcisz reported that the Chicago Planning Commission, at its February 14 meeting, accepted

comments on their proposed Calumet Area Land Use Plan (including Walter's comment on behalf of BCN) and then passed the Plan, which changes the designation of a tract of land along the Little Calumet River west of Altgeld Gardens from "Open Space Preservation" to "Mixed Use." (Mixed Use designation will allow construction of a housing development.)

The Land Use Plan designates the east and west shores of Lake Calumet as areas for "Open Space Recreation," and it is expected that the Illinois International Port District will apply for permits to expand their golf course and construct a marina in these areas. As an alternative to the Port District's proposals, a committee consisting of members of Southeast Environmental Task Force, Calumet Ecological Park Assn., Pullman Civic Organization, Historic Pullman Foundation, Peace Pipe Prairie Project, and BCN have drawn up a "Vision for Lake Calumet" plan, which provides ample habitat for birds as well as access for birders and other recreationists.

The Chicago Dept. of Environment's first draft of its "Calumet Area Ecological Management Strategy" expressed mostly admirable sentiments about Calumet birds but contained flawed and incomplete data about endangered/threatened bird species. In order to strengthen the EMS document, Walter and Doug Stotz of the Field Museum collaborated on a revamping of the endangered/threatened bird data and text and submitted it to the Dept. of the Environment.

Jeff Levengood's Illinois Natural History Survey study regarding nesting ecology and contaminant exposure of Calumet area black-crowned night-herons is well underway. It is apparent from preliminary observations that the herons are beginning to nest at two separate Calumet wetlands this year, with hundreds of birds present at the primary site.

Lights Out

Bob reported on the City of Chicago Lights Out campaign, for Judy Pollock. Recommendations were developed by committee including birders and ornithologists, and a flyer has been sent out to buildings to get them to extinguish decorative lighting on the upper stories after 11 p.m. each evening from March 17 to June 7 and from August 25 to October 25; tenants on the upper floors are encouraged to turn out lights or draw blinds after 11 p.m. COS and CAS are calling buildings to confirm their participation. Ken Wysocki is leading monitoring efforts. Many building owners are cooperating; others are not. To encourage cooperation, talk to the building owners where bird kills have been observed. Research on the threat of brightly-lit buildings during bird migration can be found at www.flap.org.

McCormick Place

The mayor of Chicago has taken an interest in the project, and the park district has become more involved. Conservation Design Forum has been hired to develop some plans, which include a fence, an observation platform and a water feature. The 7-acre prairie and a surrounding woodland/shrubland habitat on two sides are still part of the plan. To review plant lists, contact Judy. Installation will begin when the work on the underground garage is finished some time this summer.

Bartel and Orland Grasslands

Karen Glennemeier reported that the Audubon/Cook County FPD project to remove hedgerows and seed native plants at Bartel Grassland is moving along, with help from community volunteers. Bird monitoring has been done for several years there, but more monitors would now be helpful.

At Orland Grassland, Audubon Chicago Region, ornithologists, bird monitors and land managers are working with Conservation Design Forum to restore and improve the grassland. Articles on this project have appeared

in the *Daily Southtown*. The restoration plans will be on display for public comment at the Orland Park Civic Center on May 4. Tours will be given.

Great Lakes Naval Training Center

Donald reported that there had been some destruction of the shorebird protection fence at Great Lakes and that repair efforts are being undertaken as soon as possible. Hopefully, a second interior fence will be put in because last year's common tern nests were predated, apparently by rats.

Montrose Point

Donald also reported that dog owners continue to disobey the existing law prohibiting dogs at Montrose Point and Beach.

PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

Monitoring

Lee reported on problems that some monitors are having getting access to Cornell's BirdSource database and on our continuing efforts to determine exactly what we will be charged by Cornell and how we will raise the money. Progress on the last of these has recently been made with confirmation of a \$10,000 matching grant from Chicago Wilderness. However, more funds need to be raised. Terry Schilling discussed the possibility of setting up our own database, at a greatly reduced cost; he will prepare a proposal. Lee promised to work with Judy Pollock to force the issue with Cornell, requesting an itemized bill and administrative privileges to the website. A report on our progress will be posted on BCNnet by the end of May.

Three "beginners" workshops (in McHenry, DuPage and Will counties) during March and April have added substantially to our cadre of monitors. In addition, this year we added three workshops (Lake, Cook and DuPage) giving experienced monitors a chance to share their experiences and learn more about the BCN data entry system.

Woodlands and Grasslands Audits

Karen reported on these two Chicago-area, Audubon-sponsored projects, aimed at formalizing information on threats to natural areas and wildlife. Both projects are in different start-up phases.

The Woodlands Audit project has money for a pilot study this summer. It will consist of (1) talking to land managers and owners to see what oak woodlands exist in the area, (2) going into the field to test protocols, and (3) getting a rough characterization of as many areas as possible. Needed for this year are people to help find existing monitoring records that might serve as comparative data and to do the characterization. Judy and Lee are already working on the former, but additional volunteers are needed for both tasks.

This year's goal in the Grassland Audit is to attempt to count every grassland bird in the Chicago area. It is hoped that BCN can use its county coordinators to find potential surveyors and to direct the survey, using satellite maps (already available) showing the larger grassland sites in the area. Bird clubs can help by circulating maps and lists of grasslands among their members and soliciting monitors to census some of the local sites twice during June. Bob suggested that perhaps a "blockbusting" approach might work better—where small groups of monitors survey many sites rapidly.

Field trip schedules on BCNnet

Terry observed that the schedule of club outings on BCNnet makes too big a file for a web page, and he suggests storing the data in a database. A web interface can be built for entering and editing data. A display

page can be built so that users can search by various criteria, such as a specific range of dates, by club, perhaps by county. He will pursue these suggestions with Randi Doeker.

Chicagoland birding trail

Donald observed that Chicago's Bird Treaty Committee still exists and that he has been getting ideas for it from around the country regarding birding trails. He recommends that the city should have a city employee to create the trail (for the greater Chicago area), incorporating the city trail that Jim Landing has been putting together.

TREASURER'S REPORT, January-December 2001 (Mary Anne Harrison)

Ordinary Income/Expense

Income	
Contributions Income	
Unrestricted	<u>220.00</u>
Total Contributions Income	220.00
Grants	10,416.40
LPBS Fund	-282.50
Membership Dues	800.00
Program Fees	<u>340.00</u>
Total Income	11,493.90
Expense	
Licenses and Permits	8.00
Membership Dues in Organizations	150.00
Office Supplies	26.85
Postage and Delivery	106.46
Printing and Reproduction	976.32
Program Expense	<u>5,337.49</u>
Total Expense	6,605.12
Net Ordinary Income	4,888.78
Net Income	4,888.78

OTHER BUSINESS

Lincoln Park Bird Sanctuary. Terry reported on the recent opening of the expanded Sanctuary, attended by Mayor Daley and CPD Director David Doig. Additional expansion is expected in the near future.

Great Lakes Migratory Bird Fest. Walter is attending the planning meetings and will guide and give a talk at this event in May. BCN is not participating directly.

Illinois Conservation Congress. We still need representatives to attend the Congress this summer. Assuming the dates work for him, Donald is willing to serve as an alternate. A request for another representative and the dates of the Congress will be posted on BCNnet.

Illinois Prairie Path. ComEd is planning tree removal and herbicide spraying along the Prairie Path in DuPage County. The Friends of the Great Western Trail intends to fight this.

Wolf Lake Coalition. Terry has been attending meetings of the Association for the Wolf Lake Initiative and recommends that BCN become formally involved. Until a decision is made, he will continue to attend as a BCN representative, and he and Walter will investigate further. We are looking for an additional representative, preferably someone from the area near Wolf Lake.