

BIRD CONSERVATION NETWORK

5225 Old Orchard Road - Suite 37 Skokie IL 60077 847-965-1150

www.bcnbirds.org

July 2004 Meeting - Approved

July 17, 2004

Tri-County State Park - Bartlett

Attendees:

Christine Lee CAS	Glenn Gabanski CBO	Bob Montgomery IOS	Steve Packard NAS-CW
Don Darnell CAS	Randi Doeker COS	Bob Andrini Kane	Judy Pollock NAS-CW
Jerry Garden CAS	Wayne Svoboda Ft. Dearborn	John Hockman Lake-Cook	Donnie Dann TNC
Eric Secker DBC	George Sullivan Ft. Dearborn	Jane Jones Midwin	Dick Riner Thorn Creek
Bob Fisher DBC	Mary Anne Harrison IAS		

President Donald Dann called the meeting to order at 1:05 pm. A short discussion was held until a quorum was present. The minutes of the April 2004 meeting were accepted without changes.

ADMINISTRATIVE

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Glenn Gabanski distributed the current financial statement along with a list of BCN member clubs and their payment status. All clubs have paid; one individual membership is outstanding.

There was a short discussion about the dollar level that it is appropriate for BCN to carry as a balance. The Excom will discuss THIS (new projects that could use the funds) at its next meeting.

PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

Dog Friendly Areas in Cook County FP - Randi Doeker

Randi explained that the one-year pilot for the Beck Lake dog area has been completed. The official report has been sent to the FP Real Estate Committee. There is no reason to believe that any specific action will be taken.

A group called West Cook Dog has announced that they want the FP to build a dog area at a location that has been used to store rocks from the Deep Tunnel project. Steve Packard pointed out that the FP has many greater problems than a small dog park and we should evaluate where we want to spend our influence and energy.

Cook County Land Use Policy - Randi Doeker

Commissioner Mike Quigley has submitted a proposal for a new land use policy that requires an open process when requests from 3rd parties are considered by the FP. Donnie Dann represented BCN at the press conference. The proposal is in the Real Estate Committee, the head of which opposes any changes.

The Village of River Forest has officially requested that it be given a sliver of land for Dominican University's new driveway. This proposal was sent to the FP's Citizen Advisory Committee, a group that has not met in years; virtually nothing is known about who they are or how they operate.

Bird Monitoring - Judy Pollock

The data entry of the breeding bird survey information into the Cornell database is now complete. The Cornell contract is complete. Data has been sent to the interested land owners. The plan is to send this data in the fall of each year.

The monitoring team has been meeting with county officials, most recently Cook County, to discuss coordination and cooperation. The team agreed that birders should work with the County restoration staff to expand their understanding of the needs of grassland birds.

A big challenge is to get birders to enter their trip lists into eBird. It is believed that the biggest deterrent is the fact that double entry is required by those birders who already use a standard software package. Judy believes that Cornell may be working on a tool to solve that problem.

The Audubon office is using the database to evaluate the status of grassland birds in the area. A new user of the eBird data is Chicago Wilderness. They are working on a 5-year report card for ChiWild and the group looking at birds is using the database.

Judy reported that the Audubon office could use a volunteer to be the liaison with the bird monitors - someone to keep in contact with them. This person should probably be located near the Skokie office.

Steve Packard praised the work of the monitors, describing the great results that Marianne Hahn has gotten at the Bartel Grasslands and Wes Serafin at the Orland Grasslands. Marianne was able to determine that birds were declining at Bartel because of the growth of trees. Working the FP staff the situation was remedied and the number of birds started increasing. This fall there will be a new area in northwest Cook County, Spring Creek, which will be the focus of restoration efforts.

Birding Trail Map - Randi Doeker

Randi explained that the Chicago Dept of the Environment now expects to have maps printed by the spring of 2005 using a \$15,000 grant from Chicago Wilderness.

Important Birding Areas - Judy Pollock

The big kick-off Judy hoped would happen has not yet been scheduled. They are now trying for a fall date.

Swainson's Hawk efforts - Bob Fisher

The development in Hampshire has been delayed but not stopped. We are supporting the local residents in any way we can, including donating \$70 to a school program for birding-related supplies.

Meeting with Steve Bylina, CC FP Superintendent - Donnie Dann & Steve Packard

Donnie described a meeting that the Cook County FP Superintendent held with public groups to update everyone on the efforts being made to upgrade the FP for all visitors. Steve commented that the FP staff seems to sincerely want to know what citizens have to say, a big change from previous administrations.

Website Changes - Eric Secker

A new page design will be launched soon. "News" will be more prominently displayed.

Bird Collision Conference - Randi Doeker

COS and Chicago DOE are working on a conference designed to explain to architects the problems that are causing bird deaths through window collisions. The tentative date is March 11, 2005.

CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES

Midewin - Jane Jones

Significant sections of the east side of Midewin were opened in June.

Donnie Dann advised that the Sierra Club's legal challenge to the Indeck coal plant has been successful and a temporary injunction was granted.

-

Lights Out - Judy Pollock

The Audubon office has received a small grant from USFWS to do a website to export the Lights Out program to other cities.

Judy is working with the McCormick Place staff regarding their continuing problem; they indicate a willingness to try various solutions.

Northerly Island - Randi Doeker

The island should be open soon. The public meetings that will discuss what happens next are TBD.

There is a concern that the group called a Committee for a Better Chicago, which has adopted the Miegs Field proposal, will cause the public process to be delayed. It appears that their real intention is to embarrass Mayor Daley and Miegs is just a convenient tool.

Lake Michigan Eco-Partnership - Donnie Dann

Donnie announced that an eco partnership has been formed for Lake Michigan. Members will be both government and NGOs. The Lake Michigan Federation seems to be taking the lead on organizing the volunteer board.

OTHER BUSINESS

IDNR Budget Cuts - Donnie Dann

BCN is part of a group called Partners for Parks and Wildlife that has a professional lobbyist at work in Springfield.

Taxes on Woodlands - Bob Fisher

Rhonda Rothrock from Southern IL has asked BCN for help with what appears to be an effort to raise taxes on woodland lots. Excom members have offered Rhonda advice on how to pursue action.

Bird Conservation Alliance - Donnie Dann

A national coalition of birding-related groups has been formed. BCN is an automatic member by virtue of our connection to ABC. A listserv is available for all individuals to join.

Habitat Project - Judy Pollock

The Habitat Project and the Volunteer Stewardship Network have joined to produce workshops this summer and a conference next February. Suggestions for topics and speakers are welcomed.

Timber Trails - Christine Lee

CAS has received a letter from Lt. Gov. Quinn asking for help fighting the sale of the Timber Trails golf course (in southwest Cook County) to private development. Randi Doeker advised that the "Save the Timber" group has addressed the Cook County FP Commissioners asking for the county to help.

Donnie Dann asked that CAS take the lead on following up.

The meeting adjourned at 3:20 pm. The next meeting will be November 6th at Donnie Dann's house in Highland Park.

Respectfully submitted,
Randi Doeker
Secretary