

**Bird Conservation Network**  
**Quarterly Meeting Minutes**  
**April 2005 Meeting - DRAFT**  
 April 10, 2005  
 Camp Sagawau

Attendees:

Christine Lee - CAS	Randi Doeker - COS	Ann Haverstock - Kane Co.
Joan Bruckman - CBCM	Walter Marcisz - COS	Lee Ramsey - NAS-CW
Annette Prince - CBCM	Eric Secker - DBC	Donnie Dann - TNC
Chris VanWassenhove CBCM	Bob Fisher - DBC	Terry Schilling - At Large
Jeanette Bider - CBO	Wayne Svoboda - Ft. Dearborn	
Dennis DeCoursey - CBO	Mary Anne Harrison - IAS	Jackie Dann - Guest
Glenn Gabanski - CBO	Geoff Williamson - IOS	

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 January 2005 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. Prairie Woods Audubon will pay at the end of their fiscal year in May. Donnie Dann will follow-up with TNC.

**PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES**

Recruiting New Monitors – Lee Ramsey

Monitoring workshops have started. There are at least 15 new monitors, mostly through the hard work of Ann Haverstock and Dick Riner. [Applause] Donnie Dann said that Lee should be included on that list. Bob Fisher added that the DuPage FP district may have recruited 5 more volunteers as a result of the FP's recent presentation to the DuPage BC.

We are still waiting to hear about the success of the grant applications that have been submitted to allow for a professional statistical analysis of the monitoring data.

Birding Trail Map - Randi Doeker

Randi distributed a list of the actions taken by the Chicago Department of the Environment during Q1 to ensure that the map is ready by IMBD. Significant sponsorship money will have to be found to print the map in the quantity that will really be needed.

130<sup>th</sup> Street Sewage Pond – Donnie Dann

Jeff Sanders had previously requested that BCN get involved in opening up the sewage ponds for birding. Donnie pointed out that it is not a conservation issue. Bob Fisher stated that it is an important area for birders. It was agreed that Excom would approach the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District management about access.

## Illinois Bird Conservation Initiative and Southern Illinois Birding Blitz – Bob Fisher

Bob has determined that no governmental or NGO has the resources necessary to start a statewide bird conservation group. For the time-being, the proposal is on hold. (The Missouri and Wisconsin efforts are successful because they have the support of legislative leaders.)

Bob proposed, and the members agreed, to pledge \$1/species for the winning team at the Southern Illinois Birding Blitz as a way of showing our support for the conservation work in that part of the state.

Terry Schilling questioned whether BCN should determine its scope in terms of bio-regions rather than political regions.

## Birds & Buildings Conference and Birds & Buildings Forum – Randi Doeker

The conference was held on March 11<sup>th</sup> at IIT. Over 100 attended: 52 architects, 15 property owners and the rest from the conservation community. Attendees came from as far away as Seattle, Atlanta and three areas of Canada.

As a follow-on, Randi has formed the Birds & Buildings Forum, an IL non-profit, to continue to educate architects, builders and building owners about the design practices that cause birds to fly into windows. On March 17<sup>th</sup> the Birds & Buildings Forum formally applied to join BCN, per the Bylaws.

Bob Fisher initiated a discussion about whether the Birds & Buildings Forum application can be voted on at this meeting, or whether the bylaws require the vote be delayed until next meeting. Those present accepted Bob's analysis and delayed the vote.

(Note: After the meeting it was determined that a vote to accept B&BF as a coalition member should have been conducted at this (April) meeting, so the ExComm decided to rectify the error by conducting an email vote. This vote has been carried out and the Birds & Buildings Forum is now a member of BCN. )

Donald Dann appointed Glenn Gabanski and Terry Schilling to review the by-laws and make recommendations.

## Earth Day Activities – Bob Fisher

BCN receives requests to participate in Earth Day and similar event activities. Bob recommended, and the members agreed, that these activities are more appropriate for the member clubs.

## **CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES**

### Lights Out

The group discussed the program in general and the 40-story recommendation in particular. Donnie Dann will talk to Judy Pollock about the program details. Terry Schilling said he would bring up the topic at the newly-revived Mayor's Wildlife Committee.

### Lake Calumet –Walter Marcisz

#### **SITE PLANNING:**

1) On February 8, 2005 I attended the second Chicago Dept. of Environment (CDOE) meeting regarding site planning for the 138 acre Van Vlissingen Prairie/Marian R. Byrnes Natural Area. Presentations provided by project consultants appeared to provide for a healthy mix of habitat enhancement/creation and passive recreation. The project consultants are required (by US Army Corps of Engineers permit) to enhance existing wetlands and to create 6 acres of new wetland. It is projected that the area will be jointly managed by IL Dept. of Natural Resources and the Chicago Park District. The February 8th meeting represented a 30% conceptual stage for the project -a 60% conceptual stage meeting will likely be held sometime during the summer of 2005.

2) On February 22, 2005 I attended the second CDOE meeting regarding site planning for 128 acre Hegewisch Marsh. Hegewisch Marsh is the projected location for the Ford Calumet Environmental Center, and also the site of nesting habitat for IL State Endangered Yellow-headed Blackbirds and other wetland birds (the environmental center may be completed as early as 2007). Preservation and enhancement of Yellow-headed Blackbird habitat is considered a priority of the project. Unfortunately, the maps of proposed land plans presented at the meeting by the project's landscape architect include boardwalks & overlooks intruding directly into Yellow-headed Blackbird nesting habitat. I made very clear comments at the meeting that these ambitious plans would need to be scaled back to avoid disturbance to the very birds they are trying to protect. The February 22nd meeting represented a 30% conceptual stage for the project -a 60% conceptual stage meeting will likely be held sometime during the summer of 2005. I will plan to attend the 60% meeting when it is scheduled. Hopefully, the unnecessary disturbances to Yellow-headed Blackbird habitat will have been addressed by then. If not, it may be prudent for BCN to mount an education campaign to alert the CDOE to the perils of habitat disturbance!

#### MORE FENCES BEING BUILT BY IL INTERNATIONAL PORT DISTRICT:

The IL International Port District (IIPD) is currently in the process of fencing in the west shore of Lake Calumet with razor-wire fences. IIPD representatives have stated they are required to build the fencing by the Dept. of Homeland Security. Ironically, the fenced-in area includes the portion of Lake Calumet which has been proposed for an Intergovernmental Agreement which would grant the Forest Preserve District of Cook County (FPDCC) property ownership. It is not clear at this point what will become of the fencing if FPDCC assumes ownership. But at least for now, it appears that the fencing is here to stay. The Southeast Environmental Task Force will meet with Anthony Ianello of the IIPD in the near future to discuss the possibility of less offensive fencing than the razor-wire currently being erected.

#### BIRD STUDIES:

USDA Forest Service research begun during the summer of 2004 assessing the impact of recreational activity on L. Calumet's Indian Ridge Marsh Black-crowned Night-Heron nesting colony will continue this summer. The research will determine the effects of hiking, dog walking and bike riding on nest building, breeding, sleeping and foraging. Volunteers and paid interns are currently being solicited for this project by USDA Forest Service.

#### CHICAGO DEPT. OF ENVIRONMENT INSTALLS BEAVER LEVELERS AT INDIAN RIDGE MARSH:

The CDOE has approved installation of beaver levelers at Indian Ridge Marsh to prevent resident beavers from playing havoc with water levels at the marsh. Dam construction by Indian Ridge beavers in recent years has resulted in high water levels which flood out IL State-endangered Black-crowned Night-Heron nests. Hopefully, the beaver levelers will alleviate this ongoing problem. Construction of the levelers will take place over a one and 1/2 week period projected to end on April 6, 2005.

#### Northerly Island - Randi Doeker

The Chicago Park District has completed the first phase of public hearing process for the long-term planning process. The next step is the traditional planning program with professional architects and engineers. To raise funds for this (\$500,000 per year for three years), the park is renting 4.8 acres on the north to Clear Channel for summertime concerts: 30 between late June and September for 3-5 years. The venue structure will be rental equipment that is removed at the end of each summer. At the end of the contract period, Clear Channel has to return the land to its original state.

This spring the Lake Michigan Federation (LMF) will hold a mini-planning process with design professionals to further their own Northerly Island nature park plan.

It was agreed that BCN will remain in the Northerly Island Coalition, coordinated by LMF,

#### Chicago Bird Collision Monitors – Joan Bruckman

Joan reported that the group is now up to 50 volunteers and has many other prospects. As the group has grown, many supporting materials have been developed: volunteer training program and manual, recruitment/educational presentations, t-shirts, name badges, business cards, car signage. To support data collection, salvage protocols have

been established and a tracking system has been developed to monitor the success of rescue and rehabilitation.

CBCM is receiving the Group award for Protector of the Environment at the April 16<sup>th</sup> Environmental Banquet of the Chicago Audubon Society. [Applause]

The meeting adjourned at 3:50 pm. The next meeting will be on July 9<sup>th</sup> at 12:30pm in DuPage County. John Rogner, Field Superior for the USFWS Chicago office, will give a presentation on the changes to the federal laws relating to invasive bird species.