

BCN QUARTERLY MEETING
DRAFT MINUTES
Saturday, November 12, 2005

Attendees:

Randi Doeker	Birds & Bldgs		Eric Secker	DBC		John Hockman	Lake-Cook
Jerry Garden	CAS		Suzanne Checchia	ENSBC		Judy Pollock	NAS-CW
Chris VanWassenhove	CAS		Libby Hill	ENSBC		Maggie Kurcz	NAS-CW
Mary Lou Mellon	CBCM		Jeff Sanders	ENSBC		Donna Gonzalez	Save the Dunes
Joan Bruchman	CBCM		Susan Sullivan	Ft. D.		Donnie Dann	TNC
Glenn Gabanski	DBC		Nancy Casper	Ft. D.		Dick Riner	Thorn Creek
Bob Fisher	DBC		Mary Anne Harrison	IAS		Terry Schilling	

President Donnie Dann called the meeting to order at 1pm. A quorum was present.

ADMINISTRATIVE

1. Meeting Minutes: Approval, by voice vote, of prior minutes; already circulated on website; please see www.bcnbirds.org

2. Treasurer's report - Glenn Gabanski

The Treasurer distributed an updated financial report and explained that we have had to pay some back taxes; penalties and interest TBD by the taxing authorities.

Bob Fisher explained the historical situation of taking in more money (mostly via the 1999 conference) than we spent in the tax year. There has been a misunderstanding regarding the tax status of the group; that is now being corrected.

The Treasurer's report was accepted by voice vote.

3. Revision of By-Laws - Donnie Dann

(The by-laws were distributed at the July meeting and posted on the web.)

Moved and seconded: approval of the revisions; they passed by unanimous roll call vote

PROJECTS/INITIATIVES

1. Bird monitoring data base analysis - Judy Pollock and Eric Secker

Donnie explained the background of the project: years of data collection put in a data base without any useful application. Judy and Eric gave a PowerPoint presentation that Maggie Kurcz created for use by the clubs to present both the monitoring program and the benefits of the data collection.

The group passed a resolution of Big Thanks for their work on the project to Eric Secker, Judy Pollock, Glenn Gabanski, Fred Ramsey, Doug Stotz, Jeff Brawn, Christopher Wood, Brian Sullivan, Steve Kelling, Scott Meister, and Chicago Wilderness Advisors, Chris Mulvaney, Dan Gooch and Geoffrey Levin.

2. Adoption of the Wind Energy, ABC Policy Statement – Donnie Dann

(Statement distributed at the July meeting; also available at <http://www.abcbirds.org/policy/windenergy.htm>)

Group members offered their varied opinions and their knowledge of the turbine plans and technologies known for the Chicago area. The ABC policy was endorsed on a roll call vote: 12 Y, 4 N, 4 abstentions.

3. McHenry County Trap-Neuter-Release Program for Feral Cats - Donnie Dann

Donnie's public statement at a County board meeting appears to have caused a delay in the County's plans to start a TNR program. More recently McHenry Audubon has become more active in working to stop the release of the trapped cats. Everyone is encouraged to contact their McHenry County friends on this topic.

4. 130th Street Sewage pond access - Donnie Dann

No news on lifting the prohibition on access to the sewage ponds.

5. Monitoring Plans for 2006 - Judy Pollock

Volunteers are needed for data entry of the monitoring data. A general recruitment flyer has been created for distribution at club events, especially Christmas Count gatherings.

6. Lights Out – Judy Pollock

The day-to-day management of Lights Out has been turned over to Chicago Audubon; the Skokie office will continue to offer the website for national outreach. Tracy Heuschelat at the CAS office will be the key person.

7. Lake Michigan Ecosystem Partnership from the Alliance for the Great Lakes

It was agreed to have them speak at the January meeting.

8. Nominating Committee for 2006 Executive Committee

Donnie Dann has appointed Joan Bruchman as the committee chair.

CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES

Lake Calumet activities – submitted earlier by Walter Marcisz

CID LANDFILL UPDATE: According to the Southeast Environmental Task Force (SETF) News Bulletin of September 2005, the Chicago Departments of the Environment and Planning & Development are meeting with Waste Management to finalize the details of plans for closure and end use of the CID Landfill. Alderman John Pope (10th Ward Chicago) is participating in this process, after which he will schedule a public meeting to explain the plan to the community. SETF recommends native grass vegetation and a perimeter trail be incorporated into the plan.

BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON STUDY UPDATE: In August 2005, the Illinois Natural History Survey (INHS) published papers on population trends and nesting ecology of the Calumet Black-crowned Night-Heron colony (INHS Bulletin Volume 37, Articles 3 and 4). These papers, based on the results of studies conducted in 2002 and 2003, are available from the INHS website:

<http://www.inhs.uiuc.edu>

OTHER BUSINESS

1. Liability Protection for Recreational Land Use - Donnie Dann

Donnie summarized the change in Illinois law that previously protected private land owners when they allowed birders and other recreationers on their land. BCN is working with PPW (Partners for Parks and Wildlife) on the lobbying work in Springfield. Everyone is urged to contact their Springfield reps.

This legal change impacts all land owners including organizations like The Nature Conservancy and Fermilab.

2. Forest Preserve District of Cook County - Donnie Dann

Donnie attended an August meeting at FP headquarters and wrote a follow-up letter to support bird conservation budget allocations; Donnie is attending a similar meeting next week.

3. City of Chicago Bird Agenda - Donnie Dann, Randi Doeker, Judy Pollock

Like the existing Water, River, and Green Building agendas, this would lay out measurable goals and milestones, partner roles and other items for making the city even more habitable for birds.

Judy pointed out that there will be an opportunity for the various clubs to get involved in the implementation of the Agenda.

4. Gyrfalcon reward - Donnie Dann

BCN contributed \$200 toward the reward to find the person who shot the gyrfalcon in September in Antioch. (The bird is recovering at the Flint Creek Wildlife Rehab Center in Barrington.)

5. Bird Flu statement - Donnie Dann

Donnie discussed the ABC position paper recently released. It was agreed that and similar information would be posted on the BCN and other club websites.

6. Recognition of Montrose Beach Dunes – submitted on behalf of Leslie Borns

Montrose Beach Dunes, a 9.25-acre site owned by the Chicago Park District in Cook County, was designated an Illinois Natural Areas Inventory (INAI) site by the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission on October 4, the first time a Chicago Park District parcel was so recognized.

7. Swainson's Hawk Monitoring - Judy Pollock

Bob and Anita Morgan have been doing regular monitoring for Swainson's Hawks in Kane and McHenry Counties. This year they found only three breeding pairs, all in areas that appear to be destined for rapid development.

More monitors are needed to search for the hawks with the goal of protecting the new breeding areas. More info: The Morgans at 708-209-1938.

8. Operation Migration funding for 2005/06 - Bob Fisher

The Crane Foundation lacks the funds to accomplish their crane to re-establish a second wild flock of Whooping Cranes. It costs about \$1mil a year to operate the foundation; they receive little government funding.

Bob recommended that BCN make a donation. It agreed by voice vote that Excom will decide on the amount of the donation depending upon the outcome of the tax payments (referenced earlier).

9. American Bird Conservancy's Bird Conservation Alliance Meeting - Donnie Dann

Last week Donnie was in Washington for meetings of the Bird Conservation Alliance and the Pan-American Roundtable. A summary of his report follows:

· **Threatened and Endangered Species Recovery Act (TESRA)**

Michael Bean of Environmental Defense described the recently passed House Bill, Threatened and Endangered Species Recovery Act, TESRA, sponsored primarily by Congressman Richard Pombo. A complaint commonly voiced over the current ESA is that very few species have been removed from listing. However, Bean pointed out that there has never been adequate funding to allow for complete recovery. For example, the recovery plan for the Atwater Greater Prairie Chicken has been funded at 10% of the recommended amount. Meanwhile more than 99% of listed species have been saved from extinction.

Here are just a few of the problems of the new bill, which will:

- Allow the property owner to be compensated for alleged losses as well as lost profits for any 'taking'.
- Eliminate the government's ability to designate a creature's "critical habitat".
- Suspend pesticide reviews
- Mandate complex new 'science requirements' to enable listing
- Include new economic and national security aspects of listing
- Enable a developer to proceed with a project if an Endangered Species determination cannot be made within 180 days, thus allowing project approval by default.

If you believe this legislation is harmful to BCN's mission please contact your US Senator, Dick Durbin at (202) 224-2152 and Barack Obama at (202) 224-2854 and express your opinion.

· **Avian Flu**

Scott Newman, DVM, of the Wildlife Trust spoke on the very topical issue, avian flu. For more detail on this go to the ABC website for its policy statement, <http://abcbirds.org/flu.htm> or <http://www.nmnh.si.edu/BIRDNET/OC/birdflu.html>.

· **Bird Pac**

A new political organization, Bird Pac has been formed to help elect candidates that will support wild birds and the habitats they need to survive. This is the first time a birding organization has been organized specifically to provide political muscle for the millions of Americans who care about birds and bird habitats. See www.birdpac.org for more details.

· **Horseshoe crab ban**

Because of the plummeting decline of Red Knot populations ABC and other birding and conservation groups have brought heavy pressure to severely limit or stop the harvest of horseshoe crabs in and around Delaware Bay. As a result the states of Delaware and New Jersey have proposed a 2-year ban on any harvest of horseshoe crabs in state waters. A final decision will be made after a public comment period.

· **Mexican Saltillo Grasslands**

This project was selected as the single international bird conservation issue for which all members of the Bird Conservation Alliance will be able to engage in fundraising efforts. By focusing BCA member fundraising potential on a single project the hope is to achieve vital bird conservation goals in one year. Saltillo is a 7,000 acre grassland/prairie dog colony that is the wintering ground for 50% of the world's population of Long-billed Curlew, sizable numbers of the critically endangered Mountain Plover, the endemic Worthen's Sparrow, and a variety of other bird species. The American Birding Association immediately contributed \$5,000 to this effort. For more information visit www.birdconservationalliance.org/salttillo

The January meeting will be Saturday, January 14th, in Chicago.

The meeting adjourned at 3:45.

Submitted by
Randi Doeker
Secretary