

BCN QUARTERLY MEETING
MINUTES
 Saturday, April 15, 2006

Attendees:

Randi Doeker	Birds & Bldgs		Bob Fisher	DBC		Judy Pollock	NAS-CW
Walter Marcisz	COS		Eric Secker	DBC		Lee Ramsey	NAS-CW
Sigrid Schmidt	COS		Suzanne Checchia	ENSBC		Donna Gonzalez	Save the Dunes
Glenn Gabanski	DBC		Wayne Svoboda	Ft. D.		Donnie Dann	TNC
Annette Prince	CBCM		Bob Montgomery	IOS		Dick Riner	Thorn Creek

President Donnie Dann called the meeting to order at 1:00pm. A quorum was not present; therefore, no official business was transacted. At 1:07, additional members arrived; a quorum was established.

ADMINISTRATIVE

1. Meeting Minutes: Approved, by voice vote, the minutes that have already been circulated on website; please see www.bcnbirds.org

2. Treasurer's report - Glenn Gabanski

The Treasurer distributed an updated financial report. We have filed an amended tax return for last year, which should get us a refund. We have also formally requested that we not be charged a penalty for our back taxes since we misunderstood our tax status; awaiting IRS response.

Dues have not been received from CBO, Prairie Woods and one individual member. At the end of June, non-paying members lose their voting rights.

PROJECTS/INITIATIVES

1. Proposed hotel at Indiana Dunes SP – Donna Gonzalez

Donna explained the proposal by the Indiana DNR to construct a large hotel at the lakeshore. Proposals are being accepted through May. Per Bob Montgomery, Indiana has a history of putting resorts in state parks. It was moved and seconded that BCN go on record opposing the development; President Donnie Dann will act on BCN's behalf. After a group discussion, the motion passed unanimously on voice vote.

2. Support for Northerly Island Rehab Facility – Glenn Gabanski & Annette Prince

The facility is now open for CBCM volunteers to drop off birds during the early morning. When funding is available, it will be opened for the general public.

At Donnie's suggestion, Excom will consider the donation amount now that our tax situation is resolved. [Post meeting notation: a \$200 donation was sent April 17th.]

3. City of Chicago Bird Agenda – Donnie Dann & Judy Pollock

Like the existing Water, River, and Green Building agendas, the Bird Agenda will 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 are several habitat/species projects that would be great for clubs to promote, such as working with golf courses or cemeteries to increase bird habitat. Annette Prince advised that she would discuss opportunities with the CAS board when it meets this week.

4. Chicago Wilderness - Grassroots Report – Bob Fisher & Dick Riner

Per Dick: Chicago Wilderness has created a youth program with a "patch" for activity participation. Also, meetings have started for the next Wild Things conference.

Bob is creating a list of listserv owners for rapid dissemination of information; send any lists you may have.

5. Conservation Forum – Donnie Dann

Bob Montgomery explained the history of the Conservation Congress, which ran in the 1990s. It was considered a good organization for getting together a wide variety of unrelated specialists who might not otherwise meet to discuss conservation issues.

Donnie: A new organization called the Conservation Forum met recently. The meeting report indicates a desire to move forward with conservation efforts. We will follow its progression as it relates to BCN.

6. Membership in Lake Michigan Ecosystem Partnership – Donnie Dann

BCN is now a member.

7. TNC Wisconsin meeting – Bob Fisher

There is an April 24th meeting with IL and Wisc reps to discuss bird habitat along Lake Michigan. Judy and Glenn will be attending; others are encouraged.

8. Shrubland Bird Blitz – Judy Pollock & Bob Fisher

The date range is June 9-19th, with June 10th as the big Blitz day. All birds at a shrubland site are to be counted. Judy's office has a list of sites known to have shrubland birds. The goal is to institutionalize the Blitz the way the spring and Christmas counts are.

9. Monitoring Plans for 2006 – Lee Ramsey

Most of the monitoring data submitted on paper to BCN between 1999 and 2005 has been entered in eBird, and the eBird records have been cleaned up as much as is possible. We are beginning to work on several other entry projects, the most important of which is the DuPage County records from 2003 to the present. We hope that this data can be incorporated into eBird by the end of this year.

The 2005 data shows entries in eBird from about 40 identifiable Chicagoland monitors. Adding to these the DuPage monitors, whose data has not yet been entered, and others who we feel certain have been monitoring but whose data is not yet entered, we think we can identify at least 75 active monitors in our region during the past year. This would not include anyone who entered bird counts into the BCN hot spots.

Bob is working with the professional biologists at Midewin to develop a method of incorporating the extensive data gathered from the Midewin site into the BCN database. Additionally, Will County FPD staff has supplied us with a history of breeding success among the rookery bird species at Lake Renwick and we are now trying to figure out how to incorporate it into the BCN database.

April 29th: Judy will hold a brunch to honor the monitors who have been great contributors. (7:30am at Paul Douglas – Everyone is invited.)

10. Swainson's Hawk Project – Eric Secker

Bob and Anita Morgan have been doing regular monitoring for Swainson's Hawks in Kane and McHenry Counties. Last year they found only three breeding pairs, all in areas that appear to be destined for rapid development. Volunteers have joined the project to monitor for 2 months in the April/May and July/August.

Over 800 square miles are now being monitored by the volunteers. In the first 2 weeks there have been reports of several pairs. More volunteers are still needed.

Judy recommends that the information, once we have it, be distributed to every Forest Preserve, conservation group, etc., in the area.

11. Spring Creek Restoration – Judy Pollock

Judy described the history of the restoration project: it was created by BCN monitors who have been working in the area for years. Restoration work has been happening in conjunction with the Forest Preserve staff. In many cases the work being done is a correction of the work done in the 1970s when the FP believed that restoration consisted of just planting whatever trees they had available.

The project has federal funding, an excellent way to judge how scientifically sound the work is.

12. Important Bird Areas – Judy Pollock

On Friday Pyramid SP is being dedicated (in Southern IL). The current issue of the IOS Meadowlark newsletter has a detailed article about IBAs (by Bob Fisher).

A new webpage will be launched soon, linked off the Project Habitat and Audubon pages.

13. Chicago Region Bird Population Trends PowerPoint Presentation – Donnie Dann

Bob will present it to Midewin this spring. Donnie expects to present to Lake and McHenry FP officials soon. Judy Pollack will give a presentation to Park Ridge Audubon on April 27

14. Other Discussion Topics

Bob Montgomery – Describes the CARA “light” funding program. Letters are circulating in the House and Senate to support funding. Donnie will write our Senators on BCN’s behalf.

CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES

Lake Calumet activities – Walter Marcisz

A federal grant has been confirmed for the restoration of Hegewisch Marsh. Walter attended a February meeting at which the plan was presented. It was apparent that the City planners had taken into consideration the input from earlier public meetings. The plan includes expanding the wetlands areas.

4. Wild Things Conference – Judy Pollock

The date will be February/March 2007; location TBD. More birders are needed for the program committee.

5. West Nile Virus monitoring – Judy Pollock

Several routes open for people who can monitor common birds like Starlings. Judy distributed a flyer describing all of the monitoring opportunities.

6. Recreational Liability bill – Donnie Dann

A bill was not passed in this legislative session.

The summer meeting will be Saturday, July 22nd at Camp Sagawau.

The meeting adjourned at 3:31.

Submitted by
Randi Doeker
Secretary