

**BCN QUARTERLY MEETING**  
**July 22, 2006 – Camp Sagawau**  
**Approved**

Attendees:

Randi Doeker	Birds & Bldgs		Glenn Gabanski	DBC		Donnie Dann	TNC
Walter Marcisz	COS		Suzanne Checchia	ENSBC		Dick Riner	Thorn Creek
Bobbie Asher	CAS		Libby Hill	ENSBC		Leslie Borns	At-large
Joan Bruchman	CBCM		Jeff Sanders	ENSBC		Teri Radke	Guest
Annette Prince	CBCM		Wayne Svoboda	Ft. D.		Dennis DeCoursey	Guest
Mary Lou Mellon	CBCM		Mary Anne Harrison	IAS		Jackie Dann	Guest
Bob Fisher	DBC		Gail Taxy	Lake-Cook		Angela Sturdevant	Chicago Park District - Guest
Eric Secker	DBC		Donna Gonzalez	Save the Dunes		Doug Stotz	Field Museum - Guest

The meeting was called to order at 1:00pm by President Donnie Dann; a quorum was present.

**ADMINISTRATIVE**

**1. Treasurer's report - Glenn Gabanski**

An updated financial report was distributed. Two members have not renewed: CBO and Terry Schilling. The IRS has refunded part of the penalties. Refund of part of 2004 taxes based on a loss in 2005 is pending.

Arlene Koziol has donated \$1,000 for general use by BCN. (She understands that BCN is not a 501-C-3 type of non-profit.) Discussion of the use of the funds will be held later.

**2. Minutes of April meeting – approved by voice vote, as revised per a request from Donna Gonzalez**

**PROJECTS/INITIATIVES**

**3. Gull control on lakefront beaches – Leslie Borns & Randi Doeker**

Statement by Randi Doeker:

I invited Wild Goose Chase to send a representative to talk to us. Wild Goose Chase is the private, commercial company that uses border collies to control nuisance species. They've been in the news recently because of their work on Chicago beaches but they also work in many areas around the metro area so it is likely they have something going on in the neighborhood of many BCN organizations. Everything was arranged and they were very happy to attend this meeting.

That was until last night at 6pm when I was contacted by the company. The owner of Wild Goose Chase told me that she had been expressly directed by one of her clients, the Chicago Park District, to not talk to us. Any and all information that BCN needs to know should come only through the Chicago Park District. That's why we have a visitor from the Chicago Park District here today: Angela Sturdevant.

Per Angela Sturdevant: The Park District is trying a variety of technique to reduce the various nuisance species on the lakefront (Ex: spikes in the area where starlings normally nest). The use of collies is currently limited to Foster Beach. If the program is successful, it will be considered as a possible technique for use at other beaches, to be determined in the future. At this point we are collecting information and test results for use in future planning.

Angela described the general process at Foster beach: Before starting the program, the Wild Goose Chase biologist surveyed the beach situation two weeks in advance. Each day, the dogs' handlers check the beach for non-target species before releasing the collies. A WGC biologist monitors bird reports on IBET.

Angela repeated/confirmed the information provided to Randi: BCN should address all questions regarding Wild Goose Chas to the Chicago Park District.

A BCN member was pointed out that the act of chasing the gulls will make them poop on the beach and the gulls flushed from the beach simply move to the water, where they would poop. Angela had no information about the significance of this.

Member questions regarding collies chasing migrating birds, especially endangered species: Leslie reported that she had discussed the program with a CPD executive, Ellen Sargent. Ellen advised that the WGC staffers show the collies pictures of bird species that they are not supposed to chase. [sic]

Angela stated that WGC handlers are required to go through training to recognize non-target species. It seems more likely that handlers, not the dogs, view a presentation about non-target species to aid in identification of species present. If a handler determines that anything other than a target species is present on the beach, they will not take the dogs there.

Additionally per Leslie, it is Ellen's contention that shorebirds are less skittish than gulls so the shorebirds stay put when the collies flush the gulls. Per Doug Stotz: This is contrary to known science.

Per Doug Stotz: Without knowing many details, the entire program sounds like a bad idea. We have no research regarding the impact of gulls on the beach versus in the water. If the use of collies is to only move gulls around the area, the program may be useful. When gulls take off, they defecate.

Doug offered information that the federal water quality standard that uses E coli is a very poor measure of water quality. "They are measuring the wrong thing." Gulls in general do not carry E coli strains that are harmful to humans. Additionally, the testing system used measures yesterday's beach quality. Additionally one of the known issues is that the grooming process at the beach changes the natural processes that would reduce the presence of E coli.

[Post meeting note from Donnie Dann: I had a lengthy discussion with Joyce Coffee, Chicago DOE. What was surprising to me was when I told her of Doug Stotz's comments at Saturday's meeting she said completely understood and agreed with him. She said "we know all that, we know e-coli as such is the wrong thing to measure and we know that there are problems with border collie effort". Yet because they are required to follow the EPA's measurement criteria - which are e-coli, that's what they have to focus on in mandating beach closings. She did say it would make more sense to target the sources of bacteria toxic to humans and they are working with EPA to change their criteria accordingly. Meanwhile, diminishing beach closings still has to be their goal, and not, unfortunately at this time the reduction in toxic bacteria. Whether the Foster beach pilot demonstrates this or not is uncertain at best and she understands that as well.]

#### **4. Turbines and Towers – Glenn Gabanski**

Statement by Glenn Gabanski:

**Wind Turbines and Towers:** BCN and the Chicago DOE are working to establish monitoring program for various wind turbines and towers in the Chicago area. A meeting is promised soon involving DOE, BCN, CBCM, and others to discuss the monitoring programs.

**Wind Turbines at Daley Center:** Aerotecture plans to install 4 wind turbines on the roof of Daley Center. These are the helix design Aerotecture claims are bird friendly. At the moment the plans are to suspend one turbine from each of the 4 corners of a penthouse complex. The 5 foot diameter turbines will be mounted vertically but will not extend higher than the penthouse rooftops. This will also place them away from the edge of the building. Aerotecture also plans to install 4 cameras to visually monitor the turbines from a remote site, to provide information to communicate to the public, and to look for bird strikes. Installation was supposed to be in July

and is now scheduled for August.

Setting up a monitoring program independent of Aerotecture is looking difficult. For various reasons monitors are not going to be allowed on the rooftop. There is a possibility of monitoring from windows of an adjacent building. At first BCN was told the cameras would record and archive their images for monitors to review later, but now it seems it will only be a live feed to Aerotecture. Nevertheless, DOE asked BCN for input about placing the cameras to aid in monitoring. BCN was also told that screening of some kind is to be placed around the turbines to protect them from humans. DOE asked BCN if two turbines should be screened and two not as an experiment to see if screening is a protection for bird collisions.

After discussion BCN made the following recommendations:

- a) CBCM might be able to provide monitors if the live feed can be sent to them or if they can sit with Aerotecture monitors.
- b) For the cameras to be useful for monitoring they need to show the outer portion of the turbine where the birds might hit and/or the roof area at the base of the turbines. If they are directed to just the back of the turbine (the portion closest to the penthouse) it is unlikely they will see any bird hits.
- c) Before deciding whether screening only two turbines as an experiment we need to know the size of the mesh. If the mesh is too large birds might simply pass through it or go only partially through. If the mesh is small enough to allow a bird to bounce off it might also restrict air flow too much. Doing an experiment is a good idea, but it might be useless depending on the size of the screening.

Statement continued by Glenn Gabanski:

**Wind Turbines at Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA):** The museum is located at 200 E. Chicago next to Seneca Park and near the lake shore. 16 Aerotecture turbines will be mounted horizontally on their rooftop in August or September. MCA is willing to cooperate and allow monitors access to the rooftop. Annette Prince from CBCM has been in communication with MCA and hopes to arrange a monitoring program. Some issues to be worked out are what time of day and how often the monitors will be allowed on the roof.

**Univision Radio Towers:** 6 unlit radio towers, each 189 feet tall, are to be erected at a site near 127th and the Little Calumet River. This location is near to where Bald Eagles have tried to nest. BCN is told the towers are outside a refuge zone created around the nest site. Univision wants to be cooperative and will allow one or two designated monitors access to the site at any time via a private road. Walter Marcisz has volunteered to monitor the towers.

The ABC recommendation on towers states that towers that are less than 200 feet tall, are unlit, and do not use guy wires are not considered to be a problem for birds. BCN appreciates Univision's desire to cooperate and hopes their towers follow these guidelines. BCN particularly wants to know if the towers will not use guy wires.

**Other wind turbine projects:** The City of Chicago recently amended their building code to allow landowners to erect a tower with or without guy wires and mount an anemometer on top to assess whether a wind turbine would be economically feasible. It is believed that these turbines are likely to be the windmill/bladed type which are not bird friendly. One such anemometer tower is planned in the Calumet area. Walter Marcisz is aware of the location and is also interested in monitoring that site since CBCM will not likely have the resources to go that far south.

[Post meeting note by Randi Doeker: The City of Chicago has revised the zoning code to allow wind turbines on the roofs of residences:

- Rooftop wind energy systems shall be considered permitted accessory structures within all districts provided they comply with the height limits and setbacks established in this Section. A rooftop energy conversion system shall consist of a wind turbine(s) and associated equipment for converting wind energy to power. Wind energy conversions systems shall be permitted as rooftop accessory structures provided such structures:
  - a. are set back at least 20 feet from the front building line, or in the case of corner lots, at least 15 feet from

the front and side building line.

- b. are limited to a height of no more than 15 feet above the roof or top of the parapet, whichever is greater.
- c. comply with all noise limitation of the Chicago Municipal Code.
- d. are safely and securely attached to the rooftop in compliance with the Chicago Building Code.

*(Amend. Coun. J. 3-9-05, p. 44469, 3-29-06, p. 73936.)*

## **5. Hotel proposal for Indiana Dunes Lakeshore - Donna Gonzalez**

No proposals were submitted by the official deadline to the Indiana DNR for hotels on state park land. The Indiana DNR director keeps talking about ways to build the hotel – extend the submission deadlines or a state-funded project. So the fight goes on.

The BCN letters to Indiana officials, including the Governor, were very helpful.

## **6. Shrubland Blitz – Bob Fisher**

There are shrubland birds out there! In excess of 50 sites were monitored. The counties with the most coverage were Lake, Cook, Kane and DuPage. The fifty sites are probably 20% of the total possible.

ComEd officials are discussing actively managing their right-of-way land for shrubland sites. Some survey work has been done as part of the Blitz. The challenge is that it takes permission to monitor on their private property. They have a tremendous amount of land that could be good habitat.

There is a project goal to produce maps of the shrubland areas for birding and management.

## **7. Chicago Bird Agenda – Randi Doeker**

Review for the new members: The City of Chicago creates plans called “Agendas” to establish their plans for environmental actions. Check their website for the Water Agenda and the Chicago River Agenda. A group of birders has been working with the Chicago Department of Environment on the creation of a Bird Agenda, which is expected to be printed this fall.

One action item in the Bird Agenda is the creation of a Cats Indoors program; see below.

Another action is the establishment of a City plan to make buildings bird-safe. In support of this, DOE held a meeting last week with representatives of several large glass companies to encourage them to develop glass that is bird-safe. Local architects were also in attendance.

## **8. Spring Creek Project – Steve Packard**

Audubon Chicago Region and CAS have been working with Forest Preserve District of Cook County on various site restorations. The Spring Creek project in particular has been criticized by a few who did not value the removal of trees to support grassland birds.

The long-time monitor in the area (Alan Anderson) had never found birds in those trees. Since the restoration started he has counted a large increase in grassland species. Due to the political sensitivities, some aspects of the restoration may be delayed.

## **9. Important Bird Areas program – Steve Packard**

The Audubon office hopes to get more staffing support this fall for IBAs so that more outreach can be done to publicize the designations.

## **10. Wild Things conference – Steve Packard**

The event will be held in February or March. The organizers are working on some high profile speakers before setting a date.

### **11. Swainson's Hawks – Eric Secker**

Bob and Anita Morgan have been coordinating the search program for hawks in Kane County. The first round of monitoring is finished; they are now looking for juveniles. Four new nesting pairs plus the Huntley Mall birds have been located. (That mall nest has been taken over by Great Horned Owls but it is believed the hawks are nearby.)

Although the nests are in rural areas now, the entire area is under threat of development.

### **12. Cats Indoors – Donnie Dann**

ABC has a major, extensive campaign that has been implemented by several communities. To do an effective campaign, a part-time person is required. Donnie and Judy Pollock are pursuing a grant to support a local part-time employee; it looks good.

Bob Fisher: In 2005 the Illinois legislature passed and the governor signed legislation that holds people harmless if they run a TNR program in Illinois

## **CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES**

### **13. Lake Calumet activities - Walter Marcisz**

Statement by Walter Marcisz

HEGEWISCH MARSH- Habitat & Grant Status

After a number of severe drought years, the deep marsh habitat at Hegewisch Marsh is closing up -vegetation is now thoroughly choking out the center basin. If the center basin closes up completely, Hegewisch Marsh will no longer be suitable nesting habitat for Yellow-headed Blackbirds and other deep marsh species. Yellow-headed Blackbirds are hanging on by a thread in the Calumet region -1 territorial male at Hegewisch Marsh, 2 territorial males at Eggers Woods, 1 territorial male at Burnham Prairie.

I have been assured by Nicole Kamins of the Chicago Dept. of Environment that money from the National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant will be used to clear out some of the vegetation that is choking out the marsh by digging out potholes into the marsh. This work will be done this coming fall/winter. Details are not yet available for a water control structure for Hegewisch Marsh, but plans & specs will be reviewed this year, and funding should be available for the structure before the next breeding season.

INDIAN RIDGE MARSH- Habitat Status

The water control structure at Indian Ridge Marsh is still being maintained by the Chicago DOE, and the Black-crowned Night-Herons & Great Egrets that nest there appear to be nesting successfully this year (last year they had a failed nesting season due to drought/predation). At least one pair of Little Blue Herons is also nesting at Indian Ridge this year.

POWDERHORN MARSH.- Habitat Status, IL Nature Preserve approval

The multiple releases of Purple Loosestrife-eating Galerucella beetles at Powderhorn Marsh have made a huge difference. The interdunal marshes at Powderhorn which were virtually 100% clogged with loosestrife ten years ago have now been reclaimed by virtually 100% cattails. A good success story!

Powderhorn Marsh, along with 2 other Calumet area preserves (Green Lake Savannah & Calumet City Prairie) was approved for IL Nature Preserve Status at the May 2006 FPDCC board meeting. Following approval, the IL Nature Preserves Commission will review and hopefully formally dedicate these sites as Illinois Nature Preserves (IL Nature Preserves enjoy the highest level of protection a natural area can receive in IL).

LAKE CALUMET- Access issues

On April 25, 2006, Rick Byant, a representative of Congressman Jesse Jackson Jr.'s office,

convened a meeting with representatives of IL International Port District, the Calumet Corridor Vision, and Southeast Environmental Task Force. Bryant asked that all parties present state their positions on the status of Lake Calumet. No agreements were reached, but based on the IL International Port District's stated position, access to Lake Calumet will be even more severely restricted in the future.

#### **14. O'Hare Ponds – Donald Dann**

The expansion of the airport requires that the wetlands being mitigated. Donnie has written to Joe Roth (Corlands) with specific details on what the new habitat should include.

Steve Packard pointed out that there are people involved in the mitigation work who are only concerned about water; it is important that we continue to push for bird habitat.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

#### **15. Rollins Savanna – Donnie Dann**

Seven years ago this was all corn fields; now it is spectacular bird site. The Lake County Forest Preserve wants to create a checklist of birds seen. Everyone is urged to report their sightings.

#### **16. Almond Marsh – Annette Prince**

The proposal to widen Route 120 has it right up against the marsh. [www.120now.com](http://www.120now.com) is the site to promote the expansion.

Donnie has already written a letter in support of the local conservationists' efforts.

#### **17. Rehab facility at Northerly Island – Glenn Gabanski**

BCN sent a \$200 donation.

Annette Prince added that the facility was open during spring migration for CBCM use; it is expected that it will be open for more services once funding is available. Nonetheless, it is a tremendous help to the monitoring program.

#### **18. Miscellaneous News**

Donnie Dann - A new birding organization is being formed in DeKalb County.

Donnie – The American Bird Conservancy is now selling regular US Postage as a fundraiser. Order stamps at [www.abcbirds.org](http://www.abcbirds.org).

Bob Fisher – Buy a duck stamp at the post office. Birders need to be more visible in the duck stamp program. The number of pot holes is increasing significantly; likewise there has been an increase ducks.

The fall meeting of BCN will be on Oct 14th at Donnie's house – 60 Ravinoaks Lane, Highland Park, 60035.

The meeting adjourned at 3:34.

Submitted by  
Randi Doeker  
Secretary