

BCN QUARTERLY MEETING
DRAFT MINUTES
 Saturday, Oct. 14, 2006

Attendees:

Lee Ramsey	Audubon-Chicago Reg.		Sigrid Schmidt	COS		Wayne Svoboda	Ft. Dearborn
Randi Doeker	Birds & Bldgs		Chris Williamson	COS		George Sullivan	Ft. Dearborn
Jerry Garden	CAS		Glenn Gabanski	DBC		Mary Anne Harrison	IAS
Chris VanWassenhove	CAS		Eric Secker	DBC		Al Weissenbach	IAS
Bobby Asher	CAS		Bob Fisher	DBC		Donnie Dann	TNC
Walter Marcisz	COS		Libby Hill	ENSBC		Dave Johnson	WBC

President Donnie Dann called the meeting to order at 1:06pm. At 1:10 a quorum was established.

Special Guest Presentation: Brad Semel, IDNR, on the state of endangered terns in Northern Illinois.

ADMINISTRATIVE

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

2. Treasurer's report - Glenn Gabanski

To avoid paying any taxes this fiscal year, we have about \$400 to donate to an outside group. After discussion of various options (see Excom meeting minutes, Sept. 2006), it was agreed to donate the funds to the IDNR tern project.

The Treasurer distributed an updated financial report; approved on a voice vote. We received an IRS refund check of \$321 for our 2004 taxes. This closes the books on our back taxes. Ultimately it cost us \$2100 for the taxes and accounting services to be up-to-date.

BCN purchased a CD to earn interest on \$2500.

PROJECTS/INITIATIVES

1. Bird Agenda – Randi Doeker

At a press event on October 14th Mayor Daley formally announced the Chicago Agenda, a document that recommends actions in three areas: habitat, hazards and nuisance species.

2. Gull depredation – Walter Marcisz

We discussed much of this at the July meeting; see those minutes. Chicago DOE has formally asked Walter for help identifying landowners of places gulls nest to support their egg depredation program. (Legally only the land owners can remove the eggs.)

Walter declined to participate in this particular program but he did indicate that he would help find alternatives. No response has been received. Walter also reported that CAS President Joe Lill said that CAS had not been contacted about this by DOE. COS reports the same.

Donnie will contact US FWS regarding permits that would be required. Walter will request of DOE that they advise the BCN members if action is taken.

3. Border collie status – Donnie Dann

As of yesterday (Friday), a Chicago Park District official said that the final report is not complete. (See July 2006 minutes for more details.)

4. Monitoring and census update – Lee Ramsey

No news, which is good. We get data on a regular basis; the trends analysis has been set up. But we still need more monitors. Workshops will be held when requested (rather than on a scheduled basis).

Glenn Gabanski and Judy Pollock have submitted an application to Chicago Wilderness for a grant to improve and enhance the trends database.

5. Trends presentation to Save the Dunes Council – submitted by Donna Gonzalez

Save the Dunes Council Board Member, Donna Gonzalez, organized and with the monetary assistance of the Dunes-Calumet Audubon Chapter (currently on hiatus) hosted a presentation by the Bird Conservation Network titled *Bird Population Trends Analysis Program*, targeted toward an audience of bird monitors and land managers.

It was presented at the ideal location of Gibson Woods Nature Center, 6201 Parrish Avenue, Hammond, IN, on the gorgeous day of Saturday, September 9, 2006

The group started out with a morning bird walk and all enjoyed a birders breakfast.

Donnie Dann excellently presented the Bird Population Trends Analysis Program PowerPoint presentation. All in attendance were impressed with the presentation. It is interesting, engaging and modest in length, which allowed audience participation with questions asked and answered by Mr. Dann.

Following the presentation, Mr. Dann had to leave, and the group then had the opportunity to go “on-line” and explored the e-Bird site and completed “a walk through” of the listing process - by putting our day’s bird sightings at Gibson Woods on the e-Bird site. This was entertaining and most assuredly has encouraged participants to go “on-line” and start their own account with e-Bird. Twenty people were in attendance for the walk and program, or parts there of.

I would like to thank the BCN for their PowerPoint presentation and encourage all organizations to present it to a gathering in their clubs and make it available to the public, using the neighborhood libraries – which would probably have access to a PowerPoint machine.

6. Generating more bird friendly habitat – George Sullivan

Handout – Greengrid Extensive Green Roof System – www.greengridroofs.com

The City of Chicago is rewriting the building code regarding roofs; we need to be involved; this ties directly into the Bird Agenda.

7. Wild Things Conference

March 3 at Northeastern IL University

Chris Williamson volunteered to coordinate the birding presentations, such as a basic ID class for land stewards.

8. Daley Plaza rooftop monitoring of wind turbines – Glenn Gabanski

There is a meeting of related parties on Monday being held by DOE. Sigrid will report back to the group.

9. Cats Indoors – Donnie Dann

Donnie and Judy Pollock will be sending a grant application to foundations for the purpose of hiring a part time coordinator using the Puget Sound Cats Indoors program as a model.

10. Wings without Borders conference – Donnie Dann
Organized by the North American Ornithological Council - <http://www.naoc2006.org/>
2000 attendees; 600 presentations – highly recommended

CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES

1. Lake Calumet – submitted by Walter Marcisz

ACCESS TO MWRDGC CALUMET WATER TREATMENT PLANT

In 2006 new leadership at the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRDGC) began a process of loosening access restrictions to their facilities. The MWRDGC Calumet Water Treatment Plant located at 400 E. 130th St. in Chicago has long been considered to be one of the best spots for migrant shorebirds in the Chicago area. Unfortunately, the Plant has essentially been closed to birders since 9/11, but in 2006 the Plant was reopened to birders, largely due to negotiations with the MWRDGC by Libby Hill of the Evanston-North Shore Bird Club (ENSBC). Although late in the season, an ENSBC pilot field trip to the Calumet plant on September 16, 2006 produced good numbers of twelve shorebird species. In order to access the Calumet Plant, birders must necessarily follow MWRDGC procedures: birding groups must contact the MWRDGC 30 days prior to the proposed visit, and all group members must fill out and mail in release forms provided by MWRDGC.

(Libby Hill made a point of crediting the new MWRD superintendent for opening the facilities to the public.)

HEGEWISCH MARSH- Habitat & Grant Status

The Chicago Department of Environment (CDOE) will hold a Hegewisch Marsh Update meeting at 6:30pm on Monday October 23, 2006 at the Hegewisch Library (3048 E. 130th St., Chicago). The final stage of the Hegewisch Marsh conceptual plan (100% Site Plan) has been reached and will be discussed at the meeting. The meeting is open to the general public.

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 provide suitable nesting habitat for Yellow-headed Blackbirds and other deep marsh species. Funds from the National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant will be used to clear out "choking" vegetation and otherwise rehabilitate Hegewisch Marsh in the upcoming months. Per Nicole Kamins of the CDOE, bidding for contractors will begin on December 1, 2006, and the actual Hegewisch Marsh rehabilitation work will begin in early January, 2007. Per U.S. Fish & Wildlife, in order to manage the deep marsh habitat, using muskrats to manage the vegetation/open water ratio is preferable to digging potholes as previously planned.

LITTLE CALUMET BALD EAGLE HABITAT- Land donation

On July 29, 2006 a press conference was held to announce the donation of 16 acres of land along the Little Calumet River to the City of Chicago by Mittal Steel for Bald Eagle nesting habitat. This parcel of land has been a seasonal home to a pair of Bald Eagles which have built a nest and maintained a territory there for the past three years. The land will be transferred to the Forest Preserve District of Cook County, and under Chicago's Nature and Wildlife Plan, will become part of the Calumet Open Space Reserve. As a footnote, over the years Mittal Steel and its predecessors on a number of occasions have attempted to swap this very land parcel for a tract of protected land at nearby Whistler Woods Forest Preserve. Fortunately, none of these potentially precedent-setting land swap proposals ever got off the ground, and instead Mittal Steel has now ended up donating the land as eagle habitat.

Hegewisch marsh plan

2. Montrose update – Donnie for Leslie Borns

Donnie attended the site tour that Leslie gave to park and public officials. The attendees were very impressed.

OTHER BUSINESS

1. How BCN represents the coalition – Bob Fisher

Our bylaws are not explicit about the role of BCN Excom. This will be discussed at the January meeting.

2. Communications – Bob Fisher

Bob Fisher will be creating a quarterly online newsletter starting in early 2007.

Chris Williamson talked about the need for a listserv that is limited to BCN members so we can talk about action items without giving away our plans to public officials who are BCNnet participants. Eric will look at setting one up.

Eric Secker is working on updating the webpage and improving the links.

3. Olympics – Chris Van Wasserhove

Chris V. described the official plan that covers the north end of Washington Park and Northerly Island. Randi explained that local Washington Park activists want the south-end Seven Hills nature area to be turned into festival grounds and are pushing for that to be part of the Olympics plan.

Chris W. talked about the benefits of the USX site, which is also supported by Friends of the Park and Openlands Project. George Sullivan pointed out that Skidmore Owings Merrill has a citizens group.

We know of no activity by Chicago Wilderness on this. Donnie will contact TNC and Openlands. Randi will call a former SOM employee for info.

Sigrid Schmidt, George Sullivan, Chris Williamson and Bobbi Asher will be a committee to follow this issue.

4. Deer Culling at North Park Village – Wayne Svoboda

Wayne is a steward at NPV. The deer population has exploded to about 5 times the manageable population. The park district supports culling efforts. The local Alderman has stopped all efforts because of the upcoming election. Wayne would like a letter of support from BCN.

It was agreed that the individual clubs will check back for the January meeting. DBC and TNC already have a position in support of culling.

Libby explained her personal experience having to explain to people in Perkins Woods that deer do damage. Citizens are oblivious to the damage being done and only see "Bambi" in the woods.

The group that has formed to fight any culling is the Urban Wildlife Coalition.

5. Nominating chairman appointment

Donnie has nominated Judy Pollock to head the nomination of the 2007 slate.

6. Other

Bob Fisher: ABC is publishing a review of the top 20 most threatened bird habitats in the US. Join ABC to get the full report.

Randi Doeker: The US FWS biologists are now making a point at conferences to tell birders/conservationists that the term "migratory bird flyway" only references the administrative areas for waterfowl. The term used to describe full avian migration is "broadfront migration" for an area from the Rockies to the Atlantic Ocean.

7. The **winter meeting** will be Saturday, January 27th, at the Garfield Park Conservatory, 300 N. Central Park Avenue, Chicago. (This is not the field house building we last used in Garfield Park; this is the Conservatory on the north side of the El tracks.)

The meeting adjourned at 4:02.

Submitted by
Randi Doeker
Secretary