

## BCN Quarterly Meeting - Minutes

Saturday, Jan. 27, 2007

Attendees:

Joan Bruchman, **IOS**; Suzanne Checchia, **ENSBC**; Lee Ramsey, **Audubon, Chi. Region**; Donna Gonzales, **Save the Dunes**; Wayne Svaboda, **Ft. Dearborn**; Jean Sodeman, **Lake/Cook Audubon**; Gail Taxy, **Lake/Cook Audubon**; Eric Secker, **DBC**; Sigrid Schmidt, **COS**; Bob Fisher, **DBC**; Glenn Gabanski, **DBC**; Chris Van Wassenhove, **CAS**; Bobbie Asher, **CAS**; Annette Prince, **CBCM**; Dick Riner, **TCAS**; Al Thomas, **TCAS**; Judy Pollock, **Audubon**, Donnie Dann, **TNC**

President Donnie Dann called the meeting to order at 1:00pm. A quorum was established.

Donnie called on Judy Pollock, Chairman of the nominating committee, to present the officer nominees.

The nominees, Dick Riner, **President**; Joan Bruchman **Vice-president**; Mary Lou Mellon, **Secretary**; Glenn Gabanski, **Treasurer**; were presented and approved unanimously by voice vote.

New President, Dick Riner, took over and presented his vision of expanding membership in BCN and his goal to stimulate grassroots awareness of the organization. Dick asked that BCN members send local newspaper contacts to him to help him in contacting the right people to get BCN more publicity.

Sigrid Schmidt asked that BCN be sure to include representation from COS in any meetings and matters concerning Chicago. She was assured by the new board that this would be the case.

Susan Checchia presented a gift to each of the outgoing board members, and all former board members who were present, to express our thanks for their hard work & dedication to BCN. Those present receiving the gift were Donnie Dann, Bob Fisher, and Judy Pollock. For those not present, Randi Doeker, Mary Anne Harrison, and Terry Schilling, their gift will be mailed to them.

### Administrative

**1. Meeting Minutes:** Oct. 14, 2006 minutes were approved by voice vote and are posted on website at [www.bcnbirds.org](http://www.bcnbirds.org)

**2. Treasurer's Report** – Glenn Gabanski

All past income tax issues have been resolved. No income tax is owed for 2006.

Treasurer distributed financial report as of 1/27/07 and the 2007 proposed budget. Both were approved by voice vote.

\$75.00 is expected to be earned on CD purchased in 2006.

## **Projects/Initiatives**

### **1. Bird Agenda – Glenn Gabanski**

Quarterly meetings to continue and include discussions on new construction hazards to birds, bird collision data and US FW info on wind turbine hazards.

Donnie Dann- Meeting with Joyce Coffee; Lakefront, river ways & Lake Calumet area to be off limits to wind turbines.

Judy Pollock- Will work with city to develop Habitat Guide for land owners, i.e. golf courses, water treatment plants, park districts, private land owners, to create more bird friendly habitat.

Glenn Gabanski – Osprey nesting platforms and kestrel boxes have been installed in some city parks.

Bob Fisher – Will work with Mike Ward to research roof nesting material to be installed to attract nighthawks.

### **2. Gull Depredation – Glenn Gabanski**

Chicago DOE is planning nest removal, and/or coating eggs with oil, on Gull Island & pier south of Navy Pier.

CPD considered 2006 collie beach patrol a success. Not determined if collie patrol program will continue in 2007.

Removal of Monk Parakeet nests was raised. BCN to discuss what position to take at next BCN meeting.

### **3. How BCN represents the coalition – Bob Fisher**

Bob Fisher proposed the following draft policy. BCN reps to review proposed representation policy with their own organizations and to be prepared to vote to approve, or not to approve, at the next BCN meeting.

## **Policy and practice for how BCN and the BCN ExComm should represent the coalition and its members**

**The presumption in forming the BCN coalition: Member groups wishing to be part of BCN support the coalition's objectives as expressed in BCN's bylaws. Coalition members elect officers who are charged with the responsibility to speak out on behalf of the coalition on issues and policies relating to birds and bird conservation, as expressed in Sections 3B & 3D of the BCN bylaws:**

Section 3. The objectives of BCN are:

A. To promote public awareness, knowledge, appreciation and enjoyment of birds, and other wildlife and wildlife habitat.

- B. To be a strong and influential voice in environmental affairs in the Chicago metropolitan region.
- C. To propose and support public and private programs, which seek to protect, restore, and enhance the natural environment, and the conservation of native bird populations.
- D. To inform the membership and the general public of specific threats to birds, and other wildlife and wildlife habitat, and to recommend appropriate action.
- E. To support the accumulation and maintenance of long-term records and other information on Illinois birds and their habitats, to be used as an aid to their perpetuation and as an indicator of environmental quality.
- F. To provide quality outdoor field experiences for members and the public.

**Goal of the proposed policy: Eliminate contention and divisiveness that occasionally arises when the ExComm ‘speaks for’ the entire coalition in: Meetings with other organizations, public bodies (forest preserve districts and the like). Public forums where public opinion is being sought. Sign-on letters.**

**Policy premise: On almost all occasions, having ‘BCN’ express support or opposition to an action or policy, speaking for all its member groups, is not controversial. Examples might be, supporting increased spending for bird conservation, opposing feral cat colonies, etc. In such instances, it’s probably true that all coalition member groups would readily concur in the position being expressed, and fully support their group being invoked as a supporter of the position. Sign on letters are the most obvious situation where general support can usually be assumed.**

**Dealing with the exceptions: The most recent example of an exception might be wind energy and turbines vs. birds. One or more groups within the coalition may be opposed to categorical support for wind turbine power generation. In this case, the ‘devil is in the details’. ExComm members are then charged with the responsibility to strategize with the group or groups uncomfortable with those details, and make sure those concerns are fully expressed in any public or private policy statement emanating from BCN.**

**Should one or more member groups within the coalition be totally opposed to a specific policy statement/position, then the officers should poll all members to make sure a general consensus exists, supporting that policy or position. Group(s) in opposition should be noted when the policy statement is made, i.e., BCN supports (opposes) position X, but note that our member group Y does not agree with the consensus.**

**In a time sensitive situation (BCN needs to respond with the coalition’s position or belief on very short notice), coalition members necessarily delegate their ‘vote’ to the elected BCN officers who may be speaking or writing on behalf of the coalition. These time sensitive situations usually do not allow a member group to go back to their own board or members for approval.**

#### **4. Monitoring & census updates – Lee Ramsey**

Cornell to upload new machine to make entering data easier.

Workshops will be held on a request basis only. Send requests for workshops to Lee to schedule.

More bird song & call CD's are needed for training of monitors. Lee will check with Morton Arboretum for extras before ordering from Cornell.

Lunch for monitors to will be held in 2007. Dick Riner to organize.

#### **6. Training needs – Judy Pollock**

Need to create a formal training program for monitors & land stewards on how to approach landowners & managers with suggestions on how to improve their habitat for birds.

Program could be used as presentations at bird clubs, park district & city habitat meetings.

Lee Ramsey to head up this project.

#### **7. Wild Things conference – Judy Pollock**

Registration forms were passed out for distribution to rep's groups.

Rooms will be reserved for groups to meet for discussion between sessions.

BCN to have display table if materials can be collected before event. Volunteers will be needed to man the table.

#### **8. Hiring of cats coordinator – Donnie Dann**

Grant not yet confirmed. Coordinator not yet hired.

#### **9. Evanston Lake Front meetings – Judy Pollock**

Judy & Suzanne Checchia attended the meeting and agreed that others attending wanted a more natural & beautiful lakefront.

#### **10a. Updating BCN PowerPoint regional breeding bird population trends presentation - Bob Fisher, Eric Secker**

Bob revised the existing ppt (BCN bird census data 1.0) by removing the slides which covered navigating the BCN eBird website. This updated version, 1.1, contains only the images, charts, etc. which pertain to the statistical analysis of the bird monitoring data. That makes it easier for a BCN speaker to give a talk at a club or organization about the monitoring data analysis and conclusions.

A BCN eBird website navigation (1.0) PowerPoint now exists as a stand alone PowerPoint which can be used to train monitors on data entry. This training tool probably needs a further update sometime soon.

Eric produced a further revision (2.0) of the bird census data analysis PowerPoint that he will be presenting at an upcoming CAS meeting. Donnie and Bob are giving the 1.1 presentation to several groups in the near future. Bob and Eric will collaborate on merging the best features of 1.1 and 2.0 for use when Round 2 of the census monitoring data is complete.

**10b. The latest developments on the BCN bird monitoring database.**

Cornell has produced conversion utilities that make it simpler to incorporate bird census data from various formats. Data from DuPage and Lake Counties, Midewin and Lake Renwick (Will County) are now being incorporated into the database using these utilities. Once these datasets are in, the database size increases substantially, making it possible to produce an improved statistical analysis of our region's breeding bird population trends. Judy Pollock did point out that since the data is not derived from a random, statistically valid sampling protocol, scientists and professionals might assert that the statistical conclusions on population trends are skewed.

**10c. Grant progress –Judy Pollock**

Judy feels confident our grant request will be approved to give us the resources to improve the reliability of the trends analysis.

**11. Bird Blitz 2007 – Judy Pollock**

Goal is to count all Shrubland birds in the Chicago area.

Once compiled, all info will be sent out to bird clubs.

Count is on the mornings of 6/8 through 6/18.

Lunch will be held for monitors after counting on June 9. Monitoring results will be turned in then.

Judy passed out “Bird monitoring Opportunities 2007” flyer to be passed out at bird club meetings.

Donnie brought up other monitoring opportunities; Breeding Bird Survey, Marsh Bird Survey, Shorebird Survey & Bird Feeder Survey, and others

**12. Shrubland Green Paper – Judy Pollock**

Judy is working on the Green Paper for Shrubland Birds which is supported by ComEd.

**13. Grassland Green Paper – Bob Fisher**

Bob will update after more research.

#### **14. Cook County grassland habitat improvement – Judy Pollock**

Judy & Alan Anderson met with members of Cook County FP to establish priority projects for brush mowing.

Paul Douglas & Poplar Creek FP were selected as priority areas.

#### **15. Wind Turbines – General discussion – Glenn Gabanski, Donnie Dann**

Glenn – Daley Center Turbine Project

Nov. 2006 meeting – IPO cameras to be installed on roof to monitor turbines. Cameras will connect to internet to feed to laptop to download for later viewing.

No progress on installation of turbines since Nov. meeting. Joyce Coffee to look into progress.

Donnie – Spoke with Al Manville of Neotropic Bird Division of US FW. Al is expert on wind turbines and his research states that except for Altamont Pass in California, wind turbines are not as major of a problem to birds as previously thought. See website for further info. <http://www.nationalwind.org/>

Bob Fisher suggested scheduling a regional meeting for Al Manville to speak to all BCN members.

### **Campaign Activities**

#### **1. Lake Calumet activities – Donnie Dann for Walter Marcisz**

LAKE CALUMET CAMPAIGN REPORT/ABSTRACT

**Submitted by Walter Marcisz, 1-7-07**

##### **HEGEWISCH MARSH UPDATE-**

The Chicago Department of Environment (CDOE) will begin physical rehabilitation work of Hegewisch Marsh in January, 2007. The firm Conservation Design Forum has been hired to carry out the work, which is designed to enhance the 100-acre parcel owned by the City. Activities will include invasive species control, prescribed burning, trail grading, removal of dumped debris, and planting of native seeds, shrubs, & trees.

One of the first activities will be establishment of a rehabilitation entrance off Torrence Avenue north of 134th Street. Equipment will move in and out of this area. A gate will be installed to prevent fly dumpers from accessing the site. A prescribed burn to control invasives and encourage growth of native species will occur sometime between February 1st and April 1st. The CDOE will coordinate with neighbors and other appropriate parties for this work. Work will continue through December, 2008. CDOE will be identifying opportunities for volunteer stewards of all ages to get involved.

A "**Calumet Projects Update**" meeting sponsored by CDOE will be held at the Hegewisch Library (3048 E. 130th St., Chicago, IL) at **6:30pm on February 26, 2007**. Updates on what's happening at Hegewisch Marsh, Van Vlissingen Prairie, Heron Pond, Indian Ridge Marsh, Hyde Lake Wetlands, and Big Marsh will be presented. Information on the Calumet Area Hydrologic Master Plan and the Calumet Ecotox Protocol will also be provided at the meeting.

Copy of letter to Alderman Pope concerning transfer of Lake Calumet western shore to FP. Copy of letter was sent to Mayor Daley.

**Submitted by Walter Marcisz**

January 28, 2007  
The Honorable John Pope  
3522 East 106th Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60617

Re: Proposed transfer of the western shore of Lake Calumet  
to the Forest Preserve District of Cook County

Dear Alderman Pope:

I am writing on behalf of the Bird Conservation Network (BCN) in support of the proposed transfer of the western shore of Lake Calumet from the Illinois International Port District to the Forest Preserve District of Cook County. BCN, a coalition of twenty bird clubs and birding organizations from the Greater Chicago area, advocates for the protection, perpetuation, and appreciation of the native bird life of the Chicago region. We strongly urge your support for the proposed land transfer, both for the permanent protection it will provide for the Lake's western shore & it's wildlife, and for the improved public access it will provide.

From a personal perspective, as a 10th Ward resident and local birder, I have visited the western shore of Lake Calumet on numerous occasions during past years (before public access was completely closed off) and always found it to provide excellent habitat for a diverse array of native bird species including pelicans, herons, egrets, ducks, swans, shorebirds, hawks, and owls. Peregrine Falcons occur year-round on the western shore, and Bald Eagles are regularly found feeding there during the winter months.

The transfer of the western shore to the Forest Preserve District of Cook County will provide an excellent opportunity to better manage and protect natural areas adjacent to the lake, as well as allow better access to Lake Calumet for recreational purposes. BCN understands that the Forest Preserve District is amenable to owning and managing the property, and we believe this opportunity should be taken advantage of while it exists. We strongly urge your support for the proposed land transfer.

Sincerely,  
Walter J. Marcisz  
Bird Conservation Network representative to  
Lake Calumet Vision Committee

## **Other Business**

### **1. Agent action plan – Gail Taxy**

Update of positive involvement of members of Lake/Cook Audubon.

Gail asked for a published list of contact people to make it easier to promote work of BCN.

### **2. Website issues - <http://www.bcnbirds.org/> – Eric Secker**

Eric to update website to contain committee head information.

Website has been redesigned with new departments. News letter is still in the works.

### **3. 2016 Olympics & Washington Park – Donnie Dann**

Mayor badly wants the Olympics. City is sensitive to the impact of the Olympics on bird habitat.

Go to <http://www.chicago2016.org> for info on planned event sites.

**4. TNC Migrant Stopover Study** – Judy Pollock

Audubon partnering with birders with the best data to identify habitat with the most stopover migrating birds.

Over the next month, workshop meetings will be held to identify critical habitat for migrating birds.

**5. Gull Frolic – 2/11/07**

The event was explained and all were encouraged to attend.

**6. BCN newsletter** – Bob Fisher

In process of development. Will be sent electronically. Will focus on concerns of all BCN members.

Will be sent to all BCN reps who can then add members of their group.

**7. Wooded Isle** – Donnie Dann/BCN Response to Trib items.

Due to recent trimming & removal of trees & bushes, bird population will diminish at first but will be better in the long run.

**8. BCA meetings in D.C.** – Bob Fisher

For future discussion. Should BCN provide funds for members to travel to national meetings held outside of Chicago?

**9. FPDCC anti-TNR** – Donnie Dann

Voice vote taken. Reps unanimously agreed for BCN to support FPDCC anti-TNR policy.

**10. Other business** -Donna Gonzales

Great Lakes Day, March 6 & 7, 2007

The Healing Our Waters Coalition may still have some scholarship money available and may offer up to \$225 for travel assistance, one meal and lodging. See [www.glc.org](http://www.glc.org) for more information about Great Lakes Day 2007.

Contact Pam Goddard <[goddardp@nwf.org](mailto:goddardp@nwf.org)> to get more details.

**11. Next meeting – 4/7/07** in the old terminal building at **Northerly Island**

**12.** Meeting adjourned at 4:00pm

Minutes submitted by,

Joan Bruchman

Vice-president