

**BCN Quarterly Meeting—Minutes**  
**April 7, 2007**

Attendees:

Leslie Borns, **at large**; Chris Van Wassenhove, **CAS**; Bobbi Asher, **CAS**; Matthew Myer, **CAS**; Annette Prince, **CBCM**; Mary Lou Mellon, **CBCM**; Teri Radke, **CBCM**; Christine Williamson, **COS**; Glenn Gabanski **DBC**; Bob Fisher, **DBC**; Eric Secker, **DBC**; Suzanne Checchia, **ENSBC**; Wayne Svoboda, **Ft. Dearborn**; Mary Anne Harrison, **IAS**; Geoff Williamson, **IOS**; Joan Bruchman, **IOS**; Gail Taxy, **Lake-Cook Audubon**; Jean Sodemann, **Lake-Cook Audubon**; Kim Ramirez, **Midewin Alliance**; Dick Riner, **Thorn Creek Audubon**; Donnie Dann, **TNC**; Judy Pollock, **Audubon**; Lee Ramsey, **Audubon, Chicago Region**

President Dick Riner called the meeting to order at 1:00pm.

Dick welcomed new member club representative Diane Rosenberg of Lake County Audubon and new reps Kim Ramirez of Midewin Tallgrass Prairie Alliance and Teri Radke of Chicago Bird Collision Monitors.

**Administrative**

1. **Meeting Minutes:** The Jan. 27, 2007, minutes were approved by voice vote and are posted on the BCN website at [www.bcnbirds.org](http://www.bcnbirds.org)
2. **Treasurer's Report**—Glenn Gabanski  
Dues have been paid by most clubs. Glenn will follow up with those who haven't paid.

The financial report as of 4/6/07 was distributed.

Glenn reports that we have about \$200 available that should be donated before the end of the year, so we do not have taxable income. The CD that was purchased in 2006, which earned \$75 interest is expected to roll over this month and should produce another \$75 interest.

**Projects / Initiatives**

- 1, **Chicago Wilderness Trust Grant, Oversight Committee (OC)**—Glenn  
On April 2, 2007, BCN signed the contract with CW so the approximately \$10,000.00 grant is now official. Prior to this the Oversight Committee (comprised of Judy Pollock, Dick Riner, Lee Ramsey, Sigrid Schmidt and chaired by Glenn Gabanski) had two planning sessions and a conference call with some of the science advisors to develop the job descriptions for the contacts we will offer to do the GIS work, expand the database and do the statistical analysis, and integrate the results into the web site. The job descriptions were then circulated to various individuals and email lists.

Currently the OC is negotiating with Mike Ward at INHS for the GIS work and is awaiting resumes for the other two positions. It expects to review the resumes and finalize the three contracts in the next weeks.

**3. Midewin Reciprocal Membership—Dick Riner**

The three BCN representatives from Midewin had indicated that they were unable to attend BCN meetings, so Dick contacted a new Midewin volunteer and also a current Bartel Grassland volunteer, Kim Ramirez. She agreed to represent Midewin at BCN. Dick also contacted Jerry Heinrich, president of the Midewin Tallgrass Prairie Alliance and discussed a reciprocal membership agreement. Dick will attend MTPA meetings as a representative of BCN.

**4. Recreational Liability Protection, Openlands—Donnie Dann**

TNC is supporting a bill in the state legislature to support no liability for property owners who allow people to go on their lands for recreational purposes. SB333 (sponsored by Senator John Cullerton) extends liability coverage to individuals who allow the public to use their land for recreational purposes and defines recreational broadly - as opposed to listing specific activities.

**5. Lake County Audubon membership--Glenn moved that Lake County**

Audubon be elected to membership in BCN and the movement was seconded. By voice vote Lake County Audubon was accepted, with Diane Rosenberg to be the representative. Lake County is part of National Audubon. It has about 40 active local members, field trips, monthly meetings at the Libertyville Town Hall on the first Monday of the month and is endeavoring to establish IBAs.

**6. Cats Indoors—Donnie**

We have applied for two grants to hire a part-time person to improve outreach for the ABC Cats Indoors Program. The first grant application has been denied, but we are still hopeful that we will get funds for this project. Chris Williamson suggested that animal shelters might be enlisted. Many already have a requirement written into their adoption agreements that adopted-out cats not be allowed to go outside. We also want to block Trap Neuter Release advocates from moving forward and feral cat colony supporters as well. Chris offered to talk to PAWS.

**7. Cook County Board Separation--Dick**

Dick attended an Openlands and Friends of the Forest Preserve meeting. FFP wants to sue for the funds taken from the forest preserve budget for Cook County. The BCN Executive Committee (ExCom) believes that a more realistic approach is to separate the Cook County Board from the Cook County Forest Preserve Board. Separation is doable, but would be a huge undertaking (DuPage County took 10 years to accomplish this). Chris Williamson reported that Sierra Club has taken a sidelines position—friendly and involved—which she recommends for BCN.

**8. Birding Calendar—Joan Bruchman**

The calendar is a valuable service to the birding community that BCN would like to continue. Jenny Vogt of IOS has agreed to assume this responsibility and Joan has been in contact with her and will work with her. Links from each organization to the calendar would be best, although a free-standing website is probably impractical. Sierra Club has a “self-entering” calendar, but this is thought to be very difficult to set up. Joan will pursue all options with Jenny and will attempt to do this in a timely manner, as migration is upon us.

**9. Shrubland Breeding Bird Blitz and more—Judy Pollock**

This year’s Shrubland Breeding Bird Blitz is between June 8 and 18th and especially on June 9. Judy would like for this to become an annual event along the line of spring bird counts. Last year’s results are posted at [www.habitatproject.org](http://www.habitatproject.org). Flyers are available to send to all the clubs. A compiler is needed for McHenry County. Judy would like suggestions for locations for count sites.

Important Bird Areas—20 new IBAs have been named. Among those in the NE Illinois region are the Chicago Lake Front (Montrose south to the Indiana line), Elsen Hill and the north Des Plaines River channel. Others are Bergman’s Slough, Danada & Herrick Lake (heron rookery), Baker Lake. Bussey Woods was suggested.

**10. Report of Hegewisch Marsh** is not available because Walter Marcisz is in rehab following an accident and subsequent surgery. He is expected to recover.

**11. 2016 Olympics –Glenn**

On March 1 Donnie and I attended a presentation about the 2016 Olympics that provided more detail about the various venues than we saw in the presentation last October. Of particular interest to us was what kind of commitment the Chicago 2016 Committee has to preserving the natural habitats and other green spaces the city has worked so hard to preserve and restore. Following their presentation Donnie had the opportunity to ask the first question and asked just that. Chairman Pat Ryan responded that they have a high commitment to preserving habitats and building green. They also plan to revitalize and improve the green spaces used for venues, particularly at Washington Park.

Here is a list of some of the venues and events that will use important green spaces:

Washington Park: Olympic Stadium

Northerly Island: Beach Volleyball, BMX Cycling, Track Cycling

Lincoln Park: Canoe-Kayak Slalom, Tennis Center

Lake County: Equestrian

Palos Forest Preserve: Mountain Biking

At Northerly Island the plans show the venues being built on the north end, a natural area in the south half, and a temporary bridge connecting McCormick Place to Northerly Island.

The U.S. Olympic Committee will decide between Chicago and Los Angeles on April 14. The International Olympic Committee will choose the host city in October 2009.

Following discussion there was a general feeling that if Chicago is selected, BCN should look for opportunities to continue to voice our concern for the green spaces and to monitor the Olympic Committee's stated commitment to restoring them after the Olympics.

## **12. Bird Conservation Alliance Meeting—Donnie**

The Bird Conservation Alliance (BCA) is a giant national network of organizations with a shared interest in the conservation of wild birds (a national version of BCN). It has twice yearly meetings with the goal of preventing further bird extinctions, to reverse declines in bird populations, and to assure the protection and management of sufficient habitat to effectively conserve populations of the full range of native, wild bird species for the future. <http://www.birdconservationalliance.org/> At the recent meeting that Donnie attended some of the subjects discussed were the impact of global warming on birds; carbon caps are coming; as much as \$7 billion is being proposed for conservation in the new farm bill. This will be an authorized amount, but the money still must be appropriated, not just authorized. The impact of so much corn being planted for ethanol must be considered. If you need the password to navigate the website, contact Donnie.

Donnie has been elected the new secretary of BCA.

Bob Fisher pointed out that individuals can call senators and encourage them to have good conservation attitudes and vote green.

## **13. News Items**

Chris Williamson reported that Partners for Parks and Wildlife (PPW) is developing a Dear Colleague letter for state reps requesting support for Open Space funding for land acquisition of \$100,000,000 a year.

It was noted that BCN is a dues-paying member of PPW.

May 15<sup>th</sup> is Endangered Species Day

Leslie Borns, Site Steward, Montrose Beach Dunes had great news regarding the Montrose Beach Dunes, as explained in the following news announcement.

As the weather turns warm this beautiful spring and the dunes come to life, we have much to celebrate. In late December, the Chicago Park District was awarded a state

C2000 grant for restoration work at Montrose Beach Dunes. The C2000 (Conservation 2000) is a large grant from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources for conservation work that protects, preserves, and enhances biodiversity and Illinois' natural heritage. It is the first time the Park District has received such a grant for one of its natural areas. Applying in 2005 was hard work and required much documentation about the dunes' flora, fauna, and public use. The C2000 is a two-year grant that will cover major invasives work at the dunes (targeting mainly *Salix interior*), updated interpretive signage, a stabilization planting on the upper beach, and a new dune protection fence. We are very excited about the grant and it will make a huge, positive difference in the future health and viability of the dunes.

Another great piece of news is that in mid-March, the Chicago Park District and City approved the addition of one more acre of beach to Montrose Beach Dunes. The new area is just west of the current dune protection fence and includes shoreline and potential panne habitat (a panne is a wet depression in a dune/swale ecosystem; pannes are globally imperiled). Plants have been emerging in the area for the past two years because the sailboat owners started parking their boats there, which prevented the beach grooming machines from raking and destroying vegetation. The boats will be moved west and the new dune protection fence installed farther west to enclose the area. This will increase the size of the dune habitat to ~10.25 acres. It's thrilling and gratifying that on Chicago's largest public beach, despite huge pressures of active recreation and coastal development, the Park District and City have decided to set aside more land for nature. Times certainly are changing!

Our first workday of 2007 will be an Earth Day event on Saturday, April 21, from 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. An enthusiastic group from St. Olaf's University will be participating with us. We will focus on winter debris removal and trash pickup since not much dune vegetation will have emerged by then. The bird watching should be good, so please bring binoculars, field guides, and scopes. Tools, equipment, and refreshments are provided. I'll be in touch with you closer to the date with last minute details. As always, feel free to call (773-334-2281) or email me if you have any questions.

Congratulations and thanks to Leslie for these excellent accomplishments. She said she's going to keep going till she has the whole beach under control!

**14. Next General Meeting is July 21, 2007, at Camp Sagawau.**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:43pm.

Submitted by

Mary Lou Mellon  
Secretary

