



BIRD CONSERVATION NETWORK

www.bcnbirds.org

BCN Quarterly Meeting Minutes
Saturday, April 16, 2011, 1:00pm-4:00PM
Camp Sagawau, Lemont

Attendees: Chris VanWassenhove, Carolyn Marsh, CAS; Annette Prince, Mary Lou Mellon, CBCM; Sigrid Schmidt, Christine Williamson, Nancy Tikalsky, COS; Bob Fisher, Linda Padera, Eric Secker, DBC; Suzanne Checchia, ENSBC; Mary Anne Harrison, IAS; Joan Bruchman, Matthew Cvetas, IOS; Valerie Lewis, Jean Sodemann, Lake-Cook; Judy Pollock, Lee Ramsey, NAS-CR; Donnie Dann, TNC; Lee Witkowski, WCA; Dawn Smith, Individual.

President Joan Bruchman called the meeting to order at 1:00pm. A quorum was established with 20 representatives from 12 member organizations. A welcome was extended to guest Dawn Smith. Introductions were made.

Administrative:

1. The minutes of the January 22, 2011 meeting were approved as amended. They are posted on the BCN website at www.BCNbirds.org, as are the minutes of the March 13, 2011 Executive Committee conference call meeting.
2. Treasurer's report: Joan Bruchman on behalf of Glenn Gabanski.

In 2011, at the time of the meeting, BCN had income of \$1,250 from dues. Expenses totaled \$790.25. \$435 was spent on licenses, \$200 in fees to other organizations, \$65.34 in bank charges and \$89.91 in conference calls.

Currently, BCN has a net income of \$459.75. The checkbook balance on April 11, 2011 was \$4,414.80. \$100 in anticipated income from dues is expected; anticipated expenses are about \$327.

The report was approved.

3. Membership report: Joan Bruchman on behalf of Glenn Gabanski.

According to the report written on April 11, 2011, dues for 2011 have been received from all but one organization and one individual, totaling \$100 in anticipated income. Renewal notices have been sent out. A response from the organization indicated that the decision to renew would likely be made at a board meeting in early April. No response was

received from one individual. All organizations and individuals have until June 30, 2011 to renew before losing voting rights.

4. Update of 501 (c)(3) Application: Joan Bruchman on behalf of Glenn Gabanski.

We received a response from the IRS concerning our 501(c)(3) application and they need more information before making a decision. This is not unusual and was a likely first response from them. There are three items, one major and the other two minor, I need to respond to by May 4. Following is a description of each item and what action I have taken.

Item 1: According to the IRS our Articles of Incorporation do not include PURPOSE and DISSOLUTION clauses needed to be a 501(c)(3) organization. We need to amend the articles using language the IRS provided in their letter (see below). To resolve this I, as registered agent with the state for BCN and with the approval of the Executive Committee, have filed the appropriate form to amend our Articles of Incorporation to include the language the IRS provided. Once the amendments are accepted by the state and returned to me (with the "accepted" stamp on it) I will send a copy to the IRS.

Here are the two clauses we need to include.

PURPOSE clause:

Said organization is organized exclusively for charitable, religious, educational, and scientific purposes, including, for such purposes, the making of distributions to organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code.

DISSOLUTION clause:

Upon the dissolution of the organization, assets shall be distributed for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or shall be distributed to the federal government, or to a state or local government, for a public purpose. Any such assets not disposed of shall be disposed of by a court of competent jurisdiction in the county in which the principal office of the organization is then located, exclusively for such purposes or to such organization or organizations, as said Court shall determine, which are organized and operated exclusively for such purposes.

Item 2: The IRS said our application did not adequately describe how we fulfilled our objective of "providing quality outdoor field experiences for members and the public." Actually I think the application did when I described our monitoring program and the bird blitzes and GBTB days. To resolve this I wrote to the IRS citing these areas of the application and elaborating on them to emphasize how they satisfy the points of IRS concern.

Item 3: The IRS is concerned that our membership in the Bird Conservation Alliance and the Illinois Environmental Council may constitute activity that supports influencing legislation. This could jeopardize our exemption status. At the suggestion of the IRS I have submitted Form 5768, Election by an Eligible Section 501(c)(3) Organization To Make Expenditures to Influence Legislation. Submitting this form allows us to still spend a portion of our money (there are limits) to influence legislation without jeopardizing our 501(c)(3) status.

Proposed amendments to BCN Bylaws:

I believe we ought to also amend our bylaws to include the two clauses required by the IRS for 501(c)(3) status. The IRS does not require this action, but it makes sense to me that our bylaws should reflect our Articles of Incorporation.

I propose we add the purpose clause to what we already have in Article I (NAME, PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES), Section 2. I also propose we delete what we have in Article X (DISSOLUTION) and replacing it with the dissolution clause suggested by the IRS.

After reading through these notes, Joan recommended voting on the amendments during the next quarterly meeting and the discussion was tabled.

5. Bylaws, Rewrite to allow electronic voting - Christine Williamson and Nancy Tikalsky

This topic was also tabled until the next quarterly meeting.

6. BCN Secretary Position - Judy Pollock

Judy Pollock proposed that Matthew Cvetas fill the vacant Secretary position, effective immediately. Bob Fisher seconded the motion, and it was passed by acclamation, with all present voting in favor.

7. Membership Vote, Dawn Smith

Lee Ramsey nominated Dawn Smith for individual membership in BCN at the January meeting. Dawn was asked to step out of the room. After a brief discussion, Bob Fisher moved to accept Smith for membership, Judy Pollock seconded the motion, and it was passed by acclamation, with all present voting in favor.

Speaker

Judy Pollock - Northerly Island Plan Update

Judy presented the concept plan of the Chicago Park District and architect Jeanne Gang, which is designed to transform Chicago's Northerly Island into a state-of-the-art multi-purpose outdoor recreation area. The plan features space for outdoor summer concerts on the north end of the island, innovative shoreline engineering, a fish-spawning area, and a prairie, wetland, and woodlands to support migratory birds.

Other

1. Community Cloud Forest Conservation – Judy

Judy introduced BCN to Rob Cahill's work, Community Cloud Forest Conservation (Cloudforestconservation.org), which strives to alleviate poverty and protect cloud forests in Guatemala through education and reforestation.

Judy suggested that BCN partner with CCFC as a way to energize its own fundraising efforts. Chris Williamson suggested BCN focus its first efforts on local issues. Carolyn Marsh suggested that National Audubon should endorse this individual before BCN considers it. Donnie Dann emphasized that supporting the American Bird Conservancy, who focuses its efforts in many countries in Central and South America, makes more sense than supporting an individual effort in one country. The matter was tabled until next meeting.

Advocacy

1. Status of Trap Neuter Return (TNR), House Bill 840 and S 65 – Donnie Dann and Bob Fisher

Donnie Dann reported that on March 15, 2011, he and Bob Fisher visited Springfield, Illinois, to lobby against S 65 and its companion bill, House Bill 840, whose purpose was to legalize managed cat colonies (Trap, Neuter, Return) throughout Illinois. Upon arrival, they learned that the sponsor of the Senate bill had withdrawn it, so their efforts were concentrated in the House. They met with several legislators including the chief sponsor, Representative Holbrook, who told them he would not be calling his bill.

2. Wind Energy Guidelines – Donnie Dann

Donnie described the pending final regulations on wind energy guidelines and urged everyone, individually and through their clubs, to write letters to the Director of the US Fish & Wildlife Service to make these guidelines MANDATORY. The decision is scheduled to be made on May 19, 2011.

3. Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act – Donnie Dann

The first iteration of the spending plan (HR1) eliminated the State & Tribal Wildlife Grants Program (SWG) and the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA). But thanks to the outpouring of support from organizations such as BCN, some funding was restored to both programs. However, SWG funding levels were cut by \$28M from FY10 levels and are at the lowest they have ever been since its inception.

Here is the final breakdown for some conservation programs:

- State & Tribal Wildlife Grants—\$62M
- North American Wetlands Conservation Act—\$37.5M
- Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation—\$4M
- USFWS Land Acquisition—\$55M
- USFWS Resource Management—\$1.24B

4. BCN Sign-on Letters – Donnie Dann

During this most recent quarter BCN sent sign-on letters of support on these issues:

- Letter to Chicago’s Mayor Daley and Chicago Police Department Superintendent Weis against the proposed Calumet area law enforcement firing range (See Addendum A.)
- The Center for Biological Diversity’s Get the Lead Out Campaign to ban lead shot
- The Bird Conservation Alliance’s call for the Interior Department to Develop a Feral Cat Policy
- Letter opposing cuts to the State Wildlife Grants program
- Support of ABC’s Bird-Smart wind campaign
- We supported the National Wildlife Refuge Association’s proposed 150,000-acre Everglades Headwaters National Wildlife Refuge and Conservation Area
- Letter to US F&W in support of National Wildlife Refuges
- Support of Bird-friendly Design Code in California

5. Camp Sagawa Window Collision – Judy Pollock, Joan Bruchman, Mary Lou Mellon

Bird monitor Mary Bernat, the director of Sagawau Learning Center Mike Konrath, and BCN members Judy Pollock, Joan Bruchman, Mary Lou Mellon and Annette Prince met with Chicago Park District Superintendent Randall at Camp Sagawau to discuss the proliferation of bird window collisions at the newly constructed learning center (opened in 2010). Annette Prince of Chicago Bird Collision Monitors gave a presentation re alternatives to modify the existing bird harmful windows. Randall listened to BCN’s concerns, entertained possible solutions, and was overall receptive to taking action to prevent future collisions.

Randal was invited to attend upcoming BCN meeting, but his schedule would not allow it.

Other

1. Chicago South Pond Black-crowned Night Heron Colony – Chris Williamson

Black-crowned Night Herons have again been observed in good numbers south of the island at South Pond in Lincoln Park, Chicago, a historical nesting location, to the trees above the promenade. It was suggested that BCN contact Adam Schwerner, Director of Chicago Park District's Department of Natural Resources to have protection put in place. Chris volunteered to be the BCN liaison with the Lincoln Park Zoo and CPD on Black-crowned Night-Heron nesting issues at South Pond.

Projects and Initiatives

1. Great Lakes Common Tern Colony Important Bird Area Dedication – Donnie Dann and Judy Pollock

On April 21, 2011, the Great Lakes Naval Center will host a dedication ceremony where Judy Pollock, representing National Audubon Society, will present the Important Bird Area (IBA) designation and plaque to the base's Executive Officer, Commander Sullivan. The Navy has cooperated extensively on this multi-year project to manage the only Common Tern nesting site in Illinois, recently making several improvements to ensure the future success of the colony. Judy, Joan Bruchman, and Donnie Dann will be present for the ceremony.

2. Chicago Lakefront Festival 2012 – Nancy Tikalsky and Bob Fisher

In celebration of Chicago Ornithological Society's 100th anniversary, COS is entertaining the idea of organizing a Chicago Lakefront Birding Festival with field trips, big day competitions, and guest speakers – to name just a few ideas. Nancy asked BCN's member organizations if they would support such a festival, as there were obvious resource issues that go along with organizing an event of this magnitude. All agreed that the idea was exciting. A possible date for the festival would be May 19, 2012.

Judy Pollock mentioned that a Bird Agenda grant could potentially offset the cost for the event should the grant come through and suggested COS get this topic on the Bird Agenda Meeting. Joan suggested that BCN ExComm discuss the matter further in a separate meeting.

3. Cook County Forest Preserve Fishing Line Receptacle Monitoring – Mary Lou Mellon

At the July 17, 2010, BCN Quarterly Meeting, Annette Prince of CBCM raised an issue regarding Cook County FPD fishing line recycle bins that are trapping and killing birds. The Forest Preserve District had installed PVC tube type containers for fishermen to use for disposal of their tangled unusable line, which is too hazardous to wildlife to be deposited in open trash barrels. Unfortunately many birds (including Baltimore Orioles

and Tree Swallows) find fishing line attractive for nest building. The birds were entering the tubes to get to the line, getting tangled in the line and dying. FOTFP and the FPD have asked for help from birders in resolving the issue.

To this end a conference call meeting was held February 23, 2011, between Judy Pollock, Joan Bruchman, Annette Prince and Mary Lou Mellon. It was agreed that the goal would be to inventory the fishing line bins at the 12 lakes where they have been installed by the FPD. If the bins needed repair work, the information would be passed on to the head of the CCFPD Fisheries Department Steve Silic. Ideally the containers would then be monitored on a weekly basis for condition and for bird deaths. Mary Lou Mellon agreed to head up the project. Judy Pollock agreed to write the monitors' protocol.

Monitors were found for the various lakes via IBET posts. The original survey for each lake, locating, identifying and describing the condition of each container was completed by the first week in April. Many of the bins were found to be damaged or missing covers (which had been added to the tubes to prevent the birds from entering). Tubes missing lids were covered with plastic bags till the covers could be reinstalled. All were reported to Steve Silic, whose professed goal was to have all bins in good condition by the start of the fishing season. Steve has enlisted local nature centers to maintain, repair and empty the bins on a timely basis.

Lakes being monitored are Busse, Powderhorn, Tampier, Wampum, Horsetail, Saganashkee Slough, Maple, Skokie Lagoons, Axehead, Belleau, Big Bend and Beck. Later Ed's Pond was added. Volunteer monitors are Joan Bruchman, Suzanne Checchia, Kurt Leslie, Chuck Ferczok, Vicky Sroczynski, Kathryn Cunningham and Mary Lou Mellon. Diane Fieri has been monitoring 4 lakes independently for the past 4 years, and she will continue to do so and report directly to the FPD.

4. Lake-Cook Audubon Barn Owl Project – Jean Sodemann

Lake-Cook Audubon chapter decided to experiment with placing Barn Owl boxes in several Lake County Forest Preserves. Illinois Beach State Park (IBSP), Rollins Savanna, and Middlefork Savanna were sites chosen on Steve Bailey's advice. The personnel at the Lake County Forest Preserve Department were very positive about the project and agreed to work with us on location, provided we could coordinate future site monitoring. Paperwork was presented to the Nature Preserve system for permission to erect boxes at IBSP and Middlefork Savanna. Permission was granted in February for a box at IBSP, but final approval has not yet been granted for Middlefork.

Since the project was first mentioned, several members and subscribers of the Lake-Cook Audubon have indicated interest in helping with the project, from assembling boxes to site selection to future nest box monitoring. The first owl box is ready to assemble, which will be done based on the schedule suggested by the site stewards. The former coordinator of this project is moving out of state, so a new coordinator will be appointed to take over.

5. BCN Bird Monitor Workshops – Judy Pollock and Lee Ramsey

Three workshops were held since the past quarterly meeting and another fifteen monitors recruited in Lake and Will Counties, Illinois and Lake County, Indiana.

6. Bird Blitz – Lee Ramsey

Spring Creek is a 4000-acre preserve. We've divided it into 40 units for the 2011 Bird Blitz and started assigning teams to units. Our target for finishing these assignments is early May. Maps of the units are being prepared, for distribution as May 18 organizational meeting or before. The plan is for 2- or 3-person teams (birder, plant person, record keeper) to do at least one survey from dawn to 10am on any date from June 4 to June 26. There will be a picnic and countdown following the blitz on June 5 (Sunday) and June 11 (Saturday).

Since planning began in February, we've enjoyed cooperation from the BCN, Audubon of the Chicago Region, Chicago Wilderness, the Cook County Forest Preserve District, the Spring Creek stewards, and the Barrington Hills equestrian community. People from several Audubon groups, the INHS and ACE have volunteered to help with the surveys. So far, we have just 50 volunteers; we will need at least twice that number.

In addition to joining the teams, we are looking for coordinators for the picnics and drivers to shuttle blitzers to their units. We also need donations. Our estimate is that about \$500 will be required for food and printing. We request that BCN supply some of that amount.

Joan Bruchman suggested the matter be discussed at the next ExComm meeting.

7. Great Lakes Offshore Wind Project – Judy Pollock

Based on the input of Doug Stotz, Donnie Dann, Judy Pollock, and Joan Bruchman in a meeting held September 2, 2010. Matthew Cvetas and Judy Pollock wrote the wildlife portion of a policy for the Great Lakes Offshore Wind Project. The policy recommended a mandatory three years of site monitoring of any developer seeking to construct a wind farm in the Great Lakes region. Chris Williamson asked that the policy be shared with the rest of BCN. Bob Fisher made a motion that BCN amend its green paper, *Minimizing the Impact of Wind Turbines on Lake Michigan's Wildlife*, to incorporate the statement mandating a three year study. The motion was seconded, and it was passed by roll-call vote, with all present voting in favor. Judy Pollock offered to rewrite the paper, Bob Fisher to edit, and Eric Secker to post to the BCN Web site.

8. Give Back to Birds Day, 4/30/11 – Joan Bruchman

The next BCN Give Back to Birds Day will take place at Nachusa Grasslands on April 30, 2011. There are nine confirmed attendees at the time of the meeting. Donnie Dann recommended that future events be held closer to home. Judy Pollock explained that

BCN would alternate between local sites and those further afield. Joan Bruchman urged all member organizations to send notice out to their members reminding them of the upcoming event.

9. Fall Montrose Beach Sweep, 9/17/11 – Chris Williamson and Judy Pollock

Chris Williamson says that the Fall Montrose Beach Sweep Day will occur on September 17, 2011. The day will include a field trip from 7-9 am, followed by mulching paths with adults and older teens to work on upland areas. There will be lots of food and other festivities. As there was some concern over the heavy labor involved with spreading mulch, Chris suggested that she ask the Jarvis Sanctuary steward for the possibility of a Jarvis work day on October 8, 2011, with parking passes available to volunteers.

10. Important Bird Area Fund Raiser Trips – Bob Fisher & Committee

Bob reported that they have not met on the matter yet, waiting on the transition of BCN to 501(C) (3) status and the need to raise money based on the financial calendar. Bob mentioned the need for alternative IOS sponsors to fund proposed grants for bird-related research. Bob made a plea for all members to donate what they can so IOS can increase their level of funding in 2011.

Other

1. Chicago Audubon Society's Environmental Awards Banquet

Chicago Audubon will hold its biennial Environmental Awards Banquet on Saturday, April 30, at the Silver Stallion Restaurant in Des Plaines. The guest speaker will be Doug Stotz of the Field Museum, who will present a program on the museum's conservation and research efforts in Peru: "Conservation of Peruvian Birds in Amazonian and Andean Forests." Refreshments will be served at 5:30 p.m. and dinner at 6:00 p.m. The dinner is \$30. You may call the CAS office (773-539-6793) to make a reservation.

2. Calumet area law enforcement firing rang - Carolyn Marsh

The Metropolitan Water Reclamation District meeting is scheduled for April 21. There is a motion is to have a bird study completed this summer.

3. Next BCN Quarterly Meeting

The next BCN Quarterly Meeting is scheduled for July 16, 2011, location to be determined.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Matthew Cvetas

Secretary, BCN

Appendix A

February 9, 2011
Mayor Richard M. Daley
Chicago City Hall
30 North LaSalle Street
Chicago, Illinois 60602-2575

Mr. Jody P. Weis, Superintendent
Chicago Police Department
3510 South Michigan Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60653

RE: Proposed Law Enforcement Firing Range - 2025 East 134th Street, Chicago

Dear Honorable Mayor Daley and Superintendent Weis:

Chicago area environmental and community groups urge the Chicago Police Department to postpone action on the proposed Calumet area law enforcement outdoor firing range, arsenal and training center until a baseline wildlife survey has been conducted. The undersigned groups believe that more study of the proposed site for the shooting range at 2025 East 134th Street in Chicago to be certain of the impacts on birds, mammals, reptiles and other wildlife is essential before signing a lease with the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRDGC) and construction begins.

To that end, we respectfully request that the Chicago Police Department allow the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) and MWRDGC consultants to conduct a baseline wildlife survey on the proposed site of the outdoor firing range, as well as natural areas potentially affected by the activities at the range such as O'Brien Lock Marsh, Whitford Pond and Hegewisch Marsh, which is the future site for the Ford Environmental Center and across the Little Calumet River from the site. The study should assess how the identified species would be affected by the particular type of sound, light, and other factors from the proposed range.

Our groups strongly agree that this survey is important because both the proposed firing range site and the surrounding habitat are well known as an important site for a diverse group of breeding, migrating and wintering bird species. (Wintering species include a pair of Bald Eagles.)

The proximity of a firing range and arsenal to important bird nesting areas on, adjacent and near the proposed site, such as Whitford Pond and O'Brien Lock Marsh, can put stress on birds and other wildlife. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers previously found nesting Black-crowned Night-Herons - a species on the Illinois Endangered List - at Whitford Pond. (See *Conceptual Plan for the Lake Calumet Ecological Park, Chicago, Illinois, August 1986.*) Both Whitford Pond and O'Brien Lock Marsh are connected ecologically to Hegewisch Marsh.

We further request that the Department review existing and planned recreation in the vicinity of the range. For example, we do not know how the range's sound and operation will impact paddling on the Calumet and Little Calumet Rivers, and biking on the proposed multi-use trail along the bank of the Little Calumet River. The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency recently recommended protecting the growing number of canoeists and kayakers that enjoy this stretch of the river.

We think it is necessary to champion the rich natural history of the Calumet area. Lake Calumet is the centerpiece of the Calumet Land Use Plan and its ecological partner: the Open Space Reserve Plan for its remnant wetlands and prairies. (See *Calumet Land Use Plan* and *Calumet Open Space Reserve Plan* approved by the City in 2005.) The national significance of bird habitat, the millions of dollars committed to Hegewisch Marsh and the Ford Environmental Center, and a decade of community planning in the area call for a more comprehensive land use analysis before committing to building the outdoor firing range at this location.

Please contact Carolyn Marsh, Conservation Chair, Chicago Audubon Society by email at: cmarshbird@prodigy.net to discuss this matter or with questions.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

Joan Bruchman, President
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cc: U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Illinois Governor Pat Quinn
Marc Miller, Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Kevin Fitzpatrick, Acting Executive Director,
Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago
Suzanne Malec-McKenna, Commissioner, Chicago Department of Environment
Lieutenant Raymond J. Hamilton, Chicago Police Department