



BIRD CONSERVATION NETWORK

www.bcnbirds.org

BCN Quarterly Meeting Minutes
Saturday, July 16, 2011, 1:00pm-4:00PM
Spring Valley Nature Center, Schaumburg, IL.

Attendees: Chris VanWassenhove, CAS; Annette Prince, Teri Radke, CBCM; Nancy Tikalsky, COS; Linda Padera, DBC; Suzanne Checchia, ENSBC; Mary Anne Harrison, IAS; Joan Bruchman, IOS; Eric Secker, KCA; Jean Sodemann, LCAS; Diane Rosenberg, LCA; Judy Pollock, Jenny Vogt, NAS-CR; Brigitte Schmidt, Louis Vassmer, PWA; Bob Harrison, TCA; Donnie Dann, TNC; Lee Witkowski, WCA; Becky Menich, Guest.

President Joan Bruchman called the meeting to order at 1:00pm. A quorum was established with 18 representatives from 15 member organizations and one guest.

Administrative:

Minutes Approval

Donnie Dann moved to approve the minutes of the April 16, 2011 BCN meeting. Jean Sodemann seconded. The minutes were approved by a verbal vote. The minutes are posted on the BCN website at www.BCNbirds.org, as are the minutes of the June 20, 2011 Executive Committee conference call meeting.

Treasurer's Report - Glenn Gabanski (report read by Joan Bruchman)

Prior to the meeting a spreadsheet was distributed showing finances on one side and membership on the other. As of 7/12/11 income is \$1,550.00 and expenses are \$1,497.15. The most recent income was a very generous donation of \$200 from Carol and Lee Ramsey to support the Bird Monitors' Brunch. The most recent expense was \$255.74 for the Monitors' Brunch. Our net income to date is \$52.85 and our checkbook balance is \$4,007.90.

Known remaining expenses for this year (database maintenance: \$120, ABC membership: \$100, annual website hosting fee: \$107.40) total \$327.40. No additional income is expected this year. We are projected to finish the year with a deficit of \$274.55. This large deficit was caused mostly by the \$440 spent applying for the 501(c)(3) status, an item that was not anticipated in the 2011 budget, and larger than expected expenses in the monitoring program and in conference calls.

Membership Report - Glenn Gabanski (report read by Joan Bruchman)

All members from last year except one have renewed by the June 30 deadline. Individual member Leslie Borns did not renew and should be dropped from the membership roster. BCN currently has 18 Organizational Members and 3 Individual Members.

Update on 501(c)(3) Status - Glenn Gabanski (report read by Joan Bruchman)

After complying with the items requested by the IRS (and reported at the April meeting), on May 13, 2011, the IRS sent BCN a letter granting us 501(c)(3) status. Interestingly, the effective date of exemption is February 2, 1999, the date BCN was incorporated, and not the date of the IRS letter. This suggests we could apply for refunds of taxes paid in previous years. However, I contacted the IRS and was told there is a three-year statute of limitations on filing amended returns. The last year BCN paid income tax was 2006. Thus, we cannot apply for a refund of any taxes.

We have received donations in the past years from individuals and organizations and these donations are now tax-deductible. The treasurer has contacted these individuals and organizations to alert them to the change.

In the future all contributions to BCN are deductible and I assume this includes dues paid by member organizations. Also, travel expenses to and from any BCN meeting are event are also deductible. (Contact a tax accountant for further advice.)

On June 9, 2011, the treasurer filed papers to register BCN as a not-for-profit with the Illinois Attorney General's Office. In the future, BCN will file annual reports to this office and not the Illinois Department of Revenue. Also, on June 15, 2011, the treasurer sent a letter and required documents to the Illinois Department of Revenue requesting an Exempt (E) number so that BCN will not have to pay Illinois sales tax.

By-laws adoption related to 501(c)(3) status:

At the April meeting I proposed two amendments to BCN Bylaws to be consistent with an IRS required change to our Articles of Incorporation.

The two clauses I propose we adopt are:

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.

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 replace it with the dissolution clause suggested by the IRS.

These clauses were introduced at the April meeting and are eligible to be voted on at the July meeting. However, if there are further proposed amendments to the bylaws introduced at this meeting and thus not eligible for voting until the next meeting, it might be prudent to delay voting on my proposed amendments until all the amendments can be voted on at once.

Bylaws, Rewrite to Allow Electronic Voting, Follow-up From 4/16 Meeting - Nancy Tikalsky

The email bylaws draft language (see below) was acceptable to those present without changes. A concern about board members not on email was raised but it was decided to address it at the time of occurrence on a case-by-case basis rather than integrate the exception into the bylaws. Nancy will format the new article to integrate it into the bylaws as "Article III.a - VOTING" which will follow the present bylaw "Article III - MEETINGS". A formal proposal to amend the bylaws to accept the new Article III.a and delete Section 6 of "Article III-MEETINGS" (which has been integrated into the new Article III.a) will be presented at the next meeting for a vote. Nancy will forward a formal proposal to amend the bylaws by email more than 10 days before the next board meeting set for November 12, 2011.

Proposed Changes to the Bylaws

ARTICLE III – MEETINGS

Voting

Section 1. Voting shall be carried out during the regularly scheduled meetings of the BCN, unless a special vote is required.

Section 2. Special voting may be conducted by email vote in the event that waiting until the next regularly scheduled meeting would result in a delay of the function, objectives, and/or the purpose of the BCN.

Section 3. All issues to be voted on shall be decided by a simple majority of the quorum of those present during the regularly scheduled meetings. In the event that any general meeting of BCN fails to achieve a quorum, the Executive Committee may call for a paper or e-mail ballot to be distributed on any issue requiring a vote. The Secretary will then distribute the ballots, with any necessary explanation, to all the active BCN members and set a deadline for return of the ballots two weeks after the date of distribution. On such a ballot, the quorum requirements described in Article III, Section 5, shall apply.

Section 4. If a special email vote is required, issues shall be decided by a simple majority of those responding to the email within a reasonably defined time period.

Updating of BCN Brochure – Eric Secker

At the BCN Exec Meeting 20-Jun-2011, Mary Lou Mellon pointed out that the BCN brochure does not accurately reflect BCN's status as a 501(c)(3). She suggested that Eric Secker create a sticker that could be affixed to the current brochure to indicate this. Matthew Cvetas contacted Eric to see how many brochures remained in his control. He reported that he has at least 800 or more in his possession and agreed that a sticker would be a cost-effective alternative to printing new brochures. Eric and Suzanne Checchia agreed to work together to modify the brochures, in a financially reasonable manner, and report back to the membership at the next meeting.

Advocacy:

BCN Sign-on Letters – Donnie Dann

This past quarter BCN sent sign-on letters in favor of:

- The proposed 150,000-acre Everglades Headwaters National Wildlife Refuge and Conservation Area
- ABC's bird smart wind campaign
- National bird-friendly building design as proposed in federal legislation
- Urging the Department of the Interior to develop a department-wide policy to address feral cat management.
- Good science in reestablishing the Northern Spotted Owl Recovery Plan
- Bilingual pesticide labeling
- Participating in a national coalition to command a loud and large voice for Conservation, Outdoor Recreation, and Historic Preservation
- Opposition to H.R. 872, a bill that will exempt pesticide users who spray over waterways from the Clean Water Act
- Restoration of funding for the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act (NMBCA) grants program
- Request to the Army Corps of Engineers to conduct a full Environmental Impact Statement of a proposed wind development on the Texas Coast

Cook County Cats Legislation – Judy Pollock

Cook County has an ordinance that allows for the establishment of feral cat colonies. Judy and Donnie have been investigating the ordinance.

Trap, Neuter, Release (TNR) – Judy Pollock

Trap, Neuter, Release (TNR) programs are becoming more active in the region. The Chicago Wilderness coalition is in the process of publishing a paper with the scientific facts about the danger of these programs to native wildlife. Donnie, Bob and Judy are part of the effort. It was suggested that the BCN prepare a PowerPoint presentation on the topic and develop a speakers' bureau. Help with this is welcome.

Chicago Department of the Environment (DOE), Recent Issues – Donnie Dann

There was a brief discussion on the future of the Chicago DOE.

Great Lakes IBA Dedication & Common Tern Colony Update – Donnie Dann

Great Lakes Naval Training Center (GLNTC), which has the only nesting colony of Common Terns in Illinois, has been designated an Important Bird Area. A private small dedication ceremony was held at GLNTC on Thursday, April 21, 2011. An Important Bird Area sign was posted at the location.

Donnie visited the site on July 9, 2011, and was feeling very pessimistic when he arrived at the Great Lakes Common Tern site. Besides the fact that the nests were all unprotected and totally exposed to predation, the area was also hit by the same severe thunderstorms that felled 1,000 trees at Illinois Beach State Park on the prior Friday. Sure enough, there was almost no activity in the area where the nests were situated. As he scanned the entire area, he noticed the new fenced enclosure that the Navy had built was swarming with the entire colony's comings and goings. The birds had all re-nested inside the fence! Donnie reported 27 adults, 10 nests with 19 eggs in total, and 2 chicks.

Camp Sagawa Window Collision Meeting Follow-up Report – Joan Bruchman

Superintendent Randall turned the issue of window collisions at Camp Sagawau over to Jim Havlat in the Planning and Development Department.

I spoke with Jim a few weeks ago and he reported that they contacted the glass company suggested by BCN and found that it was too costly to replace the glass. In addition, they did not think glass replacement would actually change the overall reflective properties of the structure.

They plan to put up netting in the next few months similar to that used by the Chicago Botanic Gardens. CBG reported that the netting is working well with cutting down on window collisions there.

Suzanne Checchia reported that there are bird collision issues with the new building at Ryerson Woods, Lake County, and that she and Annette Prince have spoken with Nan Buckhardt of the Lake County Forest Preserve District. Suzanne and Annette will try to go back to Ryerson using the information and data from Camp Sagawa. In the ensuing discussion, Donnie Dann mentioned that Highland Park passed an ordinance that all new public buildings be bird friendly and said that he would be available to speak with any village officers regarding this issue. BCN members should be alert and proactive when new public construction in their own local area is first proposed. New York City Audubon has published a booklet related to bird friendly construction. It was suggested that BCN might be able to gather relevant information into a binder form which could be given to local governments. Annette Prince and Teri Radke volunteered to work on an update of this possibility for the next meeting.

Projects/Initiatives:

BCN Fishing Line Container Project - Mary Lou Mellon (report read by Suzanne Checchia)

A year ago at the summer quarterly meeting of BCN, the issue of Cook County Forest Preserve District fishing line recycle bins that were reportedly trapping and killing birds was raised by Annette Prince of Chicago Bird Collision Monitors.

The Forest Preserve District had installed PVC-tube type containers for fishermen to use for disposal of their tangled and unusable line, which is too hazardous to wildlife to be deposited in the open trash barrels that are commonly available in the forest preserves. Unfortunately many birds (including Baltimore Orioles and tree swallows) find fishing line attractive for nest building. The birds were reportedly entering the tubes to get to the line, getting tangled and trapped in the line and dying. Graphic photos documented the deaths. FOTFP and the FPD asked for help from birders in resolving the issue.

The Cook County Fisheries Department headed by fisheries biologist Steve Silic installed the fishing line receptacles at various locations at 14 lakes some years ago. Last fall, in an effort to prevent the birds from entering the tubes, each tube was retrofitted with a plastic disk that covers the opening of the tube and swings to the right or left to open for line to be deposited.

Eight volunteer monitors were recruited in March. By the first week in April, the lakes had been surveyed by the monitors and the locations of the bins and their condition had been documented and reported to Steve Silic. Some of the covers and containers had been vandalized over the winter. Tubes missing lids were covered with plastic bags till the covers could be reinstalled. The Fisheries Department repaired all containers before the beginning of the fishing season-- which of course coincides with the bird breeding season. Steve enlisted local nature centers to maintain, repair and empty the bins throughout the summer.

Our monitors visited the 14 lakes and checked the containers every week or two from April until now. More than 60 visits have been documented and reports filed with the Fisheries Department. Monitors have picked up trash and line and written instructions on the covers. They have talked to the fishermen and made suggestions as to placement of tubes and trash

barrels. Bins that needed repair were fixed or removed as directed by the Fisheries Department, which has been very receptive to all of our suggestions.

We are extremely happy to report that there has been no documented bird fatality at any of the containers that we have been monitoring. We believe that as long as the covers remain in place the fishing line recycle bins are not a threat to birds.

Since the breeding season is about over, we will be discontinuing monitoring in the next week or so.

I hope BCN joins me in extending huge thanks to the dedicated volunteer monitors who have taken on this unglamorous job with enthusiasm and good will: Joan Bruchman, Suzanne Checchia, John Kaiser, Kurt Leslie, Chuck Ferczok, Vicky Sroczynski, Kathryn Cunningham and Mary Lou Mellon.

2012 Blitz – Judy Pollock

Dale Crusoe, Lee Ramsey, Becky Rossof and Judy Pollock are working on a plan to do a blitz for red-headed woodpeckers next year, in conjunction with a study of their habitat and distribution in the region. Additional members on the planning team are welcome.

Updated Version of the CW Atlas – Judy Pollock

Chicago Wilderness just published a new version of its Biodiversity Atlas. These are available free to Chicago Wilderness members. Judy ordered enough for us to distribute to representatives at the next meeting. The online version is here:

http://www.chicagowilderness.org/pdf/CW%20Atlas%20of%20Biodiversity_2011.pdf

Kane County Birds of Concern List - Judy Pollock

Audubon Chicago Region worked with the Kane County Forest Preserve District and BCN monitors in Kane County to map existing populations of grassland, shrubland and savanna birds of concern and to determine actions that could be taken to double the habitat these birds, as suggested by the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan. Findings were that by simply reversing habitat degradation in existing preserves, habitat could be doubled for grassland and savanna birds. Shrubland birds would take a little more planning. The report describes ways to increase habitat through management and gives specific suggestions for a dozen preserves. Eric Secker, Mary Anne Harrison, Nancy Tikalsky, Jenny Vogt, and Louis Vassmer offered to read and review the report. It will be available at habitatproject.org in mid-August.

Birds of Concern List - Judy Pollock

Chicago Wilderness is developing lists of species of concern, and one of their first projects is to look at the list that the BCN developed. Since we are near the end of our supply, we will explore printing a new list with them, when they are done. Jim Anderson is heading the project. Doug Stotz is on the team, and Judy has been involved in the bird portion.

Fundraising – Teri Radke

Now that BCN has 501(3)(c) status, the Fund Raising Committee, which had tabled its activity, is again moving forward. There have been a number of fundraising ideas discussed. Teri Radke is organizing a meeting for anyone interested in BCN fundraising to sort through these ideas and decide a direction. Contact her if you would like to attend.

Ft. Sheridan Golf Course Update - Sonny Cohen (report read by Jean Sodemann)

In June, 2011, the Lake County Forest Preserve Board voted 12-10 to accept their advisory committee's recommendation to privatize their golf course obligation at Fort Sheridan. They've directed their staff to prepare and issue a request for proposal for a private company to design, develop and operate a 9-hole golf course on a portion of what is now 250 acres of grassland and lake bluff habitat. The Forest Board is expected to consider awarding a bid at their February or March 2012 meeting.

Will a golf course be built?

Executive Director of the Forest Preserve District, Tom Hahn, said, "This doesn't mean that there is going to be a golf course. It means the Forest Preserve District board is following recommendations from the Fort Sheridan Golf Course Advisory Committee to put proposals for a 9-hole golf course out there to private entities."

For the golf course to be built there has to be a bidder. Golf, as a business, is struggling and it is unclear if a private bidder will emerge. Second, the county board has placed terms on the proposal request which are onerous and prospective golf course developers may find difficult to meet. Last, the Forest Board has not greenlighted the project, only the action to seek proposals.

Why did the Forest Board vote to seek a proposal?

Although the Forest Board voted 12-10 to seek a proposal, the actual tally of support was 13-9 against the course. 3 Board members opposed to the course voted in favor because the Forest Board legal counsel said they should at this time. The Board is positioning itself to defend its actions against a possible lawsuit and its lawyers recommended seeking the proposal as a defensive move. 10 board members ignored the lawyer's advice and voted no.

What can be done to stop the golf course from being developed?

In spite of Board sentiment against the golf course and the open question of a bidder coming forward, it is essential to continue to take steps to stop the golf course.

Increasing the visibility of the Preserve and getting people out there is important. The emerging habitat and growing wildlife population, trails through the grassland, mile of beachfront and connection to the Openlands Lakeshore trail make this a recreationally attractive area. Few realize the threat of losing this land to a golf course.

Second, the Forest Board must be kept aware of the importance of this area. This issue is a monkey on their back and they should know how heavy this monkey is. With a vote to award a bid coming up in 2012 and the board leaning 13-9 against building this golf course, it is essential to provide the political cover they may need to vote against awarding the bid if it comes to that.

To be kept aware of the status of this issue, send an email to Sonny Cohen at sonny1@gmail.com. You can also follow the Fort Sheridan Twitter or Facebook page as well as Sonny's blog, "Fort Sheridan Golf Course Forum" (FortSheridanGolfCourseForum.Wordpress.com).

Lake-Cook Audubon Barn Owl Nest Project – Jean Sodemann

A new coordinator has been appointed, but has not been able to do anything with the nest boxes as yet. The boxes are all ready and are stored for the present in Sonny and Rena Cohen's basement. Hopefully, things will begin to move in the fall.

July 9 Monitors Bird Outing and Lunch Recap – Joan Bruchman

About 30 monitors gathered at Schaumburg Grasslands for a pre-lunch bird walk led by Lee Ramsey.

Afterward, all met at Spring Valley Nature Center in Schaumburg for a tour of the grounds before meeting in the center for lunch.

Judy welcomed all and gave recognition to a number of the long time monitors who were present. Many of them have been monitoring for 12 to 16 years!

We will start on plans for the 2012 monitors' lunch soon. This way we will have advance time to secure a location to suit our timing.

Fall 2011 Give Back to Birds Day – Joan Bruchman

It was pointed out by Mary Lou that the original date of 10/8 was Yom Kippur. This was a date chosen by the steward of Jarvis, not BCN. The date has been moved to 10/22. The change of date information should be quickly sent to all BCN representatives. Further details to follow.

Other Business

Palatine Prairie – Louis Vassmer

Louis Vassmer (Prairie Woods Audubon) reported that their prairie stewards investigated and found that a landscape company hired by a church that's next to the Palatine Prairie was dumping landscape refuse on the prairie site. "No dumping - will be fined" signs are now in place.

Camp Sagawa Hummingbird Festival – Lee Witkowski

Lee Witkowski reminded members that the Camp Sagawa Hummingbird Festival is scheduled for 8/20/11.

Next BCN Meeting

Scheduled for 1:00pm on the 2nd Sat. in Nov. (11/12/11), at Donnie Dann's home in Highland Park. Directions to follow.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Matthew Cvetas, Secretary