



# BIRD CONSERVATION NETWORK

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## **BCN Quarterly Meeting Minutes**

Saturday, January 14, 2012, 1:00pm-4:00PM  
North Park Village Nature Center, Chicago

Attendees: Terry Schilling, At large member; Chris VanWassenhove, Carolyn Marsh, CAS; Mary Lou Mellon, Annette Prince, CBCM; Sigrid Schmidt, COS; Bob Fisher, Linda Padera, Glenn Gabanski, DBC; Suzanne Checchia, ENSBC; Mary Anne Harrison, IAS; Joan Bruchman, Matthew Cvetas, IOS; Eric Secker, KCA; Diane Rosenberg, LCAS; Valerie Lewis, Jean Sodemann, L-CAS; Judy Pollock, NAS-CR; Joe VanWassenhove, PAS; Donnie Dann, TNC.

President Joan Bruchman called the meeting to order at 1:06pm. A quorum was established with 20 representatives from 13 member organizations and one at large member.

### **ADMINISTRATION**

#### 1. Approval of 11/12/2011 Quarterly Meeting Minutes

Donnie Dann made a motion to accept the 11/12/2011 meeting minutes. Bob Fisher seconded. Carolyn Marsh asked to discuss further. She asked that two post-meeting additions to the minutes be deleted. Joan Bruchman responded that both were in direct response to actions discussed in the meeting and belonged in the minutes. Joan also cited an example from a 2009 meeting as a precedent; it was integrated in those minutes, but highlighted in bold font face in the relevant section of the minutes. Bob Fisher suggested we include these after meeting actions as an appendix to the minutes and use this style going forward. A vote was taken and the minutes were approved as written.

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

Prior to the start of the meeting handouts were distributed displaying the Financial Report spreadsheet, the Proposed 2012 budget, and the Membership Status spreadsheet.

BCN finished 2011 with income of \$1,574.40 and expenses of \$1,916.02, resulting in a net loss of \$341.62. Much of this loss is due to the \$440 in various un-budgeted application fees we paid to apply for 501(c)(3) status. BCN ended the year with a checkbook balance of \$3,613.43. Current balance, following some renewals already received, is \$3,938.43.

Bob moved we accept the treasurer's report. Chris VanWassenhove seconded. A vote was taken and the report was approved as written.

### 3. 2012 Budget – Glenn Gabanski

The proposed 2012 budget had been distributed prior to the meeting. There are two new items in this budget compared to previous years. At the last BCN Executive Committee Meeting the committee decided BCN should pay Eric Secker an annual retainer of \$100 for his work as BCN Webmaster. It was also decided that, as the Monitor Brunch is a very important part of our monitoring program, it should get its own line item in the budget. The current Financial Report spreadsheet has been updated to show the amounts spent in past years on the brunch. For the 2012 monitor's brunch \$350 is budgeted.

Glenn pointed out that for several years BCN has been spending all of its dues income to support the existing activities and programs, and that additional revenue through donations and/or grants will be needed to fund any growth in our monitoring program or any future analyses of the monitoring data.

Donnie asked if monitors could pay their own way. Joan said that attendance and morale at the 2010 monitor's brunch was at all time high - 32 people attended - because BCN treated the monitors. Judy mentioned that at the Executive Committee meeting Joan had suggested the committee to pitch in by bringing home cooked food. Diane Rosenberg made a motion to accept the budget. Annette Prince seconded. A vote was taken and the budget was approved.

### 4. Membership Report – Glenn Gabanski

It is renewal time for all members. Membership renewal notices were sent to all reps and individual members by January 7, 2012. Currently BCN has 18 Organizational Memberships and 3 Individual Memberships. Prior to the meeting, four organizations and one individual have already renewed.

### 5. Officer Nominations – Judy Pollock

Judy, Donnie, and Bob comprised the nominating committee. Joan Bruchman, Mary Lou Mellon, and Glenn Gabanski have agreed to serve again as President, Vice President and Treasurer, respectively. Matthew Cvetas is stepping down as secretary, moving onto a position coordinating activities for the Illinois Young Birders Club. Chris has agreed to take over as secretary after Matthew steps down. Joan asked if there were further nominations from the floor. Bob made a motion to close the nominations. Terry seconded. Joan called for a vote and all approved the slate.

### 6. Bylaws, Conflict of Interest Committee – Joan Bruchman

Joan stated that it is critical that BCN, as a nonprofit organization, have a conflict of interest policy written into the bylaws. Joan nominated Bob to chair a committee to develop the policy. Bob accepted and asked for help. Carolyn and Terry agreed to help. Joan noted that proposed

changes to the bylaws and/or policy recommendations should be presented to members 10 days before the next quarterly meeting.

#### 7. Bylaws, Use of BCN Representative Email List – Joan Bruchman

Joan stated that the BCN mailing list is intended for BCN use only and should be considered private information and not be shared for any other purpose. She also reiterated that any communication intended for BCN members should go to the president first for approval by ExCom. Joan will chair a committee to write an email privacy clause as an addition to the members section of the bylaws. Joan also recommended that we create one general BCN email address for all correspondence and list it on the Web site, removing all personal email addresses.

There was some discussion about Carolyn using the email list to send out email to all board members about the Calumet Firing Range. Carolyn said she had expedited the message as it was an extremely urgent matter. Bob suggested that BCN come to a consensus as to the appropriate use of the roster. Diane mentioned that she likes a clear line of communication or protocol on how to communicate to all BCN board members. Donnie also suggested this is the right way in which to work. Bob suggested that the issue doesn't need to be written into the bylaws but could simply be a caution on the roster list that says two things. (1) If you don't want your details in the list, let BCN know and we'll take it out. (2) This is intended for BCN business only and it should not be used for other reasons. Terry also thought it doesn't need to be written into the bylaws. Judy suggested that somebody bring a policy in writing to the next meeting so we have something concrete to discuss.

### **ADVOCACY**

#### 1. Recap of BCN Sign-on Letters – Donnie Dann

The following letters were submitted on behalf of BCN since the last quarterly meeting.

- Banning the use of lead shot
- Urging a longer period for public comment and requesting mandatory rules, instead of the present unenforceable FWS guidelines on wind energy projects
- Thank you letter to Senator Mark Kirk for being a co-sponsor of the Red Rock Wilderness bill
- Requesting a longer public comment period for rule making re incidental take of golden eagles at a wind farm
- Support for Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and U.S. Forest Service development of a new range-wide conservation strategy for the Greater Sage-Grouse, affecting over 47 million acres of public lands
- Protect Shawnee National Forest from dirty coal mining

## 2. Bird-Friendly Building Construction Around the Country – Donnie Dann

On March 8, there will be a meeting of the Evanston Environment Board to amend building codes for bird friendly construction. Donnie, Judy, and Suzanne Checchia plan to present documentation from the American Bird Conservancy (ABC). Donnie is hopeful that Evanston will adopt the San Francisco building codes, which are very specific and demand bird friendly construction.

## 3. Lake Michigan Wind Energy Advisory Council (LMWEAC) Meeting – Bob Fisher

Bob reported that he attended a meeting of the council on November 30, 2011, in which the primary focus of discussion was how to draft the wind energy regulatory process recommendation that will be used by the state of Illinois as language for future legislation. The state of Illinois is considering the lease of Lake Michigan lake bottom to erect wind turbines. The conditions of the lease and construction permits are what need to be written into the regulations. The Advisory Council is charged to provide to the governor and general assembly a report containing the criteria for permitting wind turbines in Lake Michigan by June 2012. Another meeting is scheduled in early February 2012. Donnie and Bob with the help of ABC are drafting a letter that will suggest what should be built into the regulatory process. The US Fish & Wildlife Service has written federal guidelines for terrestrial, but not offshore purposes as it relates to the impact of offshore wind turbines on birds. Donnie stated that Illinois has renewable portfolio standards that say that by 2020, 20% of Illinois energy is required to be from alternative energy sources. Judy asked that when a draft is written to please send it to those who wrote the BCN wind policy.

## 4. Chicago Police Dept Firing Range - Carolyn Marsh

On December 9, 2011, Illinois Governor Pat Quinn was joined by federal, state and local officials, including Chicago Mayor Emmanuel, to announce a major partnership and conservation initiative to significantly increase natural green space in Chicago. The Millennium Reserve is the largest open space project in the country, which will enhance public recreation opportunities in 140,000 acres of land in the Calumet region. Governor Quinn announced the start of the Millennium Reserve: Calumet Core phase, which involves restoration of 15,000 acres of open space.

Soon after this announcement, Carolyn was alerted by Debra Shore that a planned Chicago Firing Range in the Calumet region was again on the agenda for the January 5th MWRD meeting. Carolyn sent out notices to many groups to rally around this in opposition and to get to the MWRD meeting. Carolyn, Judy, and Terry attended this meeting along with many other conservationists and many spoke out against the firing range. Still, the firing range was approved by a vote of 5 to 4. Carolyn felt that the vote was further influenced by a quote in the Chicago Tribune by John Rogner, Assistant Director of the IDNR, that the firing range was compatible with the mixed-use character of the area. This was published in an article that came out the same day as the meeting. Those that voted for the firing range used this quote as leverage.

At a meeting held with John Rogner, Judy, Carolyn, and other representatives attending, Rogner apologized for the lack of communication on this issue and said his quote was misinterpreted. Carolyn asked Rogner that the IDNR put in writing their official stance on this issue as it still needs to go to and be approved by several other governing bodies (zoning, planning, and Chicago's City Council).

#### 5. Starved Rock Mining Project – Mary Lou Mellon

Based on the promise of 39 jobs, the LaSalle County Board voted to issue a permit to a Missouri-based mining company so that a fracking sand mine - 315 acres, 90 ft. deep - can be created adjacent to Starved Rock State Park. Pollution, noise, and excessive truck traffic will certainly be created and at the very least the hydrology of the land next to Starved Rock will be adversely affected. BCN sent a letter to the LaSalle County Board in opposition to the mine. Despite efforts of various groups and individuals, the LaSalle Board voted in favor of the permit. This project still needs the approval of the IDNR. Judy stated the IDNR is conflicted as they have two roles to balance - one as adjacent land owner and the other as permit issuer. Mary Lou asked if they have to do an environmental impact statement. No one knew the answer. Donnie stated that he will be in Springfield in the near future and will speak to the IDNR about the issue.

### **FUND RAISING**

#### 1. Sound Approach Bird Fund Grant – Mary Lou Mellon

Judy, Eric, Glenn and Mary Lou are working on submitting an application to fund the next round of statistical analysis of the BCN bird monitoring database to the Sound Approach Bird Fund, which focuses on grass roots bird conservation groups. Carolyn asked if she could review the completed application prior to its submission. Judy mentioned that the money from the fund would be used to complete BCN's data analysis and that we've applied for similar funding twice before to different granting agencies.

#### 2. Guatemala Project Update – Judy Pollock

Judy made a short presentation on the Guatemala based conservation group, and the informal advice she learned from the IRS about restrictions to a BCN donation (there are none, since donations would be made to a 501c3 here in the US).

After a lengthy and spirited discussion, it was clear that no consensus could be reached regarding the question of whether BCN should donate. Several present expressed strong support for focusing on local projects as fundraising targets. It was noted that a BCN policy statement already exists, clarifying the decision making process when requests are made for funds to be donated to other organizations, including BCN coalition members.

There was general agreement that donations from individuals to the Guatemala project would be worthwhile. This is an excellent grass roots group with a good focus on the need for cloud forest conservation.

### 3. Fund Raising Committee – Joan Bruchman

Joan said there was nothing to report. Joan has extended a request to a BCN representative to chair the committee, but has not received an answer.

## **PROJECTS & INITIATIVES**

### 1. Spring Give Back to Birds Day – Judy Pollock

Judy has been working with Lee Witkowski and Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie to set a date for a spring work day, but has not found one as of yet. The proposed dates conflict with the BCN Monitors Brunch and other events.

### 2. Fall Give Back to Birds Day – Judy Pollock

Judy has been talking with Joe VanWassenhove about a location in the Peoria area for a fall work day. As of the meeting, no date or location has been chosen.

### 3. Monitors Brunch/Lunch, May 12 – Joan Bruchman

Joan and Bob have been trying to find a spot for the Monitors Brunch on May 12, 2012. It will be preceded by bird walk at Waterfall Glen. Suzanne suggested that we offer the monitors a program to round out the day.

### 4. Bird Habitat Opportunities at Millennium Reserve – Judy Pollock

Judy mentioned that she is accepting suggestions for small places in Calumet region that could use a migratory makeover.

### 5. Pipes Trapping Birds in Western US – Mary Lou Mellon

An article was recently published about scores of dead birds found in miming claim markers in Nevada. Birds are likely trying to take shelter or nest in the hollow PVC pipes, get stuck, and die. Mary Lou wanted to bring this to BCN's attention, though she doesn't think it's appropriate that we take any action on it. She did feel we could continue to make an impact locally by following up with Lake and DuPage County Forest Preserves to cap their fishing line disposal tubes. Linda Padera recently spoke to senior rangers regarding their fishing line disposal pipes, but did not discuss capping them. Bob suggested that he, Linda, and Annette meet with Brett Manning to discuss the issue.

### 6. BCN Survey – Judy Pollock

Those working on the BCN Survey are currently revising the list of priority sites. A monitoring workshop is scheduled in Indiana. Judy asked for more ideas on where to hold other workshops.

Bob suggested that we hold a conference for monitors and land managers, and include the results of the data analysis. Joan appointed Bob to work on a committee to develop that idea. Linda and Terry offered their help.

#### 7. 2012 Blitz – Judy Pollock

Judy reported that the protocol for monitoring Red-headed Woodpeckers had been defined. Now, we are in the stage in which we need to recruit monitors. Judy also suggested we revise the county coordinator system to keep data organized and communicate and recruit monitors. She asked for volunteers to fill these positions. Eric offered to serve in this capacity for Kane County. Donnie and Bob offered to help find coordinators in their county.

### **OTHER**

#### 1. Materials from the former Chicago Department of Environment – Judy Pollock

After the Chicago Department of Environment was dissolved, it donated several boxes of bird and birding related literature for BCN use. Sigrid Schmidt suggested we take some to the department of tourism. Matthew offered to take some for the Illinois Young Birders outreach program. Terry suggested we contact the Illinois Department of Transportation to get the Chicago Birding Trail Guide into travel center kiosks, etc.

2. Chris VanWassenhove reported that CAS's Birding America will be held at North Park College March 17, 8:30-4pm.

3. Sigrid Schmidt reported that COS is having its 100 year celebration in the spring and will communicate more details later.

### **NEXT MEETING**

The next Quarterly Meeting of the BCN will be held on the April 21, 2012, at Sagawau Environmental Learning Center, "formerly known as Camp Sagawau," in Lemont.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:56pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Matthew Cvetas

Secretary, BCN