

BCN Quarterly Meeting Minutes

Saturday, October 19, 2013

Donnie Dann's Home, Highland Park

Attendees: Chris Van Wassenhove, Dave Willard, CAS; Mary Lou Mellon, Annette Prince, Teri Radke, CBCM; Nancy Tikalsky, COS; Bob Fisher, Glenn Gabanski, DBC; Suzanne Checchia, Lloyd Davidson, ENSBC; Mary Anne Harrison, IAS; Joan Bruchman, IOS; Eric Secker, Kane Cty Aud; Jean Sodemann, Lake-Cook; Judy Pollock, Lee Ramsey, NAS-CR; Donnie Dann, TNC; Terry Schilling, individual member. Guests Doug Crane, McHenry County Audubon; Adam Schwerner, Director, Department of Cultural and Natural Resources, Chicago Park District; Mitch Murdock, Natural Areas Manager, Chicago Park District.

President Mary Lou Mellon brought the meeting to order at 1:10pm. A quorum was established with 17 representatives from 11 member organizations and one individual member present.

A special welcome was extended to guests Adam Schwerner and Mitch Murdock, of the Chicago Park District, and Doug Crane of McHenry County Audubon. Introductions were made around the room.

ADMINISTRATION

1. The minutes of the Saturday, July 27, 2013, meeting at Crabtree Nature Center were approved unanimously as posted on the BCN website.
2. Treasurer's report – Glenn Gabanski. Prior to the meeting, a financial spreadsheet was distributed to the reps. Since the July meeting, income has remained at \$2,963.46 and expenses have risen slightly to \$4,566.98. Cash balance in the checkbook is \$9,669.46. Major expenses yet to be paid are for the Trends Analysis.
3. Memberships – Mary Lou. Recently two organizations have sent letters of application to join BCN. Under consideration for membership are McHenry County Audubon and Loyola University Chicago Institute of Environmental Sustainability. Both organizations have been considered by the Executive Committee and have been found to support the goals of BCN as required in the Bylaws. Both organizations will wait till the January meeting to complete the membership process.

SPEAKERS: ADAM SCHWERNER, Director, Department of Cultural and Natural Resources, Chicago Park District, and **MITCH MURDOCK**, Natural Areas Manager, Chicago Park District. Adam and Mitch gave an overview of the challenges of the Department of Cultural and Natural Resources. Progress and plans for some key natural areas in the city were described: Northerly Island, Burnham Park Natural Area, Rosehill Cemetery/West Ridge Nature Preserve, Jackson Park projects, Montrose Point, Horner Park, South Shore Migratory Bird Habitat and Ronan Park. A website for special events coordination with access to natural areas was provided: <https://data.cityofchicago.org/Events/Chicago-Park-District-Event-Permits/pk66-w54g?> It was pointed out that this website doesn't provide the size of the events. Also Adam pointed out that it is the Chicago Police Department that decides when the roads will be closed for an event, not the Park District or the event organizers.

ADVOCACY – Donnie

The following sign-on letters have been sent on behalf of BCN since the last Quarterly Meeting:

1. To MWRD for supporting Watershed Management Ordinance.
2. In support of HR 2078, Mike Quigley's legislation, which would require the Federal Government's landlord, the General Services Administration, to use bird-safe building materials and design where possible.
3. Asked Governor Quinn to nix I-66 in southern IL.
4. Wrote to Congress in support of full funding for State & Tribal Wildlife Grants Program, North American Wetland Conservation Fund, Neotropical Migratory Bird Fund, Forest Legacy Program and Land and Water Conservation Fund.
5. Wrote in support of a bill which would suspend the use of bee killing pesticides.
6. Urged the banning of the toxic pesticide atrazine.

7. Wrote in support of "full life cycle" conservation programs for migratory birds.
8. Sent several letters regarding programs to diminish feral and free-roaming cat populations, including one to Costco, which had supported TNR in their magazine.
9. Asked U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to list the Gunnison Sage-Grouse under the Endangered Species Act.
10. Doug Stotz represented BCN and others in testimony before CMAP in opposing the Illiana Tollway. Although CMAP voted No, the Metropolitan Policy Committee voted Yes.
11. Urged the Army Corps of Engineers to cancel the New Madrid Floodway Levee Project and St. Johns Basin Project.

TRENDS ANALYSIS and BIRDS OF CONCERN BROCHURE – Eric Secker

The results from the new Trends Analysis continue to look exciting and promising. Eric presented a couple of sample web pages of the species results and compared them to the last analysis in 2007. He pointed out that the accuracy of our trends, when taking into account the amount of standard error, has improved by more than 200% for most species. The Birds of Concern list is currently being worked on by the group formed at the last BCN meeting (Judy Pollock, Nancy Tikalsky, Bob Fisher, Bobbi Asher). Final Trends results will be published once that list has been completed. Eric hopes that this will take place within the next month. It was brought up and discussed that the final results will also incorporate general information about how many points have been covered and how much the BCN Survey has grown since its inception.

PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

1. ABC's Bird Collision Flyers – Bob Fisher. Suggested distribution of ABC's 4-color bird collision flyers to BCN member organizations for wide distribution. The flyers are free from ABC for the cost of shipping: Only \$10 for a box of 3500. The idea was well received. Mary Lou will look into ordering a supply and see if it's possible to put BCN and CBCM logos on it.
2. Bird Monitor's Brunch – Joan Bruchman and Lee Ramsey. The 2014 Monitors' Bird Walk & Brunch will be Saturday, 5/3/14, at Bemis Woods. The bird walk will start at 7:00am followed by the brunch at about 10:00am. Bemis Woods bird monitors Tom Mulcahy, Jeff Anderson and Linda Padera have agreed to help with the bird walk if their schedules permit. We will contact the CCFP to reserve Grove #7 picnic shelter for the brunch. We may not be able to confirm this reservation until after the first of the year. Grove 7 has plenty of parking and is close to washrooms or Porta Potties. Toward the end of this year we'll announce the event through all the BCN venues, and we'll ask everyone planning to come to RSVP with their email address and phone number.
3. Give Back to Birds Day – Mary Lou. The Saturday, Oct. 5th, Give Back to Birds Day at Jarvis Migratory Bird Sanctuary was a success, with a total of about 25 people who either showed up or RSVPed or both. Christine and Geoff Williamson led a very interesting and successful bird walk for about 17 participants. The list from the walk included 42 species of birds, 7 butterflies (Cabbage Whites and Clouded/Orange Sulphurs), 3 Eastern Chipmunks and 5 Eastern Gray Squirrels. After the walk participants enjoyed refreshments at the garage and co-steward Charlotte Newfeld gave a short history of the sanctuary and described the work possibilities. There was a project for everyone's physical level. A great time was had by all! Thanks to co-steward Terry Schilling for setting up this event and to Charlotte for running it so well!
4. Status of BCN Survey and Bird Monitoring – Lee. We have just completed 16 years of bird monitoring in the Chicago Wilderness area.
5. Chicago Wilderness Bird Working Group and Blitz – Judy Pollock. This group includes land managers from county landowning agencies as well as representatives from the Army Corps, four different researchers from local non-profits and a contract biologist. It is led by Judy Pollock and Jim Herkert. Justin Schuetz, Audubon's Director of Conservation Science, is working on a remote sensing process to map grassland bird habitat, using county habitat layers and BCN point count data to train the process. The resulting layer will be used to set realistic goals for Chicago Wilderness for growth in grassland bird populations. This layer should be ready at the end of the winter. Judy Pollock proposed that next summer's Blitz be used to ground-truth areas that appear on the map for which we do not have data. This suggestion was agreeable to the group.

6. Lake Calumet Willow Flycatcher Plan – Judy. As part of the IBA program, Audubon and Friends of the Forest Preserves led a group of public landowners in the Lake Calumet IBA in developing a plan for the Willow Flycatcher. The plan will be posted on the BCN website when it is completed.
7. Bird-friendly Building Ordinance in Evanston – Judy and Donnie. Judy, Donnie and two other volunteers (one from Northwestern Law School and the other an Evanston resident) are working with the city of Evanston and the Evanston Environment Board on promoting this ordinance.
8. Birds in My Neighborhood (Openlands bird education program – Judy. A number of BCN reps and other club members are embarking on the second year of this program, which is an Openlands program supported by Audubon Chicago Region. Birders are trained to engage children in birding by Wendy Paulson, and then make visits to classrooms in the schools in which Openlands has school gardens. The first year was very successful.
9. Red-headed Woodpecker Blitz 2013 – Judy. Will report on this at next meeting.
10. Perkins Woods Path – report from Libby Hill by Mary Lou. Perkins Woods’ crushed granite path is finished; the steering committee has seeded and laid straw atop the seed, and all looks beautiful. Subsequent to this report, the FPD came in with a Bobcat and removed ash trees and destroyed the edges along one-third of the paths. The FPD has faced up to its responsibility and is dealing with it and Libby will be on the case.

BCN BYLAWS REVISION – Mary Lou. New language for Article V, Section 1, as proposed by Terry Schilling at the July 27th Quarterly Meeting:

“A quorum of the Executive Committee shall consist of at least one-half of its members, and must include either the President or Vice-President, and a second elected BCN officer.”

The new wording was discussed and voted upon. The vote was unanimous in acceptance of the new wording. Those who voted “Yes,” in favor of the change, are Chris Van Wassenhove, Dave Willard, CAS; Mary Lou Mellon, Annette Prince, Teri Radke, CBCM; Nancy Tikalsky, COS; Bob Fisher, Glenn Gabanski, DBC; Suzanne Checchia, Lloyd Davidson, ENSBC; Mary Anne Harrison, IAS; Joan Bruchman, IOS; Eric Secker, Kane Cty Aud; Jean Sodemann, Lake-Cook; Judy Pollock, Lee Ramsey, NAS-CR; Donnie Dann, TNC; and Terry Schilling.

No one voted “No,” opposed to the change.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE – Mary Lou appointed Joan Bruchman, immediate past president, to be Chairperson of the Nominating Committee, the duty of which is to prepare a slate of BCN officers for 2014.

NEXT MEETING – The next Quarterly Meeting of BCN will be January 18th at a destination to be announced.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Lou Mellon
President and Acting Secretary