

BCN Quarterly Meeting Minutes
Saturday, January 10, 2015
North Park Village Nature Center

Attendees: Bobbi Asher, Chris Van Wassenhove, Dave Willard, CAS; Mary Lou Mellon, Annette Prince, Teri Radke, CBCM; Nancy Tikalsky, COS; Bob Fisher, Glenn Gabanski, Linda Padera, DBC; Suzanne Checchia, Libby Hill, ENSBC; Joan Bruchman, Judy Pollock, IOS; Eric Secker, Kane Cty Aud; Emma England, Diane Rosenberg, Lake Cty Aud; Dean Engel, Jean Sodemann, Lake-Cook; Lee Ramsey, Rebecca Sanders, NAS-CR; Vera Leopold, Gary Sullivan, TWI; Lee Witkowski, Will Cty Aud

Guest: Nat Miller, NAS-CR

Annual Meeting

The meeting was called to order by President Mary Lou Mellon at 12:45 pm.

1. The minutes of Saturday, October 25, 2014 were approved without corrections or amendments.
2. Joan Bruchman and Nancy Tikalsky presented nominations for the slate of officers for 2015: Mary Lou Mellon, president; Dave Willard, vice-president; Glenn Gabanski, treasurer; Lee Ramsey, secretary. There were no additional nominations, and the slate was unanimously approved.
3. Mellon introduced a proposed member organization: The Wetlands Initiative, represented by Vera Leopold and Gary Sullivan. The motion for membership was moved, seconded, and adopted. In response to a question, Sullivan explained some of TWI's current and planned projects in our area.

Quarterly Meeting

ADMINISTRATION

1. President's comments:

Mellon thanked those who have supported and helped our coalition achieve its goals for the past 12 months. First of all to the Executive Committee: Joan Bruchman, Glenn Gabanski, Bobbi Asher, Suzanne Checchia, Lee Ramsey, Nancy Tikalsky and Dave Willard. Also to our talented and hard-working web master Eric Secker who not only updated Breeding Bird Population Trends of the Chicago Region (1999-2012) and created the new BOC brochure and the revised BCN brochure but also kept our website up to date. To Donnie Dann, Advocacy Chair. And to Bob Fisher and Judy Pollock who have initiated and led so many important projects for BCN. If you would be interested in playing a role on ExCom, please call or email her.

Copies of the BCN 2014 Accomplishments report were distributed. This was to be emailed to all counties' boards of commissioners in personally addressed emails before the end of the month. It is also posted on the BCN website(http://www.bcnbirds.org/BCNdocuments_files/2014Highlights.pdf)

Samples of Bird Tape from ABC were passed around. It is translucent on a window—exterior— and quite inoffensive looking and very effective. Also a copy of the Bird Friendly Building Design book by American Bird Conservancy was passed around.

2. Glenn Gabanski: 2015 BCN Budget Proposal

Copies of the proposed 2015 budget were distributed. It assumes 20 paying organization and three individual memberships. Income is estimated at \$2,775 (which includes \$1,100 from the IWPF grant) and expenses at \$2,890. This results in a deficit of \$115.

There are a few items of note that differ from previous years.

The most expensive is the creation of a Trends Analysis Reserve Fund with the idea that each year BCN will pay \$500 into that fund so that over the years it will grow. Then when it is time to do the next analysis we will have some amount of money to start with.

Next is a proposed increase in the stipend for the Webmaster.

Other items of note:

The \$200 for designing and the \$175 for printing the new BCN brochure that ExCom approved at its recent meeting are in the budget.

Also budgeted are estimated costs for the Monitors' brunch and refreshments for the CCFPD Centennial Celebration and the LaBagh Woods Workday.

An estimate for the burning of more CDs of bird songs for the bird monitors is included.

The Final Report for the IWPF Grant will be completed this month and later this year we should get the \$1,100 we thought we would be getting in 2014.

In the discussion of the budget Joan Bruchman asked that the Monitor Brunch amount be increased from \$200 to \$250. It was moved and seconded to amend the proposed budget as suggested. The motion passed. It was then moved and seconded to approve the amended budget. The motion passed.

Treasurer's Report

Copies of the financial spreadsheet were distributed.

BCN ended 2014 with \$2,758.82 in income and \$4,324.76 in expenses; \$2,116.14 of the expenses is associated with the Trends Analysis and the Birds of Concern brochure. BCN finished the year with a deficit of \$1,565.94. The checkbook balance on Dec. 31, 2014, was \$3,904.79 with no outstanding bills.

BCN received \$1,258.82 in donations in 2014 (an all-time high not counting the Redstart Campaign). The largest donation was \$780 coming from 50% of the sales of Arlene Koziol's photographs on exhibit at the Brushwood Center at Ryerson Woods last January.

Following an opportunity for discussion it was moved and seconded to accept the Treasurer's Report. The motion passed.

Membership Report

All BCN memberships need to be renewed after January 1 of each year and invoices for the dues were sent by email or postal mail to all the reps by 1/5/15. Dues remain at \$75 for organizations and \$25 for individuals. If all members renew and The Wetlands Initiative is accepted as a member then

BCN will have 21 Organizational Members and 3 Individual Members. The deadline to pay the dues is March 21, 2014.

CONSERVATION ISSUES

1. Birds of Concern brochure: Mellon, Bob Fisher

Copies of the new brochure were distributed. Thanks to Eric who designed the brochure and got it printed. Also thanks to those who served on the committee to select the species to be listed and to determine at what level they were to be listed: Eric, Judy Pollock, Bobbi Asher, Bob Fisher, Nancy Tikalsky, Doug Stotz (Field Museum). Article on BCN and the new brochure by Jeff Reiter is to be published in the Daily Herald on January 12th

[\[http://www.dailyherald.com/article/20150112/news/150119925/\]](http://www.dailyherald.com/article/20150112/news/150119925/)

2. Montrose Point Master Plan: Mellon, Judy Pollock

Montrose Point Bird Sanctuary Master Plan Update—Judy and Mary Lou. After several months of delay, the Master Plan is to be presented to the public on Thursday, January 22nd at 5:30pm at Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum. Reps were encouraged to go to this meeting. The stakeholders' group had seen the plans at an earlier meeting, so diagrams of the plans were passed around and Mary Lou described the planned addition of the meadow to the west of the hedge into Montrose and other concepts. From flawed original ideas the plans look positive for incremental changes over five to ten years to benefit migratory birds.

3. Sierra Club Energy Resources Policy, report of progress, as amended 25 Jul 2011: Fisher

Significant progress is being made. See Appendix A for presentation.

4. Audubon Chicago Region projects: Rebecca Sanders & Nat Miller

Chicago's Lighting: Framework Plan--In January 2014, Choose Chicago (Chicago's convention and tourism agency) announced a plan to "light up Chicago" as a tourism strategy. Audubon Chicago Region worked with a coalition of partners to amend the program so that it would incorporate considerations of Lights Out protocol. We've successfully incorporated the Lights Out protocol into the RFP for the project and Audubon Chicago Region is advising the selection committee on the project.

Birding in the Preserves--Audubon is working with the Forest Preserves of Cook County to develop 18 months of programming that highlights the FPCC as a premier birding destination – one of the goals within the Next Century Conservation Plan. More information will be announced at the next quarterly meeting.

Evanston Bird Friendly Building Ordinance--Audubon Chicago Region is working with Citizen's Greener Evanston to build a coalition of partners and community members to pass a Bird Friendly Building Ordinance. We are in the early coalition building phase.

Call for Volunteers: Birds in My Neighborhood--Birds in My Neighborhood is a program administered by Openlands with support from Audubon Chicago Region. The program works with Chicago Public Schools to introduce children to local birds through a classroom session, a neighborhood walk, and a field trip to a park or forest preserve. For brochure, see Appendix B'

Grassland Conservation Project--Since 2013 Audubon Chicago Region has been working on a grassland conservation project funded by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services Upper Midwest & Great Lakes Landscape Conservation Cooperative (LCC). The project aims to develop a bird population model that refines population estimates, helps improve population targets and identifies habitat and potential habitat for conservation. The large majority of the data used to build this model comes from the 2014 Grassland Bird Blitz. Data collected in 2014 is being analyzed by Audubon's science team and results are expected in February 2015.

5. Advocacy: Dean Engel

Engel has been receiving notifications from Steve Holmer at ABC in regard to various initiatives and has been forwarding a letter to the officials listed in the call to action therein. Some of these initiatives are hot-linked to additional initiatives, which can range widely in focus. Example: a letter in regard to a Bayer Company pesticide that may be decimating bee populations and is banned in Europe. He did not send letters for all of the wolf, bear, and other animal causes but added that any feedback is welcome from other chapters as to how they view and respond to these other environmental calls to action.

6. Red-headed Woodpecker blitz: Pollock

We now have all the information from the completed RHWB blitz;. Linda Padera and Judy will work together to compile it into a website.

7. 2014 Bird/Window Collisions and Bird-Friendly Buildings: Annette Prince

CBCM completed a busy fall migration season having recovered more than 7,000 injured birds in 2014. The project continues to address calls for assistance during the winter months in the downtown and other business and residential area. Other urban impacts to birds reported to CBCM include fishing line entanglement, collisions with vehicles, poisoning and attacks by domestic animals.

CBCM is working with building management at several properties to identify ways to make window/lobby areas safer for birds. Annette Prince will present case studies about making buildings safer for birds at the upcoming Wild Things conference.

CBCM is helping Willowbrook Wildlife Center make areas of their buildings more bird-safe.

Willowbrook and Chicago Bird Collision Monitors' partnership to help migratory birds is featured in the wildlife center's 2015 calendar.

CBCM is always looking to expand its network of volunteers and will be announcing training sessions for becoming part of the project in March and April 2015 on their website: www.birdmonitors.net

8. Bird monitoring: Lee Ramsey, Pollock

Almost the entire BCN Survey Council was able to get together for a bit of birding at Springbrook Prairie followed by dinner. It was a lot of fun, and we came away with some good ideas suggested by Council members. The Council will focus on using BCN Survey results to promote good conservation.

Current expansion projects for the Survey: (1) We have been in contact with Lisa Mertz at Campton Township (Kane Co.) and plan to meet soon in order to set up bird monitoring at the 4 sites where they are currently doing restoration. (2) We are also scheduled to present a program at the Indiana Dunes

Birding Festival in May. We are hoping this will lead to a connection between birding interests there and BCN and the BCN Survey. (3) We think the BCN's newest member, The Wetlands Initiative, may offer potential to become more deeply involved in surveying wetlands, the habitat the BCN Survey covers least well.

PROJECTS & INITIATIVES

1. BCN brochure: Mellon

The new BCN brochure was distributed. The brochure features completely rewritten text and updated BCN information re our tax status and new address. Supplies were available for reps to take to their organizations and nature centers, etc.

2. Urban Treaty Grant: Mellon, Pollock

A partnership has been formed to apply for a USFW grant of \$50,000 over two years for restoration to benefit birds in the city of Chicago. Cook County Forest Preserves, Chicago Park District, BCN, CAS, COS and Greencorps Chicago are the partners who have already met to discuss and plan. Judy and Mary Lou represented BCN at the meeting. Judy, Katy Krigbaum (COS) and Michelle Uting (CCFP) will be putting together the proposal, which must be submitted by February 3, 2015. The goals are to increase bird habitat at LaBagh Woods and Burnham Wildlife Corridor, to develop a migratory monitoring protocol and implement it at three sites, and to engage more Chicagoans in birding. The \$50,000 matching funds have been secured for the grant. A motion to approve \$1000 from BCN for this purpose was made, seconded, and passed.

3. Evanston Lakefront Bird Sanctuary: Libby Hill

Northwestern demolished trees along the lakefront in order to build a Visitor Center. The trees had grown up wild in an area north of Clark St. beach and had become a haven for migrants and some nesters. NU had to pay for each tree taken down no matter what size. The money is going be used to create a new bird sanctuary on the lakefront at the northernmost part of the beach to replace what was there.

Northeastern Illinois University's CollidEscape is working on the two courtyard walls where it was installed, and signs are up explaining the installation. (Annette Prince noted that a hawk had flown through one of the worst bird-collision windows that had not been treated with CollidEscape. Hawk is okay.)

4. Wild Things: Pollock

As of the cut-off date for early registration, the number of registrants equaled the total registration for 2013 Wild things. A record turnout is expected.

OTHER BUSINESS

1. Lee Witkowski promoted the Bald Eagle Weekend, sponsored by Illinois Audubon Society, of which Will County AS is a chapter. It will be held Jan 24th and 25th at Starved Rock State Park.

2. Diane Rosenberg: Lake County Audubon Chapter

Lake County Audubon received 501 (c) (3) status in December, 2014. Now there's a far less cumbersome application process. If your organization has thought about becoming a 501(c)(3) but has

been discouraged with the long form application, and perhaps the need for legal counsel, take a look at the new Form 1023-EZ.

To qualify for the EZ form, applicants must complete the Form 1023-EZ Eligibility Worksheet, which can be found on line and consists of only 26 questions. The 1023-EZ form itself is only 3 pages! The EZ form can only be filed on line. There is a \$400 filing fee which must accompany the application. If you'd like further information or help with the Eligibility Worksheet, please contact Diane: dbr333@aol.com.

3. Chris Van Wassenhove: The Chicago Audubon Society is holding its biennial Environmental Awards Banquet on March 28, 2015. They are accepting nominations through Thursday, January 22, 2015. Please send any nominations to Alan Anderson. Details can be found on the website at chicagoaudubon.org. Bobbi Asher will be giving the evening's program, A Birder's Trip to Cuba. The event will take place at the Silver Stallion Restaurant in Des Plaines beginning with a 6 pm dinner.

The next meeting will be held Saturday, 11 April, at the Dann's home.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Lee Ramsey, Secretary

APPENDIX A: Sierra Club Energy Resources Policy, report of progress, as amended 25 Jul 2011

- Wind energy disturbs sensitive/endangered plants and wildlife.
- Existing wind farms with significant impacts on avian/bat populations to be modified to mitigate impacts; if modifications are ineffective, turbines should be curtailed/dismantled.
- Select locations with lesser impacts for new projects.
- Offshore sites may access superior wind resources, but may disturb coastal/marine habitats.
- Environmental impacts of wind can be reduced via siting, technology choice, reliable pre-construction monitoring, and operations.
- SC supports research, both general and site-specific, plus development of new technologies, to minimize/mitigate impacts of wind energy systems on plants/wildlife.

GREAT POLICY

- But in practice..SC chapters and groups went their own way. Zeal for wind as 'the answer' to global warming led local SC people to ignore the impacts of wind on wildlife.
- The poster child for this behavior: The Ohio Chapter and associated groups, dismissing impacts on wildlife (birds) while promoting wind at all costs in Lake Erie.

SC's NATIONAL LEADERSHIP RESPONSE? a SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE IN POLICY!

Chapters should consult the Clean Energy Solutions Campaign, which is led by staff and volunteers, before taking a position on any large scale renewable project or transmission proposal on public or private land in their region. If there is disagreement, the matter will be decided by the Co-Pair for Programs and Campaigns--the Sierra Club Vice-President for Conservation, and the Deputy Conservation Director. A staff and volunteer led Renewable Energy Siting Advisory Committee may advise the Co-Pairs in their decision making.

The 2 page USFWS pdf is calling attention to the potential for that agency to change policy and make their current voluntary guidelines into mandatory regulations. It's also a call for action, complete with a hot link so BCN member organizations and individuals can offer comments, presumably to encourage mandatory regs. These comments must be sent by 1/29 so we only have 17 days to get the word out, etc.

I've emailed Michael Hutchins to see if ABC has some sort of key points list we could also distribute, so those who want to comment would do more than just say 'regulations would be good'.

A CHANGE IN USFWS REGULATORY POLICY ON WIND?

- Late in 2014, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service acknowledged publicly that its voluntary wind energy guidelines are not working to keep wind energy facilities out of areas that are high risk to wildlife. The Service also acknowledged publicly that it is considering regulating.

WE CAN HELP CHANGE USFWS REGULATORY POLICY ON WIND!

"...questioned whether the use of voluntary guidelines is effective due to a lack of use by public and private entities...referenced a map showing that wind energy facilities have been, and continue to be, developed in areas of high risk to migratory birds, contrary to the purpose of the Guidelines to guide development away from areas of highest risk to more suitable areas.

We are currently in the process of evaluating the efficacy and use of the Guidelines, and the Service is considering regulatory options. Based on feedback from the wind energy, and from Service staff, the Guidelines are often successful in improving communication and lead to development of wind projects that are safer for wildlife, but in other cases are not successful in preventing wind energy facilities from being constructed in areas of high risk to wildlife."

Comments due by 29 Jan 2015

<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-12-30/pdf/2014-30481.pdf>

APPENDIX B: Birds in Neighborhood brochure follows on next page

Birds In My Neighborhood®



CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

Birds In My Neighborhood® is a volunteer-driven program for 2nd to 5th grade classrooms with the goal of acquainting students with nature in their community through the observation of birds.

Connecting students with nature at school and close to home is the best way to start them on a lifetime passion for the environment. Openlands has installed school gardens at 58 schools since 2006. Through Birds In My Neighborhood, Openlands works with Audubon Chicago Region to bring knowledgeable volunteers to these schools to further establish the connection between CPS students and the local environment.



Volunteers are needed to engage students in birding, increasing awareness of nature in Chicago. We seek volunteers that enjoy working with children. Preexisting knowledge about birds is great, but an interest in learning more is essential! There are two ways to volunteer:

Become a Volunteer Instructor

Responsibilities include:

- Attending training sessions
 - Program Overview and Classroom Lesson Tutorial (2.5-hr training, on February 4th, 2015)
 - Bird Walk tutorial (2.5-hr training on March 5th, 2015)
- Set the visit schedule with your assigned teacher
- Lead three visits with students: in-classroom lesson, bird walk in the schoolyard, and a field trip to a local natural area (April/May)

Provide Field Trip Support

Responsibilities include:

- Attending training sessions on leading bird walks (2.5-hr training on March 5th, 2015)
- Coordinate schedule with Openlands Education Programs Coordinator
- Attend at least one field trip and support Volunteer Instructors by identifying birds and/or managing students

Interested? Contact John Cawood, Openlands Education Programs Coordinator

Phone: 312-863-6276

Email: JCawood@openlands.org



Birds in my Neighborhood is funded through the US Forest Service International Programs, with support from Audubon Chicago Region.

