

**BCN Quarterly Meeting Minutes**  
**Saturday, April 11, 2015**  
**60 Ravinoaks Dr, Highland Park, IL**

Attendees: Bobbi Asher, CAS; Thomas Barnes, NAS-CR; Suzanne Checchia, ENSBC; Sonny Cohen, Lake-Cook; Donnie Dann, TNC; Emma England, Lake Cty Aud; Bob Fisher, DBC; Glenn Gabanski, DBC; Gary Hantsbarger, ENSBC; Libby Hill, ENSBC; Vera Leopold, TWI; Mary Lou Mellon, CBCM; Nat Miller, NAS-CR; Debra Nord, McH Aud; Judy Pollock, IOS; Teri Radke, CBCM; Diane Rosenberg, Lake Cty Aud; Eric Secker, Kane Cty Aud; Jean Sodemann, Lake-Cook; Nancy Tikalsky, COS; Chris Van Wassenhove, CAS; Dave Willard, CAS; Christine Williamson, COS

Guests: Suzanne Malec-McKenna, Chicago Wilderness; Chris Monaghan

The meeting was called to order by President Mary Lou Mellon.

**ADMINISTRATION**

The minutes of Saturday, January 10, 2015, were approved without corrections or amendment.

**Treasurer's Report: Glenn Gabanski**

Copies of the financial spreadsheet were distributed. A summary follows.

Income YTD	Dues: \$1,375
	Grants: \$1,100 (IWPf Grant from last year)
	Donations: \$844.20
	<b>Total: \$3,319.20</b>
Expenses YTD	Licenses, etc. \$10
	Dues to IEC: \$150
	Postage/Supplies: \$30.16
	Printing: \$215.50 (BCN brochure)
	Conf. Calls: \$51.40
	Misc. \$150 (Design of BCN Brochure)
	<b>Total: \$607.06</b>

**Net Income: \$2,712.14**

**Checkbook balance: \$6,616.93**

Items of note:

\$1,000 yet to be paid if Urban Treaty Grant is awarded (would be payable in 2016).

\$500 set aside in Trends Analysis Reserve Fund.

Funds Balance: (includes known amounts receivable and payable): **\$5,641.93**

Acceptance of the treasurer's report was moved, seconded and approved.

**Membership Report: Gabanski**

As of the March 31 deadline, all but one organization and two individuals have renewed. Reminders were sent to all three: Prairie Woods Audubon Society and individuals Terry Schilling and Dawn Smith. Additional reminders will be sent between now and June 30 when unpaid dues results in loss of membership.

## **CONSERVATION ISSUES**

### **Advocacy: Donnie Dann**

Highland Park passed code changes three years ago to require that new public buildings be constructed with bird-friendly designs. Highland Park's Natural Resources Commission liked Dann's proposal for a code change that will apply to new single and multifamily construction. The issue was given to staff who will consider the implementation of the proposed code change with the intent of making a formal recommendation to the Highland Park City Council.

Dann took the following actions on behalf of BCN:

- accepted the American Bird Conservancy's cats indoors pledge;
- reiterated opposition to the proposed Illiana Tollway;
- commented in opposition to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's voluntary wind production siting guidelines;
- signed on to Center for Biodiversity's letter opposing the Sportsmen's Act of 2015, which would prevent the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency from banning lead in upland hunting ammunition and fishing tackle;
- joined Illinois Partners for Parks in opposing sweeps of designated OSLAD and NAAF funds;
- commented to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service about coastal management practices;
- supported the master plan for Gillson Park in Wilmette.

### **Fort Sheridan changes: Dann and Sonny Cohen**

The Lake County Forest Preserve District has done a fairly good job of managing the Fort Sheridan property for wildlife. The district will shift the large center grassland area from grassland to savanna by planting 2,600 trees there.

However, without permitting public comment, LCFPD is planning to remove parking from its current convenient location primarily to discourage people from swimming at Fort Sheridan's unpatrolled beach and to protect the 200-foot-high bluff from erosion from uncontrolled foot traffic, Cohen said. Parking will be moved to a lot in the far southwest corner of the property. Efforts are being made to secure overflow parking in the Metra station parking lot across Sheridan Road.

Cohen and other citizens crafted an alternative plan that will recommend keeping the current central parking lot open, plant a tree buffer on the western boundary of the property, and maintain the grasslands without additional planted trees. The alternative plan was presented to the Lake County Board. He suggested that the issues of the location of the parking lot and the preservation of the grassland should be treated separately.

Dann suggested that the ecological benefits of the grassland habitat are important for rare and threatened breeding birds, especially in a semi-urban area where there are no other nearby grassland habitats. Bob Fisher said he supports the LCFPD's plan to restore the Fort Sheridan natural area to its historical condition as an oak savanna. Fisher suggested that BCN concentrate on the habitat conversion question rather than the parking lot relocation.

Mellon requested that the two Lake County BCN member groups (Lake-Cook Audubon Society and Lake County Audubon Society) consider the alternative and LCFPD plans and provide their opinions to BCN. She will then share those opinions with the other BCN members and asked that groups write to the LCFPD about their conclusions.

### **Waste Management No-Mow Landfill Campaign: Bob Fisher**

Fisher said he has been talking to Waste Management about not mowing its grasslands on active and closed landfills until after Aug. 15 to accommodate nesting birds.

**Chicago Wilderness Wildlife Committee: Fisher**

Fisher attended a recent meeting and presented BCN's Birds of Concern brochure and supporting data. The goal was to educate the region's professional agency land managers about the bird list and BCN's Trends Analysis data collection efforts.

**DuPage County Forest Preserve District: Fisher**

Fisher said the district is in chaos, without an executive director. A solution is not apparent.

**Birds of Concern media campaign: Fisher**

So far, no solid hits, but Fisher may try again in the summer.

**Grassland Planning Initiative: Nat Miller and Thomas Barnes**

Miller said the Audubon Chicago Region initiative is using regional/landscape-level planning for habitat preservation and planning, based on BCN trends data and birding blitz data from the summer of 2014. Seven counties are included in the model, which considers land vegetative cover and forecasts maximum existing bird populations of five species: Eastern Meadowlark, Grasshopper Sparrow, Sedge Wren, Bobolink and Henslow's Sparrow.

Miller said Audubon staff now are working with Cook and Lake County forest preserve land management planners about acquiring and managing land for the benefit of the five target grassland species; these managers already are using a spatial planning approach.

**Wilmette Park District: Mary Lou Mellon**

Wilmette's ballot referendum for new lake front construction failed, but will likely reappear. With BCN's encouragement, Karen Glennemeier had convinced the Wilmette Park District to make any development bird-friendly before the election.

**Waukegan Harbor Redevelopment: Mellon and Libby Hill**

The Waukegan Harbor Citizen's Advisory Group was advised by Mellon that any new construction on the lakefront should be of bird-friendly design. Teri Radke asked that a tour of the redevelopment sites be arranged. Christine Williamson suggested that BCN talk to the Citizen's Advisory Group about public lands and habitat preservation.

Nat Miller said Audubon Chicago Region has been talking to potential players now because the final remediation of the Johns Manville property will be finished this year. He suggested that BCN and other groups make recommendations now for areas that should be preserved as habitat or for public access. For example, a portion of the northern boundary of the JM property would be an ideal border between any development to the south and Illinois Dunes State Park.

**BCN Data Analysis: Judy Pollock**

A sub-committee of BCN members reviewed the organization's data analysis because the trends database has become a bit too big for Eric Secker to handle. Chris Monaghan, a database specialist, and Gary Hantsbarger, a statistician, have volunteered to manage the database and analyze the data more efficiently.

**Longmeadow Bridge/Parkway Project in Kane Count: Eric Secker**

A new six-mile road is being constructed north of Carpentersville at a cost of \$97 million. The county is having trouble raising the money for the road project. The road will bisect the 750-acre Brunner Forest Preserve and will pass close to a Bald Eagle roost. The Kane County Council made the decision without public comment, based on a 28-year old plan and an expired Environmental Impact Statement.

Secker said the biggest problem is that Kane County seeks to make the bridge a toll bridge over the Fox River in order to help fund the road project. State legislation is required to authorize the new toll bridge. A ballot referendum about the decision will be put to voters residing in Dundee Township.

A motion to oppose the proposed Longmeadow Bridge/Parkway project in Kane County was moved, seconded and passed.

## **CHICAGO WILDERNESS UPDATE**

### **Suzanne Malec-McKenna, executive director**

Chicago Wilderness now has 338 members covering an area that touches four states with more than 10 million residents. CW has 41 working committees. Malec-McKenna joined CW about a year ago and has spent the ensuing time with the small CW staff reviewing all aspects of the organization's operations in order to remain effective and relevant. The CW model is changing, Malec-McKenna said, to remain a hub of information and serve as a regional conservation leader to leverage strategy, to become more politically active.

Six areas will be the focus of the organization over the next five years: oak eco-systems; priority species; water as a resource; landowners; public engagement; and data and member tools (aka "information curation").

## **PROJECTS & INITIATIVES**

### **Birds of Concern: Mellon**

A second printing of 5,000 more brochures at a cost of about \$600 was approved by ExCom.

### **BCN Facebook page/group: Eric Secker**

Secker recommended that a group would be more popular and useful than a page.

Mellon said a sub-committee will talk later about FB possibilities. Secker, Williamson, Barnes and England agreed to help as administrators.

### **BCN Bird Surveys: Judy Pollock**

Survey leaders have been active in talking to various agencies about bird survey work and conservation plans. Monitors will be asked to record information about habitat and conservation plans for their sites. A recruitment drive for new monitors is underway. BCN now is working with the Lincoln Park Zoo on potential data analysis and migration surveys. Pollock has been talking to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers about better bird detectability protocols.

### **Clark Street Beach Bird Sanctuary in Evanston: Libby Hill**

Evanston has approved a bird sanctuary just south of Northwestern University, and habitat fencing and planting is available. Friends of Clark Street Beach Sanctuary has been formed to provide volunteer education and maintenance support. Hill hopes that Evanston North Shore Bird Club will assume responsibility for education and maintenance.

### **Wetlands Initiative: Vera Leopold**

A 24-hour bio-blitz is planned for June 13–14 at the Dixon Waterfowl Refuge (formerly Hennepin-Hopper) Preserve in Putnam County. More information is available on the group's website <http://www.wetlands-initiative.org/upcoming-events/245-refuge-bioblitz.html>. Pre-registration is required.

**DuPage County Bio-Blitz: Glenn Gabanski**

In celebration of its 100-year anniversary, the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County is hosting its first-ever bio-blitz on June 26, 2015. The blitz will cover 3,700 acres over a 24-hour period beginning at 5:00 p.m. in four high-quality preserves: Blackwell, St. James Farm, Herrick Lake and Danada. Volunteers with expertise in identifying birds, insects, amphibians, mammals or plants are sought. Meals, snacks and drinks will be provided to volunteers. Interested volunteers should complete the Citizen Scientists Survey by copying and pasting the following link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/CitizenScientistSurvey>.

For more information, see [dupageforest.org/bioblitz](http://dupageforest.org/bioblitz) or contact Carl Strang at 630/206-9581 or [cstrang@dupageforest.org](mailto:cstrang@dupageforest.org).

**LaBagh Woods: Nancy Tikalsky**

COS is doing a group big year at LaBagh Woods to raise money for new native plantings for habitat restoration at the site. About \$5,000 has been committed to date. COS is not a sales-tax exempt organization, but BCN is. COS transferred money for planting to BCN which paid for planting and fencing, which saves a fair amount in taxes on the purchases.

Williamson said there are five upcoming trips to LaBagh cosponsored by COS and Sierra Chicago Group, a mixture of birding and workday trips.

**Bird Monitors Brunch: Mary Lou Mellon**

May 2 is the date for the annual monitors' bird walk and picnic at Half Day Forest Preserve.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

The next meeting will be held Saturday, 25 July, probably at Sagawau Environmental Center.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,  
Christine Williamson, Recording Secretary