

**Bird Conservation Network Meeting**  
**April 15, 2017**  
**Sagawau Environmental Learning Center, Lemont, Ill.**

Present: Bobbi Asher, CAS; Stephanie Beilke, Audubon Great Lakes; Mary Bernat, Thorn Creek Aud.; Suzanne Checchia, ENSBC; Donnie Dann, TNC; Emma England, Lake County Aud; Bob Fisher, IAS; Glenn Gabanski, DBC; Carl Giometti, COS; Vera Leopold, Wetlands Initiative; Mary Lou Mellon, CBCM; Tom Mulcahy, DBC; Judy Pollock, IOS; Annette Prince, CBCM; Lee Ramsey, Audubon Great Lakes; Diane Rosenberg, Lake County Aud.; Terry Schilling, at large; Jean Sodemann, Lake-Cook; Nancy Tikalsky, COS; Dave Willard, CAS; Christine Williamson, COS

**Introductions**

**Administration**

Approval of minutes of Jan. 28, 2017 meeting at Garfield Park Conservatory  
Motion: The Bird Conservation Network approves minutes of the Jan. 28, 2017 meeting.  
Moved: Rosenberg  
Second: Fisher  
Action: Passed

**Treasurer's Report – Glenn Gabanski**

2017 Income:

Dues:	\$1,970
Donations:	\$797.50
Total:	\$2,767.50

2017 Expenses:

Misc.:	\$315.85
NFWF Grant:	\$8,259.75
Total:	\$8,575.60

Net Income: **-\$5,808.10** Loss due only to NFWF Grant expenses paid in 2017 with income from 2016.

BCN gain is \$2,451.65. However, BCN still needs to pay the \$1,000 pledge to the NFWF Grant.

Checkbook balance as of 3/15/17: \$14,542.13. The balance is inflated due to over \$4,600 in grant expenses yet to be paid in 2017.

Funds Balance as of 3/15/17: \$6,721.27. This is the BCN balance after adjusting for expected amounts receivable and payable. Note that this reflects funds available after the \$1,000 pledge to NFWF Grant is paid in 2017

Federal tax form 990EZ and state form AG990-IL were filed in March to comply with BCN's tax reporting obligations.

**Membership report – Glenn Gabanski**

All but one BCN member (Peoria Audubon) has paid 2017 dues.

## **Conservation Issues:**

### **Advocacy Report – Donnie Dann**

As I've said many times, I encourage others among us to be individual advocates, whenever possible, signing petitions, contacting legislators, and otherwise speaking up for birds. They obviously cannot do it for themselves.

Since the previous meeting in January 2017, BCN has advocated the following.

1-22-17 - Submitted comments supporting the Kankakee National Wildlife Refuge and Conservation Area, and specifically as it affects our native birds and the unique set of habitats contained within the delineated area.

1-30-17 - With ExCom's consent signed on to a letter opposing the nomination of Representative Zinke to be Interior Secretary

2-6-17 – Bob Fisher and I worked continuously to drum up opposition to Illinois Senate Bill B 641. The bill would allow state funds intended only to pay for the neutering and spaying of pets of low-income state residents to be used to support Trap Neuter Release feral cat colonies.

As of this date, the bill had passed out of the Senate Agriculture Committee and is in its second reading on the Senate Floor. Calls to state senators are essential. During the period from 1-1-17 through 2-28-17 a sham Task Force convened twice and recommended against this legislation.

During the period from 1-1-17 through 2-28-17 a Feral Cat Task Force (created under SJR 53) convened twice. It's important to note that SB 641 was introduced before the Task Force held its first meeting. This action supports the conclusion that the Task Force was nothing more than political cover for SB 641, not a good faith effort to address the many questions relating to public funding of TNR.

At the second Task Force meeting in late February, a Task Force 'finding' in support of SB 641 was presented by pro TNR advocates and was brought to a vote. That vote was 8-7 in favor. Neither advance notice nor an agenda was sent to the Task Force, indicating that this finding would be brought up for a vote at the second meeting. Two Task Force members were unable to attend that second meeting. Those two absent members registered their opposition (for the record) to the finding after the meeting and their 'votes' would have resulted in a 9-8 vote against the finding.

2-6-17 - Joined over 300 conservation groups to support Together for Birds, a petition to Congress.

2-13-17 Signed-on to letter of opposition to the Western Governors Association's (WGA) policy resolution and recommendations that would significantly weaken the Endangered Species Act.

2-28-17 Signed on and worked to get others to sign on to HB 3458 Illinois Natural Areas Stewardship Act (the bill number has since changed to HB 2031). This bill would allow land trusts and similar NGO's to access NAAF funds for stewardship on Nature Preserves and Land and Water Reserves.

3-15-17 "Slipped" in favor of SB 1989, authorizing a permanent CEO and staff for the Endangered Species Protection Board

3-30-17 Asked Dave Willard to write a letter to the editor of the Tribune in support of SB 1985, a bill to ban the use of lead ammunition in Illinois.

4-15-17 Dann asked that all present call their state senators and ask that he or she oppose Senate Bill 641 that would provide funding from the Illinois Pet Population Fund for Trap Neuter Release feral cat colonies.

Bob Fisher said the Illinois Environmental Council will draft a letter and send it to all Illinois senators to ask them to oppose SB641. Every major environmental organization in the state has registered its opposition to the bill.

### **Advocacy Report – David Willard (see letters on the BCN website)**

Willard also wrote a letter to the editor of the Chicago Tribune regarding the need to ban lead from hunting ammunition and fishing tackle that has not been published yet.

Willard wrote letters to the architects of the Obama Library and the Obama Foundation urging that a bird-safe building design be used for the library.

### **Urban Treaty Grant – Judy Pollock**

The grant monies will be used by August 2017. Three activities were: habitat plantings at LaBagh Woods; International Migratory Bird Day celebration at LaBagh Woods on May 20; and bird monitoring at LaBagh Woods and Montrose Beach and Point. Burnham Wildlife Corridor also needs more monitors. BCN members are encouraged to attend our IMBD event at LaBagh Woods on May 20 from 9:00 -11:30 a.m.

### **Chicago Wilderness' demise – Judy Pollock and Bob Fisher**

Fisher said BCN's annual monitoring reports were primarily distributed to members of Chicago Wilderness. He suggested that organizations be given access to the CW member addresses for future distribution.

Pollock said member groups are gathering soon to try to find a way to keep the organization alive as a volunteer organization or possibly through a new fiscal agent. She suggested that BCN should communicate its concerns and interests in keeping programs going to the two co-chairs of what remains of CW.

Also, CW's Red-headed Woodpecker Priority Species program is uncertain. has not been adopted by another organization so far. Fisher suggested that BCN assume responsibility for the RHWO program and work with the existing RHWO Task Force. Grant funding may be required.

The existing team – mainly county forest preserve district officials – remains in place, but BCN would need funding for monitoring to find new RHWO populations; note locations of existing breeding populations; and for species-specific habitat restoration activities.

Dave Willard will request by email that BCN reps interested in becoming involved in the RHWO task force contact him.

### **Jackson Park issues – Dave Willard** Chicago Audubon held a program recently about the birding issues at Jackson Park.

The main issues of contention are the existing Yoko Ono statue; proposals for the redesign of the Jackson Park and South Shore Cultural Center golf courses; the proposed Obama Library; the proposed Project 120 pavilion which is in a bad location re: birds and features a dangerous glassy design; and ongoing habitat restoration.

### **Obama Library issues – Dave Willard (see letter on the BCN website) and Annette Prince**

Prince said the presentation by the library's architects did not reveal anything about the design of the building. But she said she was reassured that by architects' general philosophy about the

building being designed to be part of the existing landscape and the firm's previous designs did not focus on glassy exteriors. Carl Giometti noted that the library's local architectural firm may ultimately have more say in the design than the "concept" architecture firm.

### **Projects and initiatives:**

#### **Trends analysis: frequency and funding – Dave Willard**

Willard said the ExCom is wondering about when BCN should produce a new trends analysis. The last report, which covered four years' worth of data, was published four years ago.

Fisher noted that the BCN monitoring database now is much larger than it was for the previous trends analysis. He suggested that the next report should analyze data from the beginning of data collection through year-end 2016.

Pollock said the Urban Wildlife Institute at Lincoln Park Zoo offered to analyze BCN monitoring data free. Pollock will check with LPZ to be sure the offer is still valid.

Williamson suggested that an executive summary/brochure be published for general distribution rather than publishing the entire report, which could be made available in PDF format on BCN's website.

Gabanski said there's \$1,500 being held in reserve for the next trends analysis report.

Fisher suggested that a symposium about the data be presented for local birders.

#### **BCN Survey – Emma England**

England gave a presentation at Wild Things about the BCN Survey. England did not receive responses to her efforts to recruit new monitors, but Pollock met several interested people whom the team is following up with.

The invitation for the Monitor's Brunch went out in March. The event will take place on July 15th at Glacial Park in McHenry County. So far the number of RSVPs has been low at 11 people.

Judy, Vicky Sroczynski and England worked on a document that is designed to help assess potential monitors' bird song knowledge. We used the BCN bird song CD as a basis for this but reduced the number of birds that we suggest people learn so that it is less daunting. We split it up into habitat type and there are 61 bird species listed. The list has gone out to current monitors and is being sent to anyone that expresses an interest in monitoring.

England volunteered to review the BCN website, with a focus on the BCN survey pages, and inform Eric Secker of needed updates.

Pollock said a new version of the survey mobile app is in the planning stages.

Schilling suggested that a web app would be the best option because it would most easily accessed on different devices.

Pollock proposed that regular monitors have the ability to take a year off from their regular site in order to participate in special projects where they would monitor at new sites.

Response from BCN representatives was mixed and a decision was postponed.

#### **Bird the Preserves – Judy Pollock**

There will be a Big Month competition in October! Teams will adopt a preserve in the Cook County Forest Preserve District properties to win prizes.

Spanish language walks in CCFPD preserves.

Combination bird walk-habitat restoration workdays are planned. These will be branded as Give Back to Birds days.

Total-site birding blitz days are planned for June 3 and June 17 in the Palos area.

### **Give Back to Birds Day – Christine Williamson**

The BCN/COS/Sierra Club jointly sponsored event is planned at Rainbow Beach on Aug. 26, beginning with a bird walk at 7:00 a.m. Seed collection and other habitat restoration work will start at 9:00. Coffee and snacks (brunch!) will be provided. An advertisement for the event will be emailed to BCN member group representatives.

### **Other**

#### **BCN meeting places – Dave Willard**

Terry Schilling suggested two places where BCN has previously met: Wood Dale Park District, centrally located in DuPage County, and Gibson Woods Nature Center in Indiana. Reps should send other suggestions for meeting sites to Willard.

#### **Clark Street Beach Bird Sanctuary – Suzanne Checchia**

More bird sightings are needed at this small sanctuary that's just south of Northwestern University in Evanston. Birders are asked to record their sightings for the site on eBird.

#### **Next Meeting – Dave Willard**

The next BCN meeting is scheduled for July 22, location TBD.

#### **Motion: The Bird Conservation Network approved meeting adjournment.**

Moved: Sodemann

Second: Leopold

Action: Passed