

**Bird Conservation Meeting
July 22, 2017
Donnie Dann's home**

Present: Bobbi Asher (CAS); Stephanie Beilke (AUD GL); Mary Bernat (TC AUD); Suzanne Brasche (Peoria Aud); Suzanne Checchia (ESN); Donnie Dann(TNC); Dennis Endicott (Peoria Aud); Bob Fisher (IAS); Glenn Gabanski (DBC); Libby Hill (ENS); Vera Leopold (TWI); Mary Lou Mellon(CBCM); Tom Mulcahy (DBC); Judy Pollock (IOS); Lee Ramsey (AUD GL); Diane Rosenberg (Lake County AUD); Terry Schilling(At large); Ron Skleney (DBC); Jean Sodemann (Lake Cook AUD); Nancy Tikalsky (COS); Chris Van Wassenhove (CHI AUD); Jenny Vogt (AUD GL); Dave Willard (CHI AUD); Christine Williamson (COS); Ted Wolff (IOS).

Motion: Bird Conservation Network approved minutes from the April 15, 2017 meeting.

Moved: Rosenberg

Second: Dann

Action: Passed

Treasurer's report – Glenn Gabanski

2017 Income:

Dues:	\$2,070
Donations:	\$797.50
Total:	\$2,867.50

2017 Expenses:

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

Net Income: **\$5,708.10** Loss due only to NFWF Grant expenses paid in 2017 with income from 2016.

BCN gain is \$2,551.65. However, BCN still needs to pay the \$1,000 pledge to the NFWF Grant.

Checkbook balance as of 7/22/17: \$14,642.13. The balance is inflated due to over \$4,600 in grant expenses yet to be paid in 2017.

Funds Balance as of 7/22/17: \$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.

Trends Analysis reserve Fund Balance: \$1,500. This money, still in the checking account balance, is in addition to the Funds Balance, and is held in reserve for the next trends analysis.

Membership Report

All members paid their dues by the June 30 deadline. Membership remains at 21 Organization and 2 Individual memberships.

Advocacy report – Donald Dann

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

1. 4-27 Submitted Witness Slip as "Proponent" of SB1029, the Stewardship Act. It passed both houses of the General Assembly; Governor Rauner has yet to sign it.

2. 5-12 Sign on to letter opposing David Bernhardt as Deputy Sec. of the Interior.
3. 5-30 Sign-on to letter to FCC opposing Potential Elimination of NEPA Reviews for Communication Towers.
4. 6-14 Signed on to letter opposing the gutting of the Endangered Species Act. 6-30 Opposed the siting of an asphalt recycling plant near Waterfall Glen.
5. 7-7 Joined ABC in supporting a variety of bills relative to migratory birds, bird safe buildings, pollinators, and more
6. 7-17 Letter to various local authorities relative to the potential development of Jackson Park
7. Advocacy this quarter has been focused on opposing the use of "Pet-Pop" (state funds intended for low-income Illinois residents) money to support feral cat colonies (SB 641). Bob Fisher's help has been invaluable in this effort.
8. Dann suggested that BCN consider hiring a part-time lobbyist. Fisher said better organizing tools are needed to contact and encourage more birders and conservationists to lobby against Trap-Neuter-Release proposals. Dann also suggested that the BCN Feral Cat Task Force be resurrected to brainstorm new lobbying and organizing processes.

Jackson Park issues – Dave Willard

The Obama Library on the west side of Jackson Park as well as other proposed projects including concert venues, a PGA-level course and a sledding hill, are of concern because their impact on birds, wildlife and natural areas. Willard and Dann co-authored a letter on behalf of BCN to Alderman Leslie Hairston regarding an ecological vision for the natural restoration of Jackson Park. It was suggested that the letter be sent to city and Chicago Park District officials, the Obamas and the Obama Library liaison to the CPD. Christine Williamson suggested that the original letter be adapted for an op/ed or Letter to the Editor for a local paper.

Future of Forest Preserve District of Cook County habitat plans – Mary Bernat

Bernat said she thinks the FPDCC's plans to restore 30,000 of its acres to Illinois Nature Preserve quality is in jeopardy. The 2016 budget allocated \$6 million for habitat restoration and \$5 million for maintenance of existing restored areas. The 2015 budget allocated \$6 million for restoration. By contrast, the 2017 budget only includes a total of \$3.9 million for habitat restoration and no money for maintenance. Bernat said that the FPDCC's mowing practices should be reviewed because they are detrimental to habitat in some cases. For example, at Plum Creek FP, the meadow grass around the parking lot was allowed to get long enough to attract breeding Bobolinks and Eastern Meadowlarks before it was mowed in June and potentially destroyed nests. Insufficient mowing in other areas of Plum Creek FP has resulted in shrubs growing in grasslands where they should not be present.

Bernat also said mowers are spreading aggressive, non-native seeds between sites. Terry Schilling suggested that the FPDCC should use Bush Hog mowers in the grassland to control shrub growth because grass mowers are unable to cut shrubs and that mowers spread seeds from all parts of the equipment, not just the blades.]

Judy Pollock suggested that Bernat send a note to the FPDCC's ecology team and ask that they address the issue with the district's maintenance staff.

Bird the Preserves – Judy Pollock

Chicago Audubon Society received a grant to create a report about bird conservation in the Cook County Forest Preserve District in conjunction with local bird groups. Maps of breeding birds of conservation concern locations will be created. A best-practices section of the report will document how CCFPD will manage habitat to benefit these rare species. CCFPD mowing practices for grassland bird habitat would likely be included and would address one of the issues at Plum Creek brought up by Mary Bernat.

Stephanie Beilke said Audubon Great Lakes is collecting management regime data and bird data for FPCC grasslands, as well as for grasslands in five other Chicago Region counties.

Pollock said the hope is that other area Pollock said a good outcome would be that other area county forest preserve districts will similarly map BCN results.

Pollock asked whether communications training for birders to provide better community outreach would be helpful for the BCN birding community. The group was supportive of the idea.
The bird the preserves campaign is sponsoring a big month birding competition in October.
A June birding blitz in the Palos area had good attendance and found 100 species.

Red-headed Woodpecker project – Bob Fisher

Fisher and Pollock talked to John Legge, Nature Conservancy, and offered to have BCN assume the role of advocate for habitat restoration to benefit RHWO. The BCN volunteer team - Emma England, Vera Leopold and Steve Mitten – will continue to monitor RHWO breeding populations and will work with the CW Oak Ecosystems Recovery Plan Team

Bird monitor's brunch – Judy Pollock

25 BCN bird monitors attended the thank-you brunch of July 15 at Glacial Park in McHenry County.
A beta version for access to BCN data is being tested.

Lake Cook Audubon Chimney Swift Towers – Jean Sodemann

LCA raised more than \$2,400 to provide Cook County Forest Preserve District with enough money to build and install three Chimney Swift towers at Crabtree Nature Center, River Trails Nature Center and Camp Reinberg.

Northwestern University – Libby Hill

Northwestern's new lakefront building has proved to be deadly, responsible for many bird collisions. Evanston birders supplied Northwestern's community liaison with data and pictures. He in turn approached Northwestern about the need to deal with the bird collision problem at Kellogg and other problematic buildings. Northwestern brought in Christine Shepherd, the collisions expert from the American Bird Conservancy. Shepherd surveyed campus buildings and the university is awaiting Shepherd's report. The expectation is a three-tier plan for current and planned buildings. The first tier will be implemented before fall bird migration if possible. Hill said a volunteer team will monitor campus buildings going forward.

Bird monitor's brunch – Judy Pollock

25 BCN bird monitors attended the thank-up brunch on July 15 at Glacier Park in McHenry County.
A beta version for mobile access to BCN data is being tested.

Give Back to Birds Day – Christine Williamson

An advertisement for this combination bird walk-habitat work day was sent to all BCN reps for distribution to member groups. Williamson said the event likely will be well-attended. Additional bird walk leaders may be needed: please contact Williamson birdchris@aol.com if you can help lead the bird walk.

Executive Committee Nominating Committee – Nancy Tikalsky

Tikalsky is heading up the committee searching for candidates to be appointed to the Executive Committee. Send suggestions to her by email- ntikalsky@hotmail.com.

Wetlands Initiative – Hennepin-Hopper Lake developments – Vera Leopold

A matching fundraising campaign is on to raise funds for construction of a bird observation platform south of the existing boat launch, Contributions can be made via the Wetlands Initiative's website.

IOS grants – Bob Fisher

The 2017 fundraising campaign to gather funds for the IOS grant program for bird research was successful. Fisher expressed thanks to the many individuals and groups present at this meeting who supported the IOS grants program.

Peoria Audubon Group – Dennis Endicott

PAS is raising funds to expand two local nature preserves.

BCN expressed thanks to Dennis Endicott and Suzanne Brasche from Peoria Audubon Society for attending the meeting.

Common Tern nests on Waukegan Beach – Donnie Dann

Predation and human activity has been high on the beach, causing nest predation and disruption. A plan to improve fencing and increase protection will sought for the 2018 nesting season.

BCN next meeting will be on Oct, 21, Location TBD.

Motion: Adjourn

Moved: Fisher

Second: Dann

Action: Passed

Submitted by Christine Williamson, Recording Secretary