

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

Saturday, October 2, 2010

Joan Bruchman's Home, Arlington Heights

In attendance: Joan Bruchman, Judy Pollock, Matthew Cvetas, Glenn Gabanski, Diane Rosenberg. Donnie Dann (via phone)

President, Joan Bruchman, called the meeting to order at 1:09pm

1: Treasurer's report – Glenn

After not renewing the CD and transferring the \$3,000 balance to the checkbook BCN has a cash balance of \$3,274.05. I estimate we have about \$275 to spend this fiscal year to avoid paying corporate income tax.

We are still waiting for the \$1,200 owed us for the IWPF grant. I sent in all the papers and reports to Dan Kirk (as per his instructions to me) at his Yorkville office and they were received at his office on 6/11/10. I have a US Post Office return receipt to verify that. He told me he would forward everything on to Springfield. Since it has been almost 4 months without any action I emailed him last week to find out the status of the grant. He replied he "had no idea." I then emailed Kathy Barker, who I dealt with at the beginning of the grant, and she passed my email along to Jennifer Aherin, Federal Aid Fiscal Review Manager, Special Funds Coordinator, IDNR. She wrote back she has not received anything and asked me to contact Mr. Kirk to find out when he sent the packet and to whom. I forwarded her email to Mr. Kirk and asked him to answer her questions. I do have complete copies of everything I sent in should the original packet be lost. The ExCom suggested I send copies directly to Ms. Aherin and I will do so if I do not hear back from Mr. Kirk this coming week.

2: Great Lakes, Common Tern Nesting Area Update – Donnie

Donnie met recently with Brad Semel of the IDNR and Bob VanBendegom, the environmentalist with the public works department at Great Lakes Naval Training Center, at a newly completed fenced enclosure at the tip of the peninsula at the NE corner of the Great Lakes marina. For many years Bob and the Navy have provided us excellent cooperation in the intensive management of the COMMON TERN colony there, a requirement for this species. It is the only location in Illinois where this state endangered bird has successfully nested. This time the Navy outdid themselves. Most of the invasive phragmites were cut and herbicided. Then an electrically capable 5 foot wired fence was built, approximately 75' X 150'. Further plans are to string ropes across the top to preclude the entry of avian predators, yet allowing the adult terns to enter and leave.

As this location has already been declared an **Important Bird Area (IBA)** by the National Audubon Society, sometime on a Saturday in April, 2011, we plan a dedication ceremony in conjunction with a 'Give Back to the Birds Day'. Some of the areas within the enclosure are in low spots where sand needs to be spread and with a bobcat and the help of some volunteers we can create ideal habitat for this species. I'll advise when we have a fixed date. Hopefully, in 2011 we can fledge a large number of chicks.

3: BCN dog park policy – Donnie

The BCN Policy Statement on Restricted Uses of Cook County Forest Preserves, which was

drafted while Donnie was president, will be adopted as present BCN policy and will be posted on the BCN web site after the Cook County Dog Friendly Areas policy paragraph is updated.

Presently the section dealing with dog park use reads:

Specifically regarding dog friendly areas, we recommend that the District:

- Reject further expansion of the Beck Lake dog friendly area as well as the creation of any new dog friendly areas in the county;
- Evaluate and report on the existing facility at Beck Lake, including what the effects have been so far on plants and animals (and citizens) within the fenced area;
- Gather and report information regarding the future costs of maintaining a dog friendly area, including staff time and upkeep costs, police and legal costs, etc.

4: BCN Fund Raiser – Donnie

Donnie (& Bob Fisher not present at this meeting) have proposed a future BCN fund raising event. Diane will speak with the Ryerson Woods fund raisers to find out what all is entailed in booking speakers, costs, etc. A committee will then be formed to continue the planning. Funds raised will go to the BCN trends analysis.

5: Offshore Wind Development in the Great Lakes meeting (sponsored by Sierra Club and NWF) & follow-up meeting with Doug Stotz – Donnie/Judy/Joan

Donnie recapped the 8/24 Great Lakes meeting.

- Reps were there from all GL states except Indiana
- First speaker was Mike O'Brien of Blue Water Wind, to give the developers perspective
- His professed goal: provide new energy sources with good environmental practices
- They look to the European model, in existence for 17 years
- Wind over water is more consistent and steadier
- Currently there are 38 off shore wind farms in 9 countries, with 17 under construction
- In the GL there are about 15 in the planning stages
- 28% of coastal states use 78% of electricity in the US
- They can't build in more than 30 meters depth and want wind speed of 18 mph
- Denmark's wind farm estimates 1 bird killed per turbine per year and most birds have adapted to avoid the turbines
- Monitoring is key; they'll have observation platforms to monitor pre, during and post construction
- They create new habitats for fish, like a reef
- Prefer putting turbines out from shore as far as possible
- Unlike salt water they'll suffer little corrosion but ice could be a problem
- From 6 miles out to a depth of 30 meters they expect the GL has a capacity of 129 GW of power

Next speaker was Joelle Gehring of MSU a scientific expert on communication tower impacts on birds

- Modern on-shore wind farms kill 2.3 birds/turbine/yr on average; only .03 raptors, but it's very site specific
- Some on-shore turbines in Texas kill 34 bats/turbine/yr. Death is not caused by collisions but by implosion from nearby air pressure change
- Sharp-tailed Grouse and Greater Prairie Chickens have learned to avoid the turbines; not Sage Grouse
- Cannot apply knowledge learned from oceanic or on-shore turbines to fresh water
- More unknowns than knowns, especially about bats
- Raptors don't fly over water, and some songbirds fly above turbines over water but descend to shore at daybreak
- Wind towers don't have to be lit like communication towers but even lights at the base of turbines cause songbird deaths
- Recommends high 'cut-in' speeds for when the turbines start

Next speaker, Dr. Michael Murray of NWF

- State owns lake up to 3 miles out; beyond that the jurisdiction is federal
- Much more will be learned over the next year and a half
- Denmark's turbines are 600 meters apart
- Post construction the ducks return; the loons have not

Next speaker, Howard Learner of ELPC

- Opposes the whole concept
- Believes there's plenty of available land, e.g. corn and soybean fields near the grid w/o years of litigation
- Promoting offshore wind will delay more on shore wind and could bring years of litigation, benefiting the coal industry

Donnie, Judy & Joan volunteered as a BCN Guidelines committee to develop siting criteria, guidelines and exclusionary zones for placement of wind turbines in the Great Lakes. We have met with Doug Stotz as well as Judy has been in contact with Fish & Wildlife which will start a flyover program this fall which will research migratory patterns of birds in Lake Michigan from Evanston to Door County. Judy will report on the BCN committee findings and Fish & Wildlife research at the BCN 10/23 quarterly meeting.

6: America's Great Outdoors initiative – Donnie

Four speakers from the National Park Service and the FWS appeared. The event was more a listening tour and was aimed mostly at the No Child Left Indoors program. A few of the public participants were able to mention bird watching also as a way to enjoy the outdoors. This had not been mentioned in the original information.

Diane mentioned that Lake County Audubon sponsors a mid-week bird walk for home-schooled children.

7: Hackmatack Open House – Judy

Matthew & Judy will draft a BCN statement of support for this project to be read at one, or both, of the Illinois open house meetings listed below. Joan will contact Bob Andrini (KCA & BCN)),

Doug Crane (MCA), and R. Dave Johnson (BCN) to ask them to make the presentation on behalf of BCN.

Tuesday, October 12, 4-8 PM - McHenry County Government Center Administration Building, 667 Ware St, Woodstock

Wednesday, October 13, 4-8 PM-Lost Valley Visitor Center in Glacial Park, Harts Rd. & Rt. 31, Ringwood

As comments can be made by email (If you cannot attend one of the open houses, you can email your support for the refuge to the USFWS at: r3planning@fws.gov), once the BCN statement is ready it will be sent to BCN reps and BCN.net advising members to use it as an example and send statements of support as well.

8: Carolyn Marsh letter – Chicago Audubon – Police Firing Range – Joan

9/24/10 Update letter from Carolyn Marsh:

Good--news - - we now have recovered evidence that Black-crowned Night-Herons nested in the Whitford Pond Trees at O'Brien Lock and Dam in Chicago SE side. Apparently, the nesting information is not in the Illinois Natural Heritage Database of which the Illinois DNR checked in its EcoCAT review. "The Department is unable to determine whether the wetland area located in the north east corner of the site was used for nesting by the State endangered Black-crowned Night Heron." This means the Illinois DNR EcoCAT review was inadequate for the purposes of recognizing birds in the area of the proposed firing range and therefore Chicago Audubon's request for a bird survey of the area is necessary.

According to research by James E. Landing Conceptual Plan for the Lake Calumet Ecological Park: Chicago, Illinois (August, 1986), paid for by the Illinois Department of Conservation Non-Game Conservation Checkoff Fund, it states the Corp of Engineers did a survey in 1985 and found 139 BCNH nests in Whitford Pond cottonwoods.....Carolyn Marsh

Carolyn will let BCN know what future action to take, if any.

9: Meigs Field - Airport back on NI?? Gambling Casino?? – Joan

Although the Friends of Meigs Field are reviving their campaign to restore the airport on NI, the consensus of opinion was that this will not happen. Judy recently attended a CPD meeting where the revised plans for NI were presented. Judy reported the plans were not gimmicky and were based on the opinions from the public at the first NI meeting. The CPD seems committed to a nature preserve for NI.

10: Give Back to Birds Day, Oct. 30, 2010 – Joan

Information flyers have been posted on IBET, IBF, BCN.net and the Tuesday Birders' email list. Very few volunteers have signed up. Joan will post the flyers again and send the info to Diane to promote at the 10/4 Lake County Audubon meeting.

11: Asking for written recaps of reports at BCN meetings for the minutes? – Diane, Joan

It was unanimously agreed that it be BCN policy to have all speakers at quarterly, and ExComm meetings, submit a recap, or project report, in advance of the meeting for publishing in the minutes. The recap should be worded as the speaker wants it to appear in the minutes.

12: Wind Turbines on schools – Joan

TribLocal recently ran an article about wind turbines being erected on middle schools in Clarendon Hills and Arlington Heights. Donnie has sent a photo of one of the turbines to Michael Fry of ABC for assessment of danger of these types of turbines to birds. It was decided to contact the schools as a BCN project of research on wind turbines. Then possibly develop a BCN presentation for the students on the importance of responsible use and placement of turbines.

13: Other

Glenn-Information need on destination of promised BCN \$180 donation. Judy and Glenn will research.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:55pm

Minutes respectfully submitted by Joan Bruchman