

BCN Executive Meeting Minutes

Thursday, October 4, 2012, 7:00-8:00PM

Teleconference

Attendees: Joan Bruchman, Glenn Gabanski, Mary Lou Mellon, Judy Pollock, Bob Fisher, Chris Van Wassenhove

1. Lake Michigan Off-shore Wind Energy Advisory Council – Bob Fisher

- The final report has been issued. Todd Reddick, chairman of the council, Jeff Smith, legal counsel for Robyn Gabel (the legislator responsible for the enabling legislation), along with Bob Fisher, representing BCN, served on a panel discussing the topic, sponsored by the IL State Bar Association in late October.
- Bob and Donnie Dann, both appointed to LMOWEAC by Gov. Quinn, were able to get strong statements in the Advisory Council report regarding the dangers to wintering water birds, as well as passerines migrating over the lake.
- \$500,000 has been provided by USFWS for the Great Lakes Council to administer a 2 year study aimed at quantifying both the numbers and the species composition and locations used by water birds in southern Lake Michigan over the next two winters. The study results (mostly aerial surveys) should be available by early 2014.
- There are a lot of unknowns regarding how much impetus there will be for wind turbines in Lake Michigan. Any construction is probably at least five years in the future.
- Federal tax credits for the wind turbine industry may expire, so this may prolong the timeline.
- BCN will continue to do its part to assure birds and bats remain a part of the conversation on the wind turbine issue.
- The biggest threat to birds continues to be wind turbines on land. There are no regulations in place in Illinois, nor do any regulations exist nationally, except for the ESA and the MBTA. Avoidance may be a bigger threat to species survival than collisions, on land as well as on water.

2. Cook County Forest Preserve District Recreation Plans – Judy Pollock

- The Cook County Forest Preserve District is working on a camping master plan and a recreation master plan. Judy is on the advisory board for the recreation plan.
- Surveys reflect that people largely use the trails for hiking and biking.
- The plan would use lawns and parking lots for recreation as well (e.g., Frisbee golf).
- Some controversial elements included putting in a new dog park near the Oak Forest Hospital (Midlothian Meadows) without informing anyone.
- The recreation plan includes ATVs, zip lines, more dog parks, etc.
- No one knows the forest preserves better than birders, whose voices should be heard during this process.
- Benjamin Cox (Director of the Friends of the Forest Preserves) has been sharing conservation concerns with Superintendent Arnold Randall.
- The number of campgrounds was reduced from 15 to the 5 now existing. From a cost perspective 15 would not have been feasible anyway.
- We need to see the revised plans. Judy invited Kindy Kruller, Senior Planner with the District, to the next BCN meeting to do a 30 minute presentation on the revised plans. The camping plan is on the agenda for the November District board meeting, which will follow our 11/3/12 BCN meeting. Benjamin Cox will alert us if we need to take action prior to the next BCN meeting.

3. BCN Birding Trips with the Forest Preserve District of Cook County – Judy Pollock

- A lot of interest exists for birding as a part of recreational activities in the forest preserves.

- Judy suggested the District and BCN could cross-promote bird walks on each other's calendars, which would result in good outreach.
- Joan Bruchman already does this at Crabtree Nature Preserve and it brings in a lot of new birders. The Natural History Society of Barrington sponsors four walks at Crabtree in the spring and four in the fall and it brings in 3 to 10 new people each outing. Perhaps BCN could ask member groups to lead walks under the BCN name.
- At a BCN meeting, we could ask for a committee to discuss options to accomplish this.

4. Acknowledging Great Volunteers with a Gift – Judy Pollock

- A discussion was held regarding recognizing certain great BCN volunteers with gifts.
- A conclusion was reached that, given there are so many great volunteers doing BCN work, it would be hard to draw the line with gifts.
- A suggestion was made to nominate such volunteers for the various environmental awards available in the region. Normally such volunteers do not want gifts, but recognition in the community would be a nice reward.

5. BCN / Redstart Connection Fundraising Campaign Update – Glenn Gabanski

- BCN reached its goal of \$2,500 in pledges by 8/31/12.
- We are in the donation phase now. November 30th is the announced deadline for making donations that will be matched by the pledges.
- Letters were sent to the BCN reps to share with friends and family.
- Judy sent letters to the people attending the Botanic Garden presentation by Rob Cahill.
- Thus far two donations have been received totaling \$125.
- The DuPage Birding Club has just approved sending out a letter to its membership asking for donations.
- Joan will seek approval to send a letter to the CBCM monitors if Annette Prince approves; and will ask Sue Friscia if BCN may post on IBET. Judy will update the ad for the Illinois Birders Forum. BCN needs to post a letter to BCN.net. BCN member groups will be encouraged to share the letter with their members.
- Reminder letters will be sent in early November to coincide with end-of-year charitable giving.
- Glenn will ask Eric Secker to add a notice to the PayPal button that PayPal fees are deducted from funds donated via this vehicle.

6. 2012 Trends Analysis Committee Update – Glenn Gabanski

- On 9/14/12, Rich DeCoster, from Evanston, was added to the 2012 Trends Analysis Committee. The committee is drafting an RFP for updating the data on the website.

7. BCN Nominating Committee – Judy Pollock

- Judy, Bob and Donnie are on the nominating committee and will begin the search process now for the next BCN officers.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 PM.

Chris Van Wassenhove
Secretary