

BCN Executive Committee Meeting

June 17, 2020

Online Video Conference

In attendance: Sonny Cohen, Matt Igleski, Charlotte Pavelka, Steve Constantelos, Tim Balassie, Vera Leopold, Tom Mulcahy

Sonny Cohen called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.

Trends analysis. Igleski reports that five proposals were received, three in our budget ballpark.

These include: San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory (<https://www.sfbbo.org/>), Valerie Steen (<https://valeriesteen.wixsite.com/valeriesteen>), and Christy Wails (<https://cnwails.wordpress.com/>). All had a sound methodology for analyzing new data and incorporating our older data.

The Science Committee (Stephanie Beilke, Gary Casper, Steve Mitten) is now evaluating the proposals, with added insights from Doug Stotz and Jim Herkert. After hearing from them, the Trends Analysis Committee will meet again on June 30 and report to reps at the July 18 quarterly meeting.

Pavelka confirmed that BCN can cover the costs of the analysis now, using the \$3,000 we have in reserve, plus additional saved funds. Cohen and Pavelka will discuss funding and possible fundraising in more depth.

Monitoring program. Balassie updated the group. Fortunately for BCN, all area forest preserves opened up their preserves for volunteer citizen scientist monitoring. The only hiccup is some internal forest preserve operations, specifically registering volunteers. Consequently, a few new monitors can't monitor this year. He has also taken a dozen prospective monitors under his wing, hoping they will be ready to monitor in 2021.

Pavelka is the BCN County Coordinator for Lake County, which went from 8 to about 25 monitors, with others also interested. This bodes well for the future. She and Balassie observed that state parks will be fertile grounds for new monitoring sites.

Balassie plans to systematically re-evaluate current sites and add new ones of special ecological value. He proposes that a "working group" be organized - perhaps 3 people at most - to develop a process to vet potential sites, identify them across the region, establish land owner relationships, etc., etc.

Oak Ecosystem Recovery Project. Lydia Scott of the Morton Arboretum has called for an advisory meeting on August 5. As usual, Leopold and Bob Fisher will represent the BCN and advocate for added focus on birds and publicizing long-term protection measures for young oaks.

Jackson Park advocacy letter. In mid-May, Cohen submitted a comment letter to the Army Corps of Engineers regarding a request made by the Chicago Park District to modify the USACE Section 506 Great Lakes Fishery and Ecosystem Restoration (GLFER) Project in Jackson Park. A copy is filed in our archives on Box.com.

Public relations. Bob Dolgan's 50 Days of Chicago Nature campaign (#natureloveschicago) recently ended. It featured a nice piece on BCN monitoring featuring Jenny Vogt: <https://www.natureloveschicago.org/50-days/observation-power-keeping-tabs-on-our-most-fragile-bird-species>.

Christopher Cudworth posted a video on his experience BCN monitoring to the Suburban Wildlife Facebook page that we can also promote: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/SuburbanWildlife/permalink/2688917978052961/>

Possible Action Alert. Tamima Itani and Bob Fisher brought H.R. 5552, the Migratory Bird Protection Act of 2020, to Cohen's attention: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/5552/text>.

IL Reps Quigley, Bradley, and Schakowsky have co-sponsored this bill, which helps shore up the MBTA. A couple of related links to the MBTA and MBPA that we can consider for letter-writing or an Action Alert:

ABC
<https://abcbirds.org/action/petition-mbta>

FWS comment
<https://www.fws.gov/regulations/mbta/>

BCN meeting agenda. The next meeting will be on July 18 at 1 pm, via Zoom. Topics will include trend analysis, the June 2020 survey period, advocacy updates, and, at the suggestion of Leopold, hearing from member groups how engagement is going during this COVID-19 period.

Cohen thanked everyone for attending and the meeting adjourned at 8:12 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Steve Constantelos
BCN Secretary