

**Bird Conservation Network Meeting**  
**January 23, 2016**  
**Oak Park Library**

**Present:** Bobbi Asher, CAS; Thomas Barnes, NAS-CR; Joan Bruchman, IOS; Suzanne Checchia, ENSBC; Emma England, Lake Cty Aud; Dean Engel, Lake-Cook Aud; Glenn Gabanski, DBC; Eric Gyllenhaal, guest speaker; Libby Hill, ENSBC; Vera Leopold, TWI; Mary Lou Mellon, CBCM; Nat Miller, NAS-CR; Steve Mitten, Loyola University; Tom Mulcahy, DBC; Judy Pollock, IOS; Annette Prince, CBCM; Teri Radke, CBCM; Lee Ramsey, NAS-CR; Terry Schilling, individual; Eric Secker, KCA; Jean Sodemann, Lake-Cook Aud; Gary Sullivan, TWI; Nancy Tikalsky, COS; Dave Willard, CAS; Christine Williamson, COS.

**Annual Meeting**

**Introductions**

**Bird Conservation Network: 2015, The Year in Review – Mary Lou Mellon**

Mellon presented highlights of the group's annual report. [See Appendix A for written report]

**BCN Thank You To Volunteers – Mary Lou Mellon**

- Mellon thanked Lee Ramsey for his service, overseeing 18 years of the BCN Survey [breeding bird survey] from which he now has retired.
- Current BCN Executive Committee members also were thanked: Joan Bruchman, Glenn Gabanski, Lee Ramsey, Dave Willard, Nancy Tikalsky, Suzanne Checchia, Bobbie Asher.
- Other volunteers were thanked for their BCN service: Christine Williamson, Bob Fisher, Eric Secker, Judy Pollock.
- Mellon appointed Emma England to serve on the 2016 ExCom.
- BCN representatives thanked Mellon for her years of excellent service as BCN's president.

**Minutes**

Motion: Approve Oct. 24, 2015 meeting minutes

Moved: Tikalsky

Second: Pollock

Action: Passed

Motion: Approve amended July 25, 2015 meeting minutes.

Moved: Pollock

Second: Gabanski

Action: Passed

**Nominating Committee – Joan Bruchman**

Bruchman presented the following slate of officers for approval:

President – Dave Willard  
Vice President - Nancy Tikalsky  
Treasurer – Glenn Gabanski  
Secretary – Suzanne Checchia

Motion: Approve slate of officers as presented.  
Moved: Asher  
Second: Hill  
Action: Passed

Motion: Close BCN's 2016 Annual Meeting  
Moved: Gabanski  
Second: Ramsey  
Action: Passed

### Quarterly Meeting

#### Treasurer's Report - Glenn Gabanski

Copies of the financial spreadsheet and the treasurer's notes were distributed.

Income 2015            Dues: \$1,550  
                             Grants: \$1,100 (Illinois Wildlife Preservation Fund from 2015)  
                             Donations: \$2,974 (\$1,823 from COS LaBagh)  
                             National Fish & Wildlife Foundation: \$24,601(\$1,371 from  
                             COS; \$23,230 from Chicago Park District)  
                             **Total: \$30,225. 29**

Expenses 2015        Licenses, etc. \$10  
                             Dues/Fees: \$275 BCA, PPW, CW, IEW  
                             Bank checks: \$47. 96  
                             Postage/Supplies: \$44. 87  
                             Printing: \$833. 57 (BCN/BOC brochures)  
                             Conference calls: \$171. 59  
                             LaBagh restoration donations: \$1,823. 11  
                             Misc. \$190. 99 (Design of BCN Brochure)  
                             Monitor CDs: \$174. 06  
                             Monitor Brunch: \$161. 77  
                             BCN Website/Webmaster: \$543. 88  
                             NFWF Grant: \$8,293. 16 (plants for LaBagh)  
                             **Total: \$12,569. 96**

**Net Income: \$17,655. 33**

**Checkbook balance: \$17,655. 33**

**Funds balance: \$4,123. 28**

Treasurer's notes

Income and expenses for grants and the LaBagh donation inflate the figures. Here is a more realistic account of BCN's cash flow.

After subtracting the COS/LaBagh donation, the NFWF Grant, and the IWPF Grant, BCN income for 2015 was \$2,701. 18.

After removing the COS/LaBagh and NFWF Grant expenses, BCN expenses for 2015 was \$2,453. 69. BCN gain for 2015 was \$247. 49.

Motion: Accept Treasurer's report as presented.

Moved: Schilling

Second: Mellon

Action: Passed

### **Proposed 2016 BCN Budget – Glenn Gabanski**

Copies of the proposed budget were distributed.

Income 2016	Dues: \$2,070
	Grants: \$0
	Donations: \$200
	National Fish & Wildlife Foundation Grant: \$14,396
	<b>Total: \$16,666</b>
Expenses 2016	Licenses, etc. \$10
	Dues/Fees: \$325      BCA, PPW, CW, IEW
	Bank charges: \$0
	Postage/Supplies: \$50
	Printing: \$200
	Conf. Calls: \$180
	LaBagh restoration donations: \$1,823. 11
	Awards/Prizes/Donations \$200
	Conferences/Misc. programs/advertising: \$400
	Monitoring/database: \$400
	Trends analysis: \$500
	Monitor Brunch: \$350
	BCN Website: \$544 (website hosting and webmaster fees)
	BCN Pledge to NFWF Grant: \$1,000
	NFWF Grant: \$29,333
	<b>Total: \$33,492</b>

**Net Income: (\$16,826)**

Treasurer's notes

Money connected to the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) grant will inflate both the income and expenses.

Furthermore, because the NFWF grant fiscal year is August 1 to July 31 while BCN's finances are run on a calendar year basis, some grant income and expenses will carry over from 2015 to 2016 and will complicate budget accounting.

In an attempt to clarify, BCN-specific income and expenses will be noted in the budget.

Total income is projected to be \$16,666, with \$2,070 from dues (assuming all organizations and individual renew), \$200 from donations, and \$14,396 from the NFWF grant. BCN income is projected to be \$2,270.

Total expenses are projected to be \$33,492 with \$29,333 going to the NFWF grant. BCN's expenses are projected to be \$4,159.

Many 2016 expenses are similar to those in past years, but two items of note are:

- \$500 is again transferred to the Trends Analysis Reserve Fund, which now is grown to \$1,000;
- and BCN's \$1,000 pledge to the NFWF Grant likely will be paid in 2016.

The large deficit of \$16,826 results from about \$16,300 of NFWF grant income that was not spent in 2015, but will be spent in 2016.

BCN's loss is \$1,889, but \$1,500 of this is the \$1,000 pledge to the NFWF grant and the \$500 transfer to the Trends Analysis Reserve Fund.

BCN Funds Balance at the end of 2016 is projected to be around \$4,500, which is a bit lower than previous years.

Motion: Approve 2016 budget as presented:

Moved: Mellon

Second: Bruchman

Action: Passed

### **Membership Report – Glenn Gabanski**

As of Jan. 11, 2016, dues renewal notices for BCN's 21 member groups were sent to all group representatives. Renewal notices also were sent to BCN's two individual members.

As previously approved by BCN, membership dues now are \$100 for organizations and \$35 for individuals.

### **Educational presentation: Birding, bird monitoring trends and conservation in Chicago's west side parks – Eric Gyllenhaal (slides are available online)**

<https://neighborhoodnature.wordpress.com/2015/08/31/bird-lists/>

### **Proposed Amendment to BCN Bylaws - Glenn Gabanski**

*Proposed Amendment: To add "or such other amount as BCN may from time to time establish" to the last sentence in Section 1, Paragraph B.*

Rationale: To bring similar language for Individual Member dues as is found for Organizational Member dues (see highlighted text below) so that future changes in individual dues won't require amending the bylaws each time the dues are changed. For historical reasons BCN should keep the original amounts of \$75 and \$25 instead of changing them every time the dues are raised.

#### **ARTICLE II -- BCN MEMBERSHIP**

##### **Section 1. Composition**

The membership of BCN shall consist of Organizational Affiliates and Individual Members.

A. Organizational Affiliates are those organizations in the Chicago region or elsewhere in Illinois that support the goals of BCN and pay at least \$75. 00 annually in dues or such other amount as BCN may from time to time establish.

B. Individual Members are those persons who support the goals of BCN and are willing to donate their time and effort to realizing the goals of BCN. Individual Members shall be nominated by existing members, and shall be accepted by a consensus of the current members attending the next regular meeting. Individual Member dues are \$25. 00 per year or such other amount as BCN may from time to time establish.

Motion: BCN accepts the proposed bylaw change as presented.

Moved: Schilling

Second: Gabanski

Action: Passed

### **Conservation issues**

#### ***Advocacy Committee - Donnie Dann***

Ongoing: Continue to try making headway with city officials, state agencies and the USACOE about the destruction of the dune habitat at Waukegan Beach.

Highland Park's City Council has directed city staff to form a task force to explore changing their code to require new commercial, industrial and multi-family buildings to be built bird-friendly. Working extensively to get allies appointed.

10-27-15 Letter to BLM for protection of the Greater Sage Grouse.

11-5-15 Wrote again in support of the Federal Bird-Safe Buildings Act.

11-16-15 Toronto is proposing to exempt building owners from responsibility for bird collisions on their buildings. BCN wrote to oppose.

11-20-15 Helped a citizen activist to oppose a potential bird killing building at 450 W. Belmont in Chicago.

12-4-15 Attended the Illinois Environmental Council's annual meeting and together with Bob Fisher offered comments on behalf of BCN. Open Space:

- Floodplains, and farms that should never have been farms to begin with and should be converted to natural habitat.
- More should be included on ecosystem services, the CMAP report on the subject being one good source.
- Emphasis should be placed on restoring funding for the ESPB.
- Among the Goals, "Protect and encourage the ability of local governments to purchase and protect open spaces" should be amended to include "and not-for-profits".

12-21-15 Again supported October as "Oaktober" oak awareness month in 2016, as in 2015.

- 1-7-16 BCN is supporting efforts to save the natural areas in Douglas Park from development as a music festival site.
- 1-14-16 Opposed the Illinois Department of Transportation's proposal to route the "Shawnee Parkway" road connecting Interstate 57 to the intersection of IL Route 3 and IL Route 146 through southernmost Illinois.

***Chicago Wilderness Priority Species – Mary Lou Mellon for Bob Fisher***

Chicago Wilderness is designating a variety of species as critically endangered and in need of additional protection. Three bird species will be designated – Henslow's Sparrow, Red-headed Woodpecker and Bobolink. Fisher is handling publicity for BCN when CW's formal species announcement has been made.

***Douglas Park Destruction of Sanctuary and Golf Course – Eric Gyllenhaal, Christine Williamson, Mary Lou Mellon***

Local alderman, Michael Scott, Jr. , wants to eliminate the natural area bird sanctuary and possibly the park's golf course to make room for a permanent, grassy music venue. The alderman considers the natural vegetation areas to be an "eyesore," said Gyllenhaal.

Mellon said BCN sent a letter to the Chicago Park District and hasn't received a response.

Williamson and Gyllenhaal suggested possible actions:

- convince the park advisory council to oppose the plan
- invite the public to an advisory council meeting to express their views about the proposed music venue
- talk to Alderman Scott about his proposal's negative impacts on birds
- talk to the other alderman whose ward includes part of Douglas Park and convince him to oppose the music venue as proposed
- convince the Chicago Park District staff and board to deny Alderman Scott's proposal
- propose other locations for a music venue in Douglas Park, including the far north end of the park near Roosevelt Road where there are restaurants and other businesses or certain parts of the golf course

Gyllenhaal and Williamson will continue to work on the situation.

**Calumet remnant wetlands conservation planning and Indian Ridge Marsh restoration – Gary Sullivan, The Wetlands Initiative, and Tom Barnes, National Audubon Society – Chicago Region**

Sullivan talked about conservation action planning efforts being carried out in the Calumet region by The Wetlands Initiative (TWI), Audubon - Chicago Region (NAS-CR), the Chicago Park District and other partners.

The effort is assessing 20 remnant wetland sites in the Calumet area for restoration and/or management potential, with a focus on potential to restore hemi-marsh habitat to benefit declining wetland-dependent birds.

Sullivan discussed the elements needed for healthy hemi-marsh. He also described challenges that must be addressed to restore functional wetlands at Calumet, which include multiple landowners with different interests; loss of natural water level fluctuations; invasive species (plants and animals, especially carp); and water pollution.

TWI will begin the-ground work on the 147-acre Indian Ridge Marsh site. In 2016–2017, TWI will rehab areas of the marsh that the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers did not improve during its previous restoration work (which was prevented by the presence of a breeding colony of Black-crowned Night-Herons that has since left).

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

- Pollock said visits were made to existing neighborhood migratory bird plots and more plants are available for three of them.
- An International Migratory Bird Day event will be held at Burnham Prairie in May. Date has not been set.
- Money in the grant is available for binoculars. Pollock will buy binoculars for educational activities.
- Pollock said bird migration monitoring protocols are being developed in conjunction with Lincoln Park Zoo.

#### ***Birding Cook County Preserves – Judy Pollock***

- A promotional website will be launched by the Forest Preserve District of Cook County next week. CCFPD’s communications department will be designating a “bird of the month” that will be coordinated with bird walks.
- There will be a Big Sit at CCFPD Nature Centers on May 7.
- There will be three training sessions for bird field trip leaders in March and April. BCN representatives were asked to provide names of people who might benefit from the training.
- Contact information for website and newsletter for each BCN member group was requested.
- Pollock is collating local group bird field trips happening within the CC forest preserves into a single list.
- Tom Mulcahy said there will be 10 conservation-oriented bird walks in CC forest preserves in 2016.
- A Big Year competition beginning March 1 will focus on individual Cook County forest preserves, with prizes for many types of activities.
- Teams now are set for the following preserves: LaBagh, Egger’s Woods, Skokie Lagoons, Paul Douglas, Miller Meadow, all Nature Centers and a number of others.

#### ***Bird monitor CD distribution – Judy Pollock***

Mellon will take over distribution.

#### ***Gilson Park – Judy Pollock***

Pollock said that a grant has been received to enhance natural plantings at this Wilmette park.

***Bird friendly buildings – Suzanne Checchia and Libby Hill***

The pair is working on a bird-friendly building ordinance for Evanston.

***Birds In My Neighborhood – Tom Barnes***

NAS-CR will be working with OpenLands to introduce school kids to birds in their neighborhood and on a field trip.

***Migratory Bird Act Centennial Celebration – Tom Barnes***

NAS-CR will promote habitat restoration throughout the Chicagoland area, including a large jamboree restoration event in August.

***Indiana Dunes Birding Festival – Tom Barnes***

Birding events will take place from May 6 – 8.

**Other**

***Birding America – Dave Willard***

The conference will be held at North Park University on March 19. Publicity by BCN groups would be appreciated. Tables for non-profit groups are available for \$50.

***BCN Survey update – Judy Pollock***

Emma England will take over from Lee Ramsey as co-head of the BCN Survey. The monitors brunch will be on May 21, including a pre-picnic bird walk at Orland Grasslands. The brunch will be at Tampier Lake West.

***Chicago Wilderness Wild Things website and blog – Judy Pollock***

Pollock said the group has a new website with blogs. All are invited to make submissions about local conservation, including birds and bird conservation. <http://www.wildthingscommunity.org/>

***The Messenger – Mary Lou Mellon***

The movie “The Messenger” is wonderful and is available for BCN-sponsored showings at local theaters. Venues will be selected in Chicago and in the suburbs. A summer event is likely. Williamson suggested that Josh Engel be invited to give a post-movie discussion. Nancy Tikalsky is reviewing the Tugg (independent film distributor) contract.

***The Cal-Sag Trail – Glenn Gabanski***

BCN received a letter from the Friends of the Calumet-Sag Trail organization. They wanted birders to be aware of The Cal-Sag Trail and included this info:

The Cal-Sag Trail is a newly built recreation path in southern Cook County that connects Alsip, Palos Heights, Palos Park, and Lemont. It is 13 miles of greenspace alongside the Calumet-Saganashkee Channel, predominantly on Cook County FP property.

Destinations on the Trail include Sagawau Environmental Learning Center, Saganashkee Slough, Lake Katherine Nature Preserve and Little Calumet River. The west segment opened in June, 2015, from Alsip (Cicero Ave. ) to Lemont (IL-171). The east segment is scheduled for piecemeal completion in 2016 and 2017. It

will include another 13 miles through Blue Island, Riverdale, Dolton, and Burnham that will include Whistler Woods, Calumet Landing, Dolton Prairie, and undeveloped Com Ed properties.

• See [www.calsagtrail.org](http://www.calsagtrail.org) for information and construction updates. Maps and pamphlets are available.

***Give Back to Birds Day 2016 – Christine Williamson***

Williamson said she'll plan a fall work day at Jarvis Sanctuary in Chicago, followed by brunch at her house.

***COS LaBagh Restoration Update – Nancy Tikalsky***

Bird species: 168 (a record)

Individual donations: \$10,542

Grants: \$35,000

Bird monitors added: 4

Shrubs planted: 378

Total volunteers: 150 (estimated) with an average of 25 people at each restoration day and more than 40 people attending a couple of planting days.

Organized restoration or seed collecting workdays: 25

Planning meetings: 12

Other groups: Habitat 2030 and groups they work with

Organization receiving sincerest thanks from COS for being the intermediary for

LaBagh shrub purchases: Bird Conservation Network

***Clark Street Beach Sanctuary – Libby Hill***

Leaf mulch is needed. An Earth Day celebration is planned.

**Next BCN Quarterly meeting: April 16 at Donnie Dann's house in Highland Park.**

**Meeting Closure:**

Motion: Close

Moved: Gabanski

Second: Mitten

Action: Passed

**APPENDIX A**

**Bird Conservation Network: 2015, The Year in Review [attached]**