

SAW MILL RIVER AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

Minutes of Regular Meeting of Officers, Board of Directors,
and Chairmen of Standing Committees

May 5, 1966

The meeting was held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Jonathan Coggeshall. Present were Mesdames Kaye Anderson, Carol Coggeshall, Catharine Holmes, Beatrice Ridgeway, and Ruth Spendelow, and Messrs. Harold Bligh, Ed Ditterline, Lester Holmes, Stanley Lincoln, Willis Messiah, William Osborn, Robert Ridgeway, and Howard Spendelow. The

meeting was opened by President Willis Messiah at 8:25 p.m.

SECRETARY'S REPORT: Minutes of the previous meeting of April 14 were read and approved.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Mrs. Holmes reported a balance on hand of \$2,165.56 as of April 30.

Mr. Lincoln is our delegate to the annual convention of the Federated Bird Clubs of New York being held on May 22, and a decision as to the Society's financial support of this organization will be discussed following the convention. Mrs. Holmes mentioned a raise in dues of this organization, and also the question of support for the Federated Conservationists of Westchester County, of which SMRAs is a charter member. (See Bulletin #59 - page 1.) Mr. Messiah asked that further discussion be deferred until later in the meeting, but time did not permit this and the matter remained unresolved.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Conservation - Mrs. Coggeshall reported on the proposed nationwide system of scenic trails. One such proposal would extend federal support to the Appalachian Trail. The National Wildlife Refuges are being studied as part of the Wilderness System. These programs are still at the study level and no plans have been made as yet.

Mr. Ned Smith, Field Representative of the Open Space Action Committee, made a survey of the Holbrook property adjacent to Brinton Brook. The Holbrooks would like to give the back part of their property to the Society, but are not financially able to do so. However, they would sell at \$1,000 an acre, a much lower price than the rest of the land. Mrs. Forsyth was quoted as saying that actually the Kaufman property is more useful to the future of the sanctuary.

Hudson River Expressway and Route 117 spur - This road will pass close to Chernick Sanctuary, and will change the whole Pocantico Valley. Mrs. Coggeshall read a letter from Warren Balgooyen, Research Assistant at Kitachawan Research Laboratory, reminiscing about boyhood observations and pleasures in a natural area. Dr. Bligh later suggested that permission be asked to have this letter printed as a springtime feature in a newspaper to publicize such areas, arouse nostalgia, and later show that these areas may no longer be available, which might trigger memories and action. Mrs. Holmes moved that Mrs. Coggeshall and Mrs. Anderson be empowered to explore possibilities of use of the letter, and the motion was passed by the board.

Mr. Ditterline suggested that we approach the Scenic Hudson Committee which has been extremely successful in its dealings with Consolidated Edison, -that we try and raise money for support of Scenic Hudson, and that we ask them for advice and help. Mr. Ditterline also thought we should see if the Federated Conservationists would act on this matter of the relocation of Route 117. Mr. Ned Smith of the Open Space Action Committee had been contacted, and his answer was that the committee does not make statements, form policies, or take action of this type. Mrs. Coggeshall has written National Audubon about the road relocation, but has had no answer yet.

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Mr. Ditterline also felt we might enlist the support of Mr. Ottinger, who seems very concerned about the effect of the relocation of the road, and is strongly against the whole project. Mr. Ditteline further suggested that SMRAS draft a letter to every senator and representative in the state legislature, - fighting the road on the basis that it was being built for benefit of one person, not for all. He has available a copy of a letter he has written, and he read a reply received from E. Mason.

Mrs. Coggeshall suggested that instead of letters to Governor Rockefeller which would be screened, that we write to Laurence Rockefeller, a good conservationist. We might point out that while a new bond issue of two million dollars was being promoted to create natural beauty areas elsewhere, the road would be destroying a scenic river valley already here.

Mr. Messiah asked for a course of action to be taken which would sum up suggestions, - first to seek advice from Scenic Hudson, and Mr. Spindelow made a motion that this be done, which motion was seconded and carried, and secondly, to approach Mr. Laurence ^{Rockefeller} in his capacity as chairman of the Hudson River Valley Commission. Mr. Ditterline made a motion that such a letter be drafted. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Anderson, and carried. Thirdly, Mr. Messiah suggested that Mrs. Anderson send a letter to Mr. Kilborne and a copy to Mr. Ottinger as a courtesy.

Membership - Mr. Holmes reported that Smras had a total of 363 members, and that the National Audubon Society was getting out a national membership list.

Brinton Brook Sanctuary - No committee member being present, Mr. Messiah reported that a home had not yet been found for the purple martin

birdhouse offered by Mr. Fennell. Mr. Ditterline suggested it could be used more appropriately at Chernick. Mr. Messiah said there was no report on the cost of the new sign for the entrance to the property. Mr. Demarest was mentioned as a new co-chairman with Mr. Boyle. Dr. Bligh suggested that the Board draft a letter of appreciation to Jim Ritchie and Alice.

Chernick - Mr. Ditterline reported receiving more stakes from Mr. Holmes, and that the Boy Scouts have been coming down to work on the trails. He also asked that the Board start looking for a new chairman, as his job will require him to be gone for about 18 months. He agreed to continue serving as long as possible, while a new chairman was being broken in. Mr. Ed Walton was mentioned as a possible successor. Mrs. Holmes reported that maps of Chernick, which were supposed to be accurate, were in her possession.

Earlier Mrs. Coggeshall said that her committee had decided to make overtures to Burnham Lewis for wetland next to Chernick, instead of waiting for the right of way for Route 117 to be decided. This small parcel of land is a swampy area without access. It might be possible to get easements from the New Rochelle Water Company and some owners in Mt. Pleasant. This would protect the valley, unless the road goes through. She also displayed a map of the Clarkson Route, which was the original

~~proposed~~ ~~reported~~ that Mr. Walton has been informed that title to ~~is~~ ~~second~~ another another piece of property adjacent to Chernick and which SMRAs had hoped to acquire, either by gift or by purchase for a nominal sum from the Town of Mt. Pleasant, does not reside with the town. Alternate means of access to Chernick must therefore now be explored.

Minutes
Correction
6/9/66

Thurber - Mrs. Ridgeway reported that she and her husband had been to the sanctuary on three visits, -that they had replaced the sign, put up new signs on trees, and talked to neighbors there about the open ditches which appeared to be polluted and a health hazard. Mr. Thurber was contacted on the subject of draining the ditches, but was against it. The ditch problem must be settled before other projects can be undertaken. Mr. Ridgeway described the ditches and area, and suggested that the ditches be lowered to drain the polluted waters. Mr. Thurber thinks this would affect the wet area. There was a discussion by the Board as to whom should be responsible for the draining, - Nature Conservancy which owns the land, or SMRAs which administers the sanctuary.

Mrs. Coggeshall suggested that members visit the area and see the problem ditches for themselves, and interested members agreed to meet at the sanctuary at 2:30 on Saturday, May 7.

Mrs. Ridgeway has since furnished a report which is attached to and becomes a part of these minutes.

Education - Junior Audubon Clubs - Mr. Lincoln said that he had had no further contact with the couple, Mr. and Mrs. O'Neil, who had commented by letter that they had organized several hundred Junior Audubon Clubs. It was decided to ask them for advice and help. Mr. Ditterline mentioned that one of Eunice's group, Heide Urban, a junior in high school, would take over the Junior Audubon Club of Chernick, but that she would require much help. On April 26,

Eunice spoke to the PTA ^{of Briarcliff (6/9/66)} on behalf of the Junior Audubon Club and Smras

Mrs. Rosenthal was also suggested as a possible candidate for leader and received some response.

Scholarships - Mr. Lincoln reported that the Chappaqua Garden Club had put no restriction on use of their contribution. Mrs. Mildred Brooks has informed him that her plans are altered and that she cannot attend the Audubon Camp after all. The list of candidates is now narrowed down to Eunice, Ditterline, Mrs. Secor of Ossining, and Sally Brown, a counselor from Camp Sloane. A motion was made and carried that the Society limit scholarship aid to these three for this year.

Program - In the absence of the Program Chairman, Mr. Messiah listed the alternatives for the next SMRAS meeting - the showing of the film previously scheduled for the annual meeting, a visit to Brinton Brook Sanctuary, or cancellation of the meeting. It was moved that the May 13 meeting be postponed and a June visit to Brinton be substituted.

There was also a discussion of field trips to Brigantine ^{New Jersey} New Jersey on May 14 and 15, and to Sharon, Connecticut on May 21 and 22.

Committees - Mr. Messiah asked that a committee be set up to handle the chairmanship of various committees. Mr. Spindelov volunteered for consideration as Field Trip Chairman. Dr. Bligh offered to serve and chair the Program Committee.

Mr. Lincoln was asked to draw up a request for volunteers for committees for the Bulletin.

Mr. Messiah asked for volunteers for the program for the visit to Brinton Brook in June. Mr. Holmes will be chairman with Mrs. Anderson and Mr. Ditterline on his committee and the president ex officio.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Ruth Spindelov

Recording Secretary

Rec'd 5/11/66 -16

REPORT ON THURBER SANCTUARY --BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING
MAY 5, 1966 SAW MILL RIVER BRANCH, NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

Mr. Ridgeway and I have been to the Sanctuary three times. On the second occasion, Mr. Hugh D. Moore met with us, and Miss Velma Cypher. Miss Cypher knows this area very well, and was able to direct us as to the boundaries, and various problems connected with the Sanctuary. We hiked around the place, and became aware that we would require the co-operation of property owners surrounding the area. We talked with some of the neighbors, especially those near the place where an open ditch holds stagnant water, which is a definite health hazard to those living nearby. They explained that in order to get action, not only the village authorities are involved, but county and state as well. The property where the water should be allowed to drain off and away belongs first to the county and then the state. There had been a fire in one place fairly near the road on route 9A. Someone from a passing car had tossed out a cherry bomb, and the fire department had been called to put out the fire.

Mr. Moore wrote a letter to Mr. Francis Thurber, inquiring of him whether he was in favor of a meeting with the neighbors of the Sanctuary, and asking his opinion on the draining of the open ditch. After some time, Mr. Thurber responded but did not seem in favor of the draining of the ditch, as he thought it would deprive the birds of water. Actually, no bird would drink from the water held in those ditches, so this does not seem a logical conclusion. Mr. Thurber also had the thought that one tossed any rubbish back over the fence where it was found in the Sanctuary. We do not agree with this idea, feeling it would be extremely poor public relations to follow such a procedure.

We next returned to the Sanctuary and replaced the sign near the right-of-way near the yellow house at the entrance, and raked up rubbish, cut some brush; then placed other signs on trees in the sanctuary. We checked the open ditch, and it was in a progressively bad state of stagnation. To us, it seemed a health hazard. As we discussed the situation, knowing that Mr. Thurber did not wish the ditch drained, we wondered whether we should lay a trail away from the ditches and perhaps ignore what we considered a serious matter. This is why we wish to bring this to the attention of the Board of Directors. Since we are responsible for the Sanctuary, we thought a condition of this sort reflects on the society. We would like to have your opinion of the matter. As far as we are concerned, we do not see any point to calling a meeting of neighbors, since they must be very irritated by this open ditch on the area.

A Senior troop of Girl Scouts at Ossining, offered to move some threatened wild flowers from route 100 into the Sanctuary. Since this is a bog area and very wet, it did not seem suitable. After checking on Brinton Brook as a possibility, I was referred to the Croton Youth Conservation group who work closely with the Brooklyn Botanical Branch near Ossining. This information was relayed to Mrs. Areta Herrington, the Senior Advisor of the troop.

Respectfully submitted,
Beatrice M. B. Ridgeway
Robert F. Ridgeway