

March 5, 1970

A meeting of the Board of Directors of SMRAS Inc. was held on March 5, 1970 at the home of Mrs. Curnen. Members and officers present were Messrs. Kayser, Messiah, Holmes, Lincoln, Wecker, Osborn and Nettleton and Mesdames Messiah, Holmes, Curnen, Koste, Smith, Kinaman, Coyle, Coggeshall, Weiss, Anderson and Ridgeway.

Minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved.

Treasurer's report showed a balance on hand as of Feb. 28 of \$3,186.38 and in the Endowment Fund \$5,610.45.

Program Chairman Wecker reported the March 20 meeting is OK for Pleasantville High School and Mr. Dignan would be given an honorarium of \$25.00. April meeting is to be held at Roselle School. Mrs. Kinaman will again take care of the plaque for the Camera Club meeting.

Field Trip Chairman Kayser said he would take telephone calls re the April 4 & 5 trip. He will also try to contact Don Kunkel.

Conservation: Mrs. Coggeshall reported that the Timber Bill had apparently been killed, and also the Boat Pollution Bill. Mamaroneck has a local ordinance for dumping. The Open Space Institute is considering working with the County to have the entire river made a wild river throughout the county. The County is also working to preserve the Burnham-Lewis land.

The course at Westchester Community College was oversubscribed, but Mrs. Anderson did get in. They are planning another course next Fall for secondary school teachers.

Mr. Lincoln read a letter from Northern Minnesota proposed Voyagers' National Park with a resolution asking our society to endorse and support it. Mr. Holmes so moved, seconded by Mr. Osborn.

Scholarships: Mrs. Messiah stated that publicity is out in the newspapers and schools. She had called the Chappaqua Garden Club to learn the president would not be back until the first day of Spring, and we don't know whether we can get one scholarship or two. Maine now charges \$175, Wisconsin and Wyoming \$150. She has received one request for an application as of this date. /of New Castle

Mr. Wecker, reporting on the Environmental Group, said have no formal members of SMRAS as yet, still trying to get young people interested and are focusing now on the April 22 meeting. The Conservation Advisory Council/has drawn together information on pollution and pesticides and is printing up 2000, asking for our support. Mr. Lincoln suggested we finance 1000 of them if they would give them to us for our use. Mrs. Ridgeway made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Messiah, that we contribute \$25 if we could have 500 copies for distribution.

Membership: Mr. Holmes reported a total of 495 members. Thelma Smith said they had had a display at the Vishniak meeting and were invited back for the next one. The Welcome Wagon lady had not like the pamphlet because it was for a national organization primarily and wants something on our local publicity.

Mrs. Holmes announced she had sold 10 more copies of Boyle's book at a profit of \$10. Copies of the budget prepared by the Budget Committee were passed around and discussed. Copy of budget as corrected is attached. Motion made by Mrs. Coyle, seconded by Mrs. Holmes that we accept the budget as amended.

Mr. Lincoln brought up the news that the Allisons want to give us 5 acres bordering on the Western end of our present holdings in the Gedney Brook sanctuary. It is all swampland. They would like us to pick up the costs of transfer, survey and assessment, bank release, etc. which might amount to \$250 or \$300. Mr. Lincoln had told them we had not done this before and that our finances were limited. Mr. Holmes felt it important that we add this property to our area. Mrs. Coggeshall suggested we do nothing without specific figures. Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Kayser are to call on them to see how flexible they are, since we want to protect ourselves against back taxes, etc. Mrs. Coyle suggested she ask for contributions for special causes through the Bulletin.

Mr. Nettleton submitted the Sanctuary report. He asked whether we are obligated to send the other \$50 since the conservation officer cannot be reached. Mr. Lincoln said we have no reason to doubt that we have not received services for our payment, but ~~now~~ one way to find out is to hold up the last payment and wait for Mr. Donecker to make his presence known. We should also try to communicate directly with him. He suggested first sending a letter to Mr. Mahon asking for Mr. Donecker's current address so we can settle with him for this year's expenses.

Mrs. Ridgeway reported seeing 5 bluebirds at Brinton Brook, also grouse and pheasant. Mr. Kayser said the Spindelow boys have been banding birds at Gedney on weekends. They are working on seats for the sanctuary and will work on a bulletin board.

Mrs. Anderson had called at Blythedale again and we will lend them some of our books when we hear from their librarian. She has been invited to join the Teatown Council and take tours of nature centers in the area. She described the Red-tailed hawk that had been picked up at Croton Point.

Mr. Lincoln mentioned the National Convention would be held May 14-18 at Seattle. No date set yet for the Bird Clubs of New York meeting.

Mr. Osborn suggested we pool cars for the April Board meeting to be held at his home. May meeting to be at the Messiahs and June meeting at Coggeshalls. With thanks to Mrs. Curnen for her hospitality, meeting adjourned at 11:10.

Respectfully submitted,



Recording Secretary

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1. Proposed Spring Bird Count.

After checking with the President, Sanctuary Chairmen and Naturalist, I recommend our beginning an annual spring bird count in all sanctuaries during the migration season. This year I am suggesting the May 2-3 week-end, already programmed for field trips to our Sanctuaries. We could publicize it in field trip announcements, ask members to assemble at noon as with our Christmas Bird Count to tabulate species and numbers, each chairman assembling totals in the respective sanctuaries, to be turned over to our Naturalist for overall report. Robert Stan, our only bird-bander, would be asked to participate with net and other equipment at Brinton Brook and perhaps elsewhere. Early (birders recommended)

2. Patrolling of Brinton Brook Sanctuary

Reviving our practice of several years ago, probably beginning about 1962 and later abandoned, we requested NYS Conservation Officer Robert Mahon to supervise patrolling at Brinton Brook, assisted by two deputy wardens. Since Mr. Mahon, as a State official, could not legally accept compensation, we annually sent him a \$100 check made out to Robert Donecker, one of his deputies, in the fall, and \$50 in full of account

when the hunting season ended, usually in February.

Reversal of this practice, following a period of inaction and no patrol, began in October, 1968, and continued for the 1968-69 and 1969-70 seasons. Each time we made Mr. Mahon an honorary member of our Society and sent him a subscription to Audubon. Reports from him on conditions at Brinton Brook, usually by telephone, have been included in most reports to the Board by your Sanctuary Director.

This week, deciding to check with Mr. Mahon as to conclusion of the season before asking the Treasurer to forward our final \$50, I learned that Mr. Mahon is no longer an active Conservation Officer. He has been on disability leave for more than a year, his telephone now disconnected and his house sold. Apparently he still lives in the area but cannot be reached.

Succeeding Mr. Mahon is Edward Kurka, NYS Conservation Officer, Box 412, Katonah, N.Y., CE-2 3056, who knew nothing about Brinton Brook or our arrangements with Mr. Mahon. Bob Donecker apparently works for him as a deputy, unpaid, warden, but never has mentioned Brinton Brook or his duties there to Mr. Kurka. When informed of reasons for my inquiring, he recommended that I report details to the Regional

Conservation Officer, George Odell, 1455, New Baltimore headquarters of the Hartford Audubon Society's George Odell.

These developments I reported to President Stan, after which it was decided to take no further action without consultation with the Board of Directors. Separately I have typed up a documented report of our relations with Mr. Mahon to accompany tonight's Secretary's minutes, with a copy to the President and one to the Brinton Brook Sanctuary Chairmen. Thanks to our Treasurer, Mrs. Weiss, and previous Treasurer, Mrs. Holmes, I have numbers and amounts of checks to Bob Donecker, \$100 October 11, 1968, \$50 March 7, 1969 and \$100 Sept. 15, 1969, each endorsed by Robert Donecker. In addition, we have defrayed two honorary memberships to Mr. Mahon. Both Mr. Kurka and I were unable to contact Mr. Donecker by telephone.

Leon D. Nettleton

Cc. to President, Recording Secretary,
Brinton Brook Chairman, Sanctuary Director file, Mr. Odell if needed

A. BEGINNINGS, probably about 1962 and temporary cessation
SMRAS (not yet Inc.) decided on need for hiring someone in authority to be paid for patrolling Brinton Brook Sanctuary during hunting season. Joe Malone, Jim Ritchie & Leon Nettleton journeyed one night to the home of Robert Mahon, NYS Conservation Officer in Katonah with jurisdiction over Croton, and arranged to have him and two of his unpaid deputies cover Brinton Brook during hunting seasons. Since Mr. Mahon as a State officer could not be compensated for such services, a check was to be made out to Robert Donecker and mailed to Mr. Mahon. The original sum may have been \$100 for the season, completed with a Christmas check, and later the amount was increased to \$150, \$100 to be paid in November and the remainder when the season closed, usually in February. Reports were expected, but rarely received in writing.

Probably we had been recommended to the local Conservation Officer, Mr. Saglibene, and by him referred to Mr. Malone. At this time, Mary Forsyth was our Brinton Brook Chairman and she sometimes saw Mr. Mahon there. There was some disagreement as to letting him drive into the sanctuary to the pond with his boat, permission for which she refused. We were told that the officers arrested one hunter in or near the Sanctuary when found with two robins he had shot. He was fined in the Croton court. Others were warned.

B. REVIVAL OF PATROLLING, 1968 and following

After a while this practice was discontinued. Beginning in 1968 we decided to revive the practice, since the Chairman, then Mr. Haas, recommended it as being needed in order to lessen the influx of trespassing hunters. According to reports to the Board of Directors and correspondence records, these were the subsequent happenings:

(dated Oct. 11)

October 10, 1968, Mr. Mahon was sent check #556 for \$100/made out to Robert Donecker, to be complemented in February with another \$50. Accompanying was letter to him from Leon Nettleton, Director of Sanctuaries, also mentioned in Director's report November 10, 1968. Board voted to give Mr. Mahon an honorary membership in Nat. Audubon Society as token of appreciation.

Nov. 14 report to Directors, Mr. Mahon has begun patrolling

Dec. 12, 1968 report that Mr. Mahon and two deputies had patrolled for a total of 103 man hours in the vicinity of the Sanctuary, had apprehended and warned two trespassers and had heard shots, recommended posting more No Trespassing signs to be seen from cars on Route 9. Mr. Mahon enjoys Audubon Magazine.

Jan. 9, 1969 report: "Conservation Officer Mahon is confined to his home with serious back trouble. Over the fone, he said that his men are continuing to patrol Brinton Brook and report 'nothing spectacular' there"

Feb. 13, 1969 report: "Mr. Mahon has been ill with serious back trouble that could entail surgery. Altho reported improved, he was not available to report by letter or fone this week. Informal report from his deputy, Bob Donecker, says that during the past couple of months about fifteen hunters had been apprehended and warned not to return, and none had. Increase might have been due to lack of patrolling last year. Most were 'from the city'; names and addresses are on file with Mr. Mahon. Second offenders will be arrested". Director recommended permanent policy of patrolling during hunting seasons.

March 13, 1969 report: Hunting season now over. Mr. Mahon and deputies have completed their duties and received final \$50 stipend. A written report was received mentioning gun shots heard but not violations occurring. "The season as a whole was quite successful. No actual violations, and no great problems", concluding hope of attending a meeting with us some time and showing a film on law enforcement. March 7, 1969 check #632 for \$50 sent Mr. Mahon made out to Robert Donecker and returned endorsed by Mr. Donecker.

Sept. 11, 1969 Director's report: annual patrol to begin next month (Oct.) under supervision of Mr. Mahon, cost same as last year--\$100 now, \$50 at end of season. Sept. 15, 1969, \$100 check #707 sent him made out to Robert Donecker, returned endorsed by Mr. Donecker.

Oct. 10 report may have made no mention of patrol.

Nov. '69: see Secretary's minutes.

Dec. 12, 1969 Director's report: "Our Conservation Officer, Bob Mahon, reports everything fine at Brinton Brook Sanctuary--the best he has ever seen it. Every week-end the area is patrolled by him or by Bob Donecker. He writes, 'Many persons were checked near the Sanctuary. My men report very few problems.' Commenting on Bob Ridgeway's report of two shotgun shells found in the Sanctuary recently, Mr. Mahon suggested that these might indicate someone's having entered via the Con Edison territory. Mr. Mahon's new address: 127 Huntville Rd., Katonah, telephone CE-2 4374."

Jan. 11, 1970 letter to Mr. Mahon expressed our appreciation, reported renewal of his honorary membership, and in answer to a question of his clarified our agreement that final \$50 would be sent after the hunting season ended in February.

Feb., 1970: see Secretary's minutes. I believe that Mr. Mahon had reported the Sanctuary as policed effectively.

Conclusion: see DIRECTOR OF SANCTUARIES REPORT 3/5/70 #2 Patrolling at Brinton Brook Sanctuary

Cc. to President, Secretary, Brinton Brook Chairman, Mr. Odell if needed, Director of Sanctuaries file



Leon D. Nettleton,
SMRAS Inc. Director of Sanctuaries