

**Saw Mill River Audubon  
DRAFT Minutes  
Board of Directors Meeting  
April 5, 2001**

The **meeting** was called to order at 7:30 p.m. Directors R & S Wecker, R. McCrillis, A. Maram, M. Smolin, R. Nathan, J. Coffey, M. Arnold, S. Keyes, R. Saravay, J. Anderson, J. Lunetta, and H. Seduski were present. Education Director Anne Swaim was also present.

**Minutes for the March, 2001** board meeting were reviewed and amended.

**Membership** was reported by Chris Nykwest to be 999.

**Sanctuary Committee** Martin Smolin reported on the following items for the sanctuary committee:

- Danny Ferguson with Martin installed a wood duck box at Brinton Brook and cleaned out the old ones.
- There was damage to the boardwalk railing at Pinecliff from a falling tree. Under the direction of Martin, a patch of TriMax was applied to the railing. It was suggested that the entire railing be replaced and Martin will look into this.
- The Sanctuary Committee will meet on Thursday, April 26<sup>th</sup>, 7:30 p.m. at Martin Smolin's house.
- Martin is continuing to work with representatives of Con Edison to arrange for trail linkage and public access to the power lines adjacent to Brinton Brook Sanctuary. Insurance papers have been sent to Con Edison to verify that an additional \$3 million in liability has been obtained. This was made possible with an agreement with the Town of Cortlandt to pay for the approximately \$450/year increase in premiums.
- Protection of the approximately 20-acre Silverman property adjacent to the golf course and Brinton Brook is still under question. The Open Space Institute (OSI) has considered the assessment of \$225,000 to be high. They have sent a letter to Mrs. Silverman with three suggested options: (1) donation of the property to SMRAS; (2) establishment of a trail/conservation easement or (3) funds raised from local organizations to buy the property. Martin noted that the third option is unlikely and the first two, even with tax benefits, would probably not be in the financial interest of Mrs. Silverman. There was some discussion about the question of conservation easements or donation by Mrs. Silverman. Richard Saravay suggested that there should be direct contact between SMRAS and Mrs. Silverman.
- Martin reviewed the issue of the Millennium Pipeline noting that the Route 9/9A route is likely to be rejected. A third option is a route that would, again, bring the pipeline close to Brinton Brook Sanctuary. He intends to secure a realtor assessment of the value of any land that might be lost to SMRAS by the pipeline or its right-of-way. It was agreed that SMRAS should stay involved in this issue to make sure that we have a voice in any future discussions.

**Treasurer's Report** Jim Anderson distributed a "Cash Flow" report for the first three months of 2001.

**Finance Committee** Rita Wecker said additional details from this committee will be emailed to the office. She noted that the Finance Committee met on March 23<sup>rd</sup> to determine whether there were sufficient reserves to meet expenses in the event that adverse market conditions continue to affect the SMRAS portfolio. It was determined that there are sufficient reserves for the moment. It was noted that, as of March 18<sup>th</sup>, the SMRAS portfolio has declined in value by 18%.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Due to a technical glitch (by the volunteer minutes taker), Rita's emailed addition/corrections to the above report are NOT included in these mailed draft minutes. It is expected that such additions/corrections will be made available at the May meeting.

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**Naturalist's Report** Anne Swaim distributed her monthly report and highlighted various education programs she has been or will be presenting.

**National Audubon Society News** Stan Wecker gave an overview of the proposed “Essential Elements of Chapters” which will be the new evaluation tool for chapters from National Audubon Society. As written, the proposal redefines the relationship between chapters and National Audubon. However, the first draft was even more “top down” with NAS setting policy to which the chapter must adhere. The new draft does recognize that chapters are independent 501c(3) organizations. The policy is expected to be approved at the NAS Board of Directors meeting in June. He also noted that the latest annual report from NAS omitted mention of the 513 chapters of National Audubon.

**State Council** Richard Saravay gave an overview of the spring meeting of the Audubon Council of New York State.

- He noted that the Council and the State office are advocating the protection of the **Great Swamp** in Putnam County, part of the East Branch system of the NYC Watershed. Jim Utter presented an excellent program about the Swamp at the Council meeting noting the presence of over 185 species of birds in this habitat. It was suggested that we should have a public program on this issue with Jim Utter. A board canoe outing through the Swamp was also discussed.
- Richard displayed the latest “Resolution Policy Book” as approved by the Council in which various resolutions are detailed directing the policy work of the State Office. Among these were resolutions on the Jamaica Bay National Wildlife Refuge and Hudson River dredging.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

**The next meeting will be Thursday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 7 p.m., at the Chappaqua Library.**

Minutes prepared by Anne Swaim