

**Saw Mill River Audubon Board Meeting Minutes  
September 8, 2003 – Held at Chappaqua Library**

**Present:** Richard Saravay, Bob McCrillis, Ken Novenstern, Jeanne Romeu, Judy Epstein, Tom McEnerney, Lurline Arco, Sophie Keyes, Ilse Jorgensen, Stan Wecker, Rita Wecker, Jim Anderson, Joan Coffey, Jo Lunetta, and Jeff Pinerio. Anne Swaim was also present.

**Federation of New York State Bird Clubs (FNYSBC):** SMRA member Berna Lincoln updated the Board about this statewide ornithological organization of which SMRA is a member. Berna and Stan Lincoln are our delegates to FNYSBC. SMRA currently has five votes based on membership of 900. (Our votes would drop to four if our membership falls under 800.) Berna presented a motion for SMRA to submit all of its votes for a change in name for FNYSBC to "New York State Ornithological Association" and that Berna and Stan be empowered to take our proxies to the FNYBC upcoming annual meeting. Rita moved and Jim seconded, motion passed. Proxies were signed by the following Board members: Judith Epstein, Jeanne Romeu, Robert McCrillis, and James Anderson.

**June Meeting Minutes:** Under "President's Report" the minutes were edited to reflect that we do currently have a Planning Committee consisting of officers, chairs of all major committees, and Anne Swaim as staff support. Joan moved, Jo seconded to accept the minutes as edited, motion passed.

**President's Report:** Richard noted that Ilse Jorgensen, Anne Swaim and he have been invited to a girl scout "**Gold Award Ceremony**" at the home of the McGraths on Sunday, September 21. Sarah McGrath completed her Gold Award project at our Cameron-Murtfeldt Sanctuary. We are not currently a member of the **Saw Mill River Coalition** but Richard feels we should be tracking issues in this area. Stan Wecker volunteered to keep us up-to-date on this. There was a brief discussion about the use of **wind power** as an alternative to energy from Indian Point. Richard asked Stan and Anne to update us on the **Westchester County Audubon chapters** meeting. Anne reported that there will be a "Lower Hudson Audubon Chapter Roundtable" on Saturday, March 13. This is an opportunity for committee chairs from all area chapters to share problems and ideas. Details to follow. Richard noted that the date of the upcoming **fall New York Audubon Council** meeting is the same weekend as our anniversary boat trip, October 17-19. No board members stated that they plan to attend the fall council meeting.

**Nominating Committee, Treasurer's Report, Audit Committee:** No reports this month.

**Finance Committee:** Rita reported that the Finance Committee met on September 3 to update the SMRA "Policy and Guidelines for the Management of Funds." Copies of the proposed revisions will be sent to all Board members in advance of the October Board meeting for a vote at that meeting. Rita updated the status of our portfolio as of August 30. Rita noted that some of the signers on our various accounts still need updating because some signers are no longer Board members. Jim Grefig has submitted his resignation from the Finance Committee due to a lack of time. His resignation was reported with regret. Rita has sent an email accepting this resignation with thanks for his service. It was noted that Jim Grefig has been very helpful to the committee over the last three years and that his service will be greatly missed. Richard will also send him a thank you letter.

**Planning Committee:** Stan Wecker reminded the Board to reserve Saturday, November 1, 9:30 am to 3:30 pm for the Board retreat. As before, it will be held at Community Bible Church of Northern Westchester and former SMRA board member Donna Nye will be our facilitator.

**Community Relations and Development:** As of late August, our **membership** was 862 however it is expected that as many as 130 of these memberships will expire in September, dropping our membership below 800. We currently have 52 chapter-only members from whom we received 100% of the dues.

**Community Relations and Development (cont'd):** Of the 810 national/chapter members, 656 were recruited by National Audubon and 154 were recruited by our chapter.

The **2003 Annual Fund Drive** has brought in \$10,890 so far. Last year's total was \$14,045 but this included corporate matching funds so we can expect this year's total to increase somewhat from same source. However, Bob McCrillis noted that this year's amount is still disappointing because of the extra effort this year to send the anniversary journal and encourage extra donations for our anniversary year. On an encouraging note, Stan Wecker said that our office database allows us to track donations closely and reveals that over half of our current members have sent a donation at least once in the past three years. This is considered a very good percentage. Plans and orders for **the 2003 Bird Seed Sale** are underway. Ken Novenster has made contact with Saw Mill River Supply to sell bird feeders at our sale with a portion of the sales going to SMRA.

**Milne Bequest:** We were sent a letter from the attorney for "Guiding Eyes for the Blind," another beneficiary of the Milne estate. This attorney has raised concerns that the Milne estate is not being handled properly. A Surrogate Court hearing has been set to investigate these concerns. SMRA will be represented at the hearing by a pro-bono attorney secured by Richard Saravay. Jo Lunetta and Bob McCrillis volunteered to attend this hearing to demonstrate our board's interest in this matter.

**Goldsby-Morelli Property Donation:** Richard gave an overview of a possible property donation of 6.5 acres to SMRA in the same neighborhood as the Cameron-Murdfeldt Sanctuary and Anne passed out maps to show the parcel in relation to our existing sanctuary. Richard sought an opinion from the Board as to whether there is interest in this property. The family has agreed to pay all existing taxes and any taxes that accrue before tax exemption is secured for the parcel by SMRA. There was discussion about our policy on accepting land donations. Jeff questioned our purpose for accepting this land since it is not able to be developed and also not accessible to visitors in its current condition. Richard felt this was in line with our desire to protect open space. Ilse noted that we would be protecting wildlife habitat. Ken suggested that our stewardship of this land might be a way to involve the surrounding neighbors in our mission. It was also suggested that we work with the Westchester Land Trust on this question. A property visit was set for Saturday, September 13. Joan, Ilse, Judy, Jeanne, Ken and Anne will meet at the SMRA office at 3 p.m.

**Sanctuaries Committee:** Since it was late, discussion and reports from this committee were postponed until the October meeting.

**Program Committee:** We need a board presence at all of our public programs to meet and greet visitors and potential members. A sign-up sheet for board members to attend public programs was circulated.

**50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration -- Boat Ride:** SMRA will pay for tickets for Anne Swaim, Lynn Tchobanoglous, Ellen Heidelberger, John Flicker (National President, invited), Iris Blumenthal (National membership office - invited), and Danny Ferguson. Our boat speaker from RiverKeeper will also have his ticket provided.

**Naturalist's Report:** Because of the lateness of the hour, Anne Swaim reported only on the upcoming New Castle Community Day and a sign-up sheet for board member participation was circulated.

**The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 pm.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Judith Epstein

