

Saw Mill River Audubon – Draft Board Meeting Minutes

June 21, 2005

At the home of Karen Wells and Andrew Canning, 28 Apple Bee Farm Road, Croton-on-Hudson

Present: Robert McCrillis, presiding, Jim Anderson, Joan Coffey, Cori Cumming, Sophie Keyes, Tom McEnerney, Jeanne Romeu, Stanley Rosenthal, George Shakespear, Ponie Sheehan, Stan Wecker, and Karen Wells. Guests: Anne Swaim, Barbara Campbell, Carol Coggeshall, Mrs. Rosenthal

Meeting was called to order at 8 p.m., following the annual picnic.

Minutes of May 2, 2005: Approved and accepted as submitted.

President's Report: Robert McCrillis welcomed guests to the evening's picnic and meeting, including some volunteers and former members of the SMRA Board.

A new list of committee assignments was circulated. The Bird Seed Committee lost some members through attrition; a meeting is due to be called. The Arboretum and Butterfly Garden are in good shape, though we could use more help with the arboretum. The Membership Committee has been folded into the Development Committee; therefore Tom McEnerney is now a member of the Development Committee. In the fall, we will need a new chairman of the Personnel Committee.

An executive committee for the summer recess was proposed, to be composed of the standing officers of the chapter. Karen Wells moved, Jim Anderson seconded, and the motion carried.

Because of the large number of new Board members who have joined recently, a Board orientation session was proposed for the fall, perhaps in mid-September. More information will follow.

Correspondence: The second-graders at the Todd School donated \$150 to SMRA from their popcorn drive. They will be thanked in the coming newsletter.

Lasdon Arboretum circulated a press release announcing a botanical art exhibition by the National Science Illustrators.

"Green Lawn, Blue Water," a Web site affiliated with Audubon At Home, will be mentioned in the coming newsletter as well.

Joan Coffey attended the Rockefeller Preserve Spring Celebration on May 15, including the official ceremony on the Preserve's being declared an Important Bird Area, the 135th IBA in the state.

On November 11, a "Conservation Cafe" series of discussions will be held at Pace University in Pleasantville. Topic: white-tailed deer. Anne Swaim will attend.

Copies of the new Audubon Important Bird Area book, which was launched May 16th at Constitution Marsh, are available at the SMRA office.

Robert McCrillis attended the Federated Conservationists of Westchester County meeting on June 9 and reported a very good program.

Community Relations and Development: Barbara Campbell circulated a detailed report on results of the annual fund drive to date. Total donations to date are \$13,314 compared to total 2004 donations of \$11,713. The full calendar year 2005 budgeted goal is \$14,500.

It was determined that, of the various alternatives for a follow-up to the fund drive, there would be a mailing to those members who have not yet contributed.

Membership is up to a total of 798, compared to 782 a year ago. Within that figure, SMRA chapter-only memberships increased from 134 to 219.

Barbara also reported that press releases have been more regular this year, with pickup in local papers and some success in the New York Times. The volunteer handout has been revised and four new sanctuary brochures created. She noted that a new person will need to take responsibility for putting the newsletter together once Lynn Tchobanoglous moves to the West Coast on July 10. Ponie Sheehan has offered to step in. A newsletter planning meeting will be held in mid-July.

Barbara will spend most of her SMRA time this summer preparing grant applications. She asked Board members to let her know of any contacts at local foundations, corporations, or organizations, including town boards and community relations people in organizations.

Going forward, Development will submit a written report at each monthly meeting.

Environmental Action: Chris Slagle is alerting people to relevant mailings and developments through email, without formal meetings. Ponie Sheehan will join committee.

Bird Seed Sale: There's a lot of bird seed left in the shed. We will need a July sale.

Naturalist's Report: Anne Swaim reported that this was the last week of walks for the school year. Anne will do a teachers workshop at Pace University in July.

Final interpretive panels for Brinton Brook are due in the summer; Anne will circulate them to some Board members for reviews and try to get them into production by the end of July. Danny Ferguson will install signs in September, with an eye to doing a ribbon-cutting ceremony in October with a local government official.

There were no applications again for adult scholarships this year, so Anne suggests that Robert McCrillis attend the Audubon camp for chapter presidents on Hog Island in Maine. A motion to that effect was made by Karen Wells, seconded by Joan Coffey, and passed. Tom McEnerney added that he would like to use the normal accounting category, rather than scholarship line item, to account for the Audubon camp fee.

Finances:

Treasurer's Report—Operating revenues for the year through May 31, 2005 were \$21,006; total expenses, \$49,135; and transfers from endowment, \$28,000. Tom McEnerney circulated an itemized spreadsheet.

Tom also reported that a preliminary audit report is due next week, which he will share with Robert McCrillis and the Audit Committee.

Tom and Anne Swaim met with a member of Bedford Audubon regarding credit card processing. Anne is unhappy with our current credit card process because of high annual fees and cumbersome filing methods. We could save some money and gain efficiency. Tom and Anne are considering canceling the contract with the current processor and using a different provider.

Stan Wecker inquired about the annual \$500 contribution to NY State Audubon. Tom will investigate whether that's gone out yet and will report in September.

Interim Finance Report—Tom reported for Rita Wecker that the investment portfolio was at \$866,833 at May 31st, up 3.3% compared to the Dow Jones 2.69% mark for May. The next full quarterly investment report will be in September, covering performance for April, May, and June.

History: Sophie Keyes reported that she has gathered nice biographies and reports on past presidents, naturalists, and board members and is compiling this material, with the help of our new library volunteer, into a book to be stored in the SMRA office library.

Sanctuaries: Danny Ferguson has re-blazed both Brinton Brook and Graff sanctuaries. We need a new sanctuary chair for Choate, now that Lurline Arco has left. In Brinton Brook, the sign signaling the Amberlands exit was removed, perhaps by the landlord of Amberlands who doesn't want publicity about that access. Jeanne Romeu proposes replacing the sign with a new one indicating the exit as an emergency exit, posted high.

The two youths caught on ATVs in Brinton Brook pleaded guilty and paid fines. Jeanne feels we need to keep pushing on ATV issue; perhaps installing boulders at the entrance. She will check boulders unearthed by Sophie Keyes' road in recent roadwork. Karen Wells volunteered to contact the three townships involved to get their participation.

Jeanne hopes to have a committee meeting at the end of the summer.

Field Trips: Joan Coffey reported on a recent Field Trip Committee meeting at the home of Sophie & Bob Keyes. We'll be trying something new this year: the addition of a "greeter" at field trips. The greeter will bring information on SMRA, greet people, help coordinate the event, and write a field report.

Also new this fall will be Second Saturday Sanctuary outings every month. Other events: Cortlandt Manor, September 10; Constitution Marsh trip, September 18; and Hawk Watch with Bedford Audubon on October 15.

We were also asked to consider co-sponsoring a trip to Cape May this fall, Sept. 30 through Oct. 2. Joan is investigating further.

New business: Please note that Cori Cummings' correct telephone number 914-739-0994.

Stan Wecker circulated copies of the 1970 Earth Fair cover, for the history section of board members' binders.

Hospitality: Thanks to Karen Wells and her husband Andrew Canning for tonight's refreshments, and for the use of their home for the picnic and meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

The next meeting will be held on Monday, September 12, a week after Labor Day. It was agreed that it will be held at the Community Bible Church at Chadeayne Road, off Route 134 in Yorktown.

###