

**Saw Mill River Audubon – Corrected Board Meeting Minutes**  
**October 5, 2005**  
**At the Community Bible Church of Northern Westchester**

**Present:** Robert McCrillis, presiding, Joan Coffey, Sophie Keyes, Burt Leiser, Tom McEnerney, Ken Novenstern, Margo Peters, Jeanne Romeu, Richard Saravay, George Shakespear, Rita Wecker, Stan Wecker, and Karen Wells. Guests: Jeff Pinerio, Anne Swaim

**Meeting was called to order** at 7:30 p.m.

**Minutes of September 12, 2005:** Approved and accepted as submitted. Special thanks to Anne Swaim and Jeanne Romeu for covering the minutes of that meeting.

**President's Report:** Robert McCrillis reviewed and circulated correspondence, including an announcement of two National Audubon trips, a brochure on Greenpower in New York State, an announcement from Westchester.gov regarding the second annual Business Continuity Seminar scheduled for October 18, and a field guide on bird tours worldwide.

The rescheduled Board orientation will be held on Saturday, October 29, at Van Cortlandt Manor. All directors are encouraged to attend and to bring their Director's Handbook. Barbara Campbell will lead the half-day meeting.

A Deer Symposium, billed as a "conversation on conservation," will be held at Pace University on November 18. Stanley Rosenthal and Anne Swaim plan to attend and will bring along the recent SMRA statement about timing of the deer hunting season.

The deadline for submission of materials for next newsletter is November 1.

Planning and Budget Committee meetings need to be scheduled in November. Richard Saravay, Planning Chair, and Tom McEnerney, Budget Chair, will suggest dates.

Personnel Committee meeting also needs to be scheduled, and a new committee chairperson is needed. Chairperson will do annual performance reviews, staff salary level evaluations, review job descriptions, and make recommendations.

Nominating Committee, including Stan Wecker, Jo Lunetta, and Joan Coffey, was elected.

**Sanctuaries Committee:**

Committee chair Jeanne Romeu reported that the new maps and sanctuary brochures are done and look beautiful. Jeff Pinerio produced snazzy new map boxes for the trail heads and Danny Ferguson is installing them.

Jeanne also praised Anne Swaim's "great job" on copy and artwork for the 20 new interpretive trail signs at Brinton Brook Sanctuary, which are scheduled to be unveiled on Saturday, November 5. Copies of the signs were on display by the doorway to the meeting room. Actual signs are pending delivery from the manufacturer.

Jeff Pinerio presented design presentations, production information, and the town approval process for creating and installing new entrance signs at the sanctuaries. He proposed a two-tier process, beginning with producing signs for the two largest sanctuaries, Pruyne and Brinton Brook. Step 2 would be creating signs for the major entrances of the other sanctuaries. After discussion of alternative funding schemes and some design details, Burt Leiser moved that the Board authorize production of the first two signs, with monies to be drawn from the operating budget. Karen Wells seconded the motion, and it was approved with enthusiasm. Fund raising will also be investigated later for the costs of the signs.

**Community Relations and Development:**

Stan Wecker suggested that a membership push at Kendal on Hudson would be a good idea, as there seems to be lots of interest in birding and nature at the retirement community.

Richard Saravay reported that he had received a notice that a citation was filed on the Milne bequest, which should be the final formal step in settling that estate. Based on a 5 percent allocation, SMRA could receive up to \$17,000 in additional monies.

The Development Report records a total of \$14,770 in donations to date this year, passing the budgeted goal of \$14,500. The end-of-year appeal letter is drafted and will go to the printer this month. Total membership numbers are up to 810, including 229 SMRA chapter-only members. Chapter membership dues, however, are at \$2,790, below the goal of \$3,500. This is due to a change in how revenues from dues are being recorded (i.e., donations over and above dues are now more accurately listed separately, rather than being lumped together with "membership dues.") Finally, a grant application has been submitted to the NYC Environmental Fund for two kiosks at Pruyne Sanctuary.

**Bird Seed Sale:**

Ken Novenster reported that seed and truck were ready for the coming sale, and that the list of volunteers to staff the sale was in good shape. A little more physical assistance would help for Saturday morning. We will all need to load and unload seed ourselves this year.

So far, \$2,086 in seed orders have been received by telephone to Margo Peters and additional orders have been mailed to the SMRA office.

Advertising in the Patent Trader, as was done last year, was discussed briefly and deemed a good idea.

**Environmental Action:**

Robert McCrillis reported that Chris Slagle will be unable to continue as committee chairman, due to conflicts with other commitments. Chris will continue to do the water testing project, however. Burt Leiser volunteered to take on the chairmanship.

**Naturalist's Report:**

Anne Swaim passed along the news of spotty reports of a decline in gray squirrel populations in a few parts of the county. There may be a link to West Nile disease. Anyone who has noticed a change in the gray squirrel population should let Anne know.

School programs and field trips are starting up for the fall season, with the new pricing structure in effect. There will be two walks tomorrow at Pinecliff Sanctuary. Next week, there's a wetlands walk at Pinecliff, in conjunction with a trip to the water treatment plant.

**Field Trips:**

Chair Joan Coffey reported that the Constitution Marsh outing on September 18 was "a huge success," with six canoes, lots of people, and a beautiful day. It's been suggested that the outing be offered again in spring.

Two joint trips are planned with Bedford Audubon, one to Cape May (September 30- October 2) and a Hawk Watch at Chestnut Ridge at Butler Sanctuary on October 15 (which was later rained out.)

There will be a Field Trip Committee meeting late in the month, probably at the SMRA office. Stan Wecker suggested that programs be discussed at the Field Trip meeting as well.

**Programs:**

Anne Swaim asked for volunteers from the Board to attend the membership table at the "Owls in Ossining" program scheduled for October 20 at the Mariandale Center.

**Finances:***Treasurer's Report—*

Tom McEnerney reported that an Audit Committee meeting was held at the beginning of August, and went well.

Operating revenues through September 30 were \$31,588, somewhat lower than budgeted. Donations are slightly ahead of plan; seed sale, membership, and education program revenues slightly lower. However, expenses for the year to date through September 30 were significantly lower than budgeted, so the chapter is doing well on the operating balance for the year. One significant saving has been in lower than expected Development Consultant expenses. Also, Tom succeeded in getting a \$1,900 refund in disability insurance, which he had been pursuing for a while.

*Interim Finance Report—*

Finance Chair Rita Wecker noted that the third quarter closed on September 30 and will be reported as a quarter at the next meeting. For the month of September, the SMRA portfolio was up 0.85%, almost identical to the Dow Jones at 0.83%. There were no withdrawals from the portfolio in September. Other investment activity in September included maturation of one 9-month CD, which was turned over into another 9-month CD at a slightly higher rate; the opening of an account with Vanguard; and the conversion of Vanguard "investor shares" into mid-cap index Admiral Fund shares.

**Publicity:**

George Shakespear announced that a feature article on the Butterfly Garden at Pruyn Sanctuary was expected in the Journal News on October 6, featuring a field trip led by Midge Arnold and an interview with Anne Swaim.

**Hospitality:** Thanks to Margo Peters for hospitality at this meeting.

**Meeting adjourned** at 9:10 p.m. Next monthly meeting will be on Monday, November 7, at the Community Bible Church