

**Saw Mill River Audubon – Corrected Board Meeting Minutes**  
**April 3, 2006**  
**At the Community Bible Church of Northern Westchester**

**Present:** Robert McCrillis, presiding, Jim Anderson, Joan Coffey, Cori Cumming, Sophie Keyes, Burton Leiser, Tom McEnerney, Erika Miller, Ken Novenster, Jeanne Romeu, Stan Rosenthal, Richard Saravay, George Shakespear, Ponie Sheehan, and Chris Slagle. Guests: Philip Heidelberger, Michael Madias, Larry Trachtenberg

Meeting was called to order at 7:32 p.m. with a quorum present.

**Minutes:** Two clarifications were suggested by President Robert McCrillis to the March 6 minutes as mailed to directors: first, that the mention of “minutes” be specified to read “minutes of the February 6 meeting.” Second, that the author of the minutes be acknowledged; in the case of the March 6 meeting, that we add “minutes taken by Sophie Keyes.” [Special thanks to Sophie for pinch hitting!] Recording of the author of the minutes will become standard procedure for all SMRA minutes in the future. It was moved, seconded, and passed that the March 6 minutes be accepted as amended.

Likewise, it was moved, seconded, and passed that the February 6, 2005 minutes be accepted as distributed to directors prior to the March 6 meeting, where a quorum had not been present.

**President’s Report:** Robert McCrillis opened the meeting by noting that a quorum of the Board was present.

There have been more than 70 responses for the April 9 Dinner and Annual Meeting at Travelers Rest, including a contingent from Kendal on Hudson. Everyone was encouraged to bring a camera to record the event; Jeanne Romeu, George Shakespear, and Anne Swaim plan to do so. A display of nature photographs will also be mounted at the dinner; some submissions are in, more are welcome.

There is still no Recording Secretary on the Board roster to be voted on at the April 9 annual meeting. Robert asked for a volunteer and Jeanne Romeu raised her hand.

Richard Saravay reported on the New York State Audubon Spring Council conference, which was held in March at Saratoga Springs. Richard has been elected to the Board of Directors, placing a member of SMRA on the board of the state council.

Council meeting topics included:

- A draft strategic plan was submitted for review by Audubon chapters by the end of April. Richard circulated a copy of that draft to the SMRA Board and invited comment.
- An updated list of speakers available from NYS Audubon was circulated. Richard reported that two new programs are available from NYS Audubon: one on avian flu and one on global warming. Both are based on science.
- Richard also highlighted the Great Swamp resolution from the list of state legislative resolutions, as it affects an important habitat in our region (the Great Swamp is located in Putnam and Dutchess counties.) State Senator Vincent Leibel has been instrumental in proposing Phase 2 legislation to conserve the Great Swamp. Richard suggested that one thing everyone can do is inform our legislators about the importance of this initiative.
- A new NYS Audubon brochure on forest management, “Wildlife and Forestry in New York Northern Hardwoods” has been published. Richard circulated a copy and gave it to Jeanne Romeu as head of the Sanctuaries Committee.
- Among interesting field trips planned by other state chapters, there’s a May 6 trip to see spruce grouse at Spring Pond Bog, co-sponsored by the High Peaks Audubon Society and the St. Lawrence-Adirondack Audubon Society. Details on this and other Audubon activities around the state can be found at [ny.audubon.org](http://ny.audubon.org).
- Other chapters report success in raising money by hosting birthday parties in sanctuaries.

Mail and correspondence: Robert McCrillis circulated a few items of general interest: a brochure on a spring birding workshop just north of Pittsburgh, a notice that the New York Historical Society is

displaying a new set of 40 original Audubon watercolors; a presentation on birds of prey by James Eyring of Pace University, to be held this coming Thursday at the Goldstein Fitness Center; a Greenburgh Nature Center brochure; and a promotional brochure for an Audubon Nature Odyssey tour to the Chilean fjords in November.

**Nominating Committee:** Membership of the Nominating Committee requires election by the Board. It was moved and passed that the Nominating Committee be composed of Robert McCrillis (chair), Joan Coffey, and Stan Wecker.

**Finances:**

Treasurer Tom McEnerney circulated operating revenues and expenses for the three months ended March 31, 2006. Revenues are a little under budget so far, due to lagging income from membership and education programs to date. Expenses are also running lower than projected. Two line items are a bit over budget: Salaries & Benefits (due to overtime) and Office Operations (due to higher energy costs). Other expenses, however, are running lower than budgeted and more than compensate to date for those two items.

*Finance Report*—Phil Heidelberger briefly discussed the investment portfolio performance for March. After disbursements, the SMRA portfolio had a 4 percent increase since January 1, 2006, to reach a balance of \$949,000. Phil also reported that the next Finance Committee meeting will be held on April 24 and he expressed interest in recruiting new members for the committee.

**Education and Scholarship report:** Education committee chair Joan Coffey expressed pleasure at the awarding of the 2006 Larry Light Scholarship to Harper Pack, a junior at Greeley High School in Chappaqua.

A meeting of the Education Committee will be organized soon.

**Bird Seed Sale:** Bird Seed Committee chair Ken Novenstern asked for volunteers for the next sale, the final seed sale of the season, on Saturday, April 29. Ken also asked for volunteers for the Bird Seed Committee, to help with the planning, pricing, and telephone calling.

Since 15 lb. bags of sunflower chips are in long supply, they will be on special offer at “3 for the price of 2.”

**Sanctuaries:** Sanctuaries Committee chair Jeanne Romeu circulated a sign-up sheet for people interested in being on the committee, which meets two times a year. There may be a meeting in May.

Part 2 of the perimeter posting at Brinton Brook Sanctuary was held last Saturday, April 1. Jeanne thanked the participants who joined her that day, including Anne Swaim, Michael and Greg Madias, Meredith and Lisbee Smith, and Bob Keyes. GPS positions were taken along the perimeter. The next perimeter posting will be at Pruyn Sanctuary and will be arranged via e-mail.

Danny Ferguson has cleared a patch to connect Brinton Brook to the Croton Arboretum. Jeanne is talking to the Croton Trails Committee regarding reimbursement.

There will be a Town of Cortlandt Planning Meeting tomorrow (April 4) evening to discuss plans to subdivide an area of open space near Furnace Dock Road.

There will be an Earth Day cleanup at Choate Sanctuary on April 22 with the help of the Youth Group of St. Mark’s Episcopal Church of Mt. Kisco.

Jeanne went to Brinton Brook with a representative of the Village of Croton Department of Public Works to examine the entrance for where to place boulders that might block ATV traffic.

**Community Relations and Development:** The annual fund drive PSing party will be held at the home of the Heidelbergs on Saturday, April 22.

**Environmental Action:** Environmental Committee chair Burton Leiser reported that he and Robert McCrillis attended a very interesting meeting sponsored by the Federated Conservationists of Westchester County about the I-287 corridor to the Tappan Zee Bridge. Six very different proposals on what to do about

the over-used and aging bridge generated a very lively discussion among attendees. An invitation was offered to bring the principals from the New York State committee working on the problem for the past three years to talk to the SMRA board or at a public program. Sophie Keyes suggested that we may want to co-sponsor such a program with Rockland Audubon.

Chris Slagle discussed the citizen Volunteer Water Monitoring initiative organized by the Westchester County Department of Planning. Chris sent an email to gather information about training sessions being planned for four Saturdays in April and May. Chris will attend the first session on April 22 and has already obtained a book on basic monitoring procedures. He hopes to build a program to monitor water quality at Brinton Brook and at Pruyn. He's looking for 2-3 people to monitor once a month and proposed that SMRA get our own water monitoring equipment, which might cost \$400-\$600 and would be shared among team members. It was proposed that Chris attend the official training session and in turn train our other volunteers, who might also come from school groups or scouting troops.

**Field Trips:** Field Trip Committee chair Joan Coffey explained the concept of having a host from the SMRA board at every field trip to greet people, gather names, and hand out SMRA information. She circulated a sign-up list for field trip hosts.

Joan also reported that the Constitution Marsh field trip on April 29 is already fully booked. Also, the Putnam County Land Trust is planning a canoe trip at the Great Swamp the first weekend of May. Participants do not need to bring a canoe.

**Programs:** Robert McCrillis announced that he will assume the chair of this committee, which needs to become active again. Cori Cumming will also join the committee; more are welcome. Richard Saravay, Erika Miller, and Burton Leiser asked to be on the list for the next meeting.

Robert added that Anne Swaim is already talking with Pace University about collaborating on an I-287 program

**Naturalist's Report:** A sign-up list was circulated for volunteers who might set-up and manage a SMRA booth at the Tarrytown Earth Day, the evening of Friday, April 21.

**Publicity:** George Shakespear reported that he had approached reporters in the *Journal News*, *Patent Trader*, and the Westchester edition of *The New York Times* regarding the 75 years of combined service to the environment by Stan and Rita Wecker.

**New Business:** After a site visit, Robert proposed putting up a tent at Pruyn Sanctuary for the June picnic on June 5, rather than going to Croton Point Park. Jeanne will also investigate Senasqua Park as an alternative.

The proposed "Pruyn Celebration" day, to mark new kiosks and signage, is October 14.

The next copy deadline for the "On the Wing" newsletter is May 1.

The Half Moon, a replica of the famous 1609 ship, is docked at Verplanck.

**Meeting adjourned** at 9:07 p.m. The annual meeting will be held on April 9 and the next monthly meeting will be on Monday, May 1, at the home of Sophie and Bob Keyes.

The April 3, 2006 minutes were recorded by George Shakespear.