

Saw Mill River Audubon – Board Meeting Minutes

June 5, 2006

At Senasqua Park, Croton-on-Hudson

Present: Robert McCrillis, presiding, Joan Coffey, Cori Cumming, Sally Dow, Trish Foy, Phil Heidelberger, Bill Kellner, Michael Madias, Elaine Mason, Tom McEnerney, Jeanne Romeu, Richard Saravay, George Shakespear, Meredith Smith, Larry Trachtenberg, Staff: Anne Swaim, Ellen Heidelberger, Guest: Rudy Fasciani.

Meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m. with a quorum present

Minutes: A correction was suggested by Meredith Smith of the May 1, 2006 minutes in which she said she cannot guarantee a twice-a-year cleanup at Choate by the St. Mark's Episcopal Church youth group, but will try to clean up when necessary. It was moved, seconded and passed that the May 1 minutes be accepted as amended.

President's Report: Robert McCrillis opened the meeting by welcoming guests to our annual picnic, and thanking Meredith for heading the picnic committee and Jeanne Romeu for suggesting and securing the beautiful Senasqua Park venue.

The mail/correspondence portion of his report was done at the end of the meeting, with mail received on a Human Rights Watch film festival at the Jacob Burns Film Center, a Jamaica Bay trip, and a whale and bird observation cruise.

Personnel Committee: A two-part proposal was presented by the committee: 1) That Anne Swaim's title and role change from Education Director to Executive Director, and 2) That we hire a part-time educator, to be paid from the fees charged for our classroom programs in area schools. Ken Novenster agreed this new personnel change was long overdue, and there was a general consensus to accept the proposal. It is necessary to implement the proposal of a new part-time educator immediately so as to begin interviewing and have someone in place for the coming school year. Bill Kellner asked if there were candidates for the part-time educator. Anne Swaim suggested looking for someone with teaching experience who can give 15/hrs week. The hourly educator pay rate would be mid-range and we would raise the classroom program rate from \$50 to \$65 a session. Anne mentioned we would need additional equipment as we only have one laptop. Anne suggested that all interviewees be required to give a presentation. The motion to hire Anne Swaim as Executive Director, and also a part-time educator, was made and accepted.

Bird Seed Sale: Ken Novenster reported the 2005-6 seed sale had a net profit of \$10,045. Ken also noted that although the seed order was cut this year, there was still a profit of \$250 over last year. There were 60 bags of sunflower seed left over which will be sold at the fall sale—this will help reduce costs. Ken is looking into other suppliers to see how much they charge, as well as their different mixes. October 14 and 15 will be our major fall seed sale weekend. Ken will meet with the Bird Seed Committee the third week in June.

Sanctuaries Committee: Jeanne Romeu reported the committee met on May 15, and discussions included the replacement of one boardwalk and demolition of another at Pruyn, as well as a Pruyn boundary-posting hike to be held Saturday, June 17. Future signage for our other sanctuaries will be ongoing. Graff Sanctuary will be next on the schedule for boundary posting after Pruyn, as well as the possibility of improving the steep Graff/Furnace Dock entrance with steps. Rudy Fasciani was thanked for his volunteer work at Brinton.

Community Relations and Development: Robert McCrillis suggested the Fund Drive be moved to the Fall instead of April, with April as the SMRA annual dinner to recognize Board members, achievements and election of new board members. April 1, 2007 is reserved at Traveler's Rest Restaurant.

Environmental Action: No report, Burton Leiser was absent.

Field Trips: Joan Coffey acknowledged the great job of the two-page field trip and program flyer done by Ellen Heidelberger and George Shakespear. She asked for suggestions for future field trips.

Programs: Cori Cumming reported she, Bob McCrillis, Anne Swaim and Stan Wecker met for potential programs. Future programs include I-287 corridor and the Tappan Zee Bridge project in September; a second program on river otters in early November at Ossining H.S.; healthy backyard and garden program in January with, hopefully, a speaker from the NY Botanical Gardens and co-sponsored by and held at the Chappaqua library; amphibians with the NY Audubon in February; global warming in March.

Naturalist's Report: Anne Swaim reported that we could use an email service called Intellicontact for \$11/mo. to set up a notice and environmental issues email list for our members and others. People on the list always have the option to opt out if they wish or to update their own email address if it changes. Robert suggested that we explore the possibility of offering the option to receive the newsletter by email. This would save money on printing and postage. There was no objection to moving forward with this idea.

Publicity: George Shakespear reported no new press releases at this time.

Treasurer's Report: Tom McEnerney circulated operating revenues and expenses for the five months ended May 31, 2006. He reported Development Consultant Barbara Campbell is running less than budgeted, as well as overall expenses running under budget. On a separate sheet, adjustments to operating revenues and expenses showed the Larry Light Scholarship Fund at a balance of \$15,858 after the \$5,000 distribution award; the Wecker dinner profiting \$15.00; the Pruyne Kiosk \$5,000 grant received and the Pruyne interpretive sign grant of \$1,000 received.

Finance Committee: Phil Heidelberger reported May was not a prosperous month for the portfolio. The market is on a downfall at present, but although the portfolio balance went down from the May 1 figure of \$949,510 to an ending balance as of 6/1 of \$924,772, we were still \$11,605 ahead from the beginning of the year. Richard Saravay reported the remainder of the Milne bequest should be received by the end of the summer.

Hospitality: Thanks to Meredith Smith, Anne Swaim and picnic committee, Rudy Fasciani for cooking and supplying the burgers and franks, and all who participated in bringing food and refreshments.

New Business: Robert McCrillis reported the Federated Conservationists of Westchester County will have their annual meeting and program at Kensico Plaza and invited SMRA to have a table there.

Richard Saravay reported Richard Haley, Director of Education for Audubon NY, passed away.

The Board Retreat will be Saturday, September 30.

Pruyne celebration will be Sunday, October 22.

Field Trip to Trinidad - April 23-27, 2007—\$1,450 per person/double occupancy, with airfare, food, tours and transfers included. 4 nights, 3 days of incredible birding Anne reported this is a wonderful trip, with accommodations overlooking the rain forest. A \$250.00 deposit is needed from SMRA to hold the date. A \$100 deposit will be needed from each participant to hold individual spots. Majority was in favor and showed interest in trip.

Meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m. The next board meeting is Monday, September 11

The June 5, 2006 minutes were recorded by Jeanne Romeu