

Saw Mill River Audubon—Draft Board Meeting Minutes
September 11, 2006
At the Community Bible Church of Northern Westchester

Present: Robert McCrillis, presiding, Joan Coffey, Cori Cumming, Sally Dow, Trish Foy, Philip Heidelberger, Sophie Keyes, Burton Leiser, Michael Madias, Elaine Mason, Erika Miller, Ken Novenster, Tom McEnerney, Jeanne Romeu, Richard Saravay, Ponie Sheehan, Larry Trachtenberg.
Staff: Anne Swaim and Pat Mutolo.

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. with a quorum present. The minutes of the June 5, 2006 meeting were accepted with no corrections.

President's Report: Robert McCrillis opened the meeting with a survey for board members to help identify what goals should be presented and discussed at our Board Retreat on Saturday, September 30. A fast-paced retreat is planned, beginning at 9:45 a.m. until 1 p.m. with lunch included.

Pat Mutolo, our new part-time educator for classroom programs, was introduced to the Board. Pat is a retired Westorchard elementary school teacher with a passion for nature, birding and the environment. She said she is looking forward to pursuing this new role.

Robert noted that 14 people are presently signed up for the Spring, 2007 Trinidad birding trip (ten were needed), and there are three spaces left (up to 17 can attend).

A sign up sheet was passed around for volunteers to staff the SMRA table at the annual New Castle Community Day event on Saturday, Sept. 16.

Tom McEnerney said volunteers were also needed for the Pruyne Work Day, scheduled for Saturday, October 7th to spruce the arboretum in advance of the Pruyne Celebration to be held on Oct. 22.

Community Relations and Development: Membership is currently 847. Donations have surpassed last year's totals YTD by over \$5,000. This includes a \$5000 donation by the Rosedale Nursery as well as an anonymous donation of \$1,000 toward a computer for the office. A proposal was distributed with how we might use part of the \$5,000 Rosedale gift for sanctuary improvements. This will be considered at a future board meeting.

Letters will go out in December to members who have not yet mailed in their annual fund donation for this year.

Richard Saravay reported the final donation from the Milne bequest would be coming in around the ending of September and is now expected to be around \$35,000.

The Pruyne Celebration, dedicating the new educational trail signs, kiosks and road sign, will be held on Saturday, October 22 from 1:30 to 4:30. A planning outline was distributed outlining the program and the publicity schedule. Sanctuary walks, garden and arboretum tours, Birds of Prey demonstration by Jim Eyring, and refreshments are planned. A sign-up sheet was passed around for volunteer opportunities at this event.

Bird Seed Sale: Ken Novenster noted that our annual bird seed sale is now more than a one time event but, instead, an ongoing business for our organization. With his third year at the helm, Ken is continuing to refine our inventory management of seed. Ken said the weekend pickup hours will be shortened this year to 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. This will be particularly helpful on Sunday when extra work is needed at the end of the day to move unsold seed back to Pruyne Sanctuary. A sign-up sheet was passed around. Jeanne Romeu suggested we explore the possibility of being listed with area municipal courts as a recipient of community service hours for young defendants who are sentenced to that requirement.

Sanctuaries Committee: Jeanne Romeu reported the status of the sanctuaries boundary re-posting. We have completed our two largest sanctuaries, Brinton Brook and Pruyun Sanctuaries, with Graff Sanctuary (Croton-on-Hudson) to be the next one scheduled.

Anne Swaim reported the re-posting at Pruyun revealed probable lawn encroachment on our boundary, dumping of lawn and garden debris, and the placement of a deer stand with evidence of illegal deer scent being used. These conditions were found on or near the property of an adjoining landowner whom SMRA had attempted to contact several years ago about possible encroachment. Upon further discussion, Burton Leiser suggested a letter from SMRA to the offending property owner recording their "hostile use" of our property, and requesting that they desist. It was decided to pursue verbal contact for a short while and then pursue written notice. It may be necessary to have a survey done of our common lot line.

Michael Madias has now taken down a total of **four** illegal deer stands on SMRA property, three at Brinton Brook and one at Pruyun.

Anne Swaim reported the Brinton Brook Sanctuary's first "2nd Saturday Walk" was well attended, and the sanctuary was in great shape. Rudy Fasciani did a good job cleaning out leaf debris in the Split Rock pools, leaving enough behind for frogs to hibernate.

Environmental Action: Burton discussed his ongoing work to set up a public program regarding the Tappan Zee Bridge issue.

Chris Slagle was not present; therefore nothing was reported on the water testing initiative.

Field Trips: Joan Coffey felt greeters are needed at our field trips. Several people affirmed the value of board participation on field trips and agreed we should continue this idea. Anne suggested that board members look over each newsletter's listing of field trip to select trips on which they can be Audubon hosts.

Programs: Upcoming programs include "River Otters" at the Hendrick Hudson Library on Sept. 26 and a program with live wolves at Kendal on Monday, October 23rd at 7:30. The wolf program will be held at Kendal on Hudson for the residents and will not be open to the general public but open to the board. Stan Wecker has been actively nurturing the SMRA interest and membership at Kendal, and this program would be a great incentive for the SMRA Board to meet these potential members and donors.

In January, Sean Mahar of Audubon New York will present a program for us at the Chappaqua Library on backyard birds. We also hope to hold a program in May 2007 at the newly opened, rebuilt Ossining Library.

Executive Director's Report: Anne Swaim reported that the email list is working very well. We are now able to accept credit card payment securely online at our web site. We are using that ability for seed sale payments and new memberships as well as two new pages for memorial donations and tribute gifts.

BOCES has hired a new part-time environmental educator, basing their job description on the one we used for our part-time educator. We are exploring the possibility of this teacher leading field trips for SMRA as well.

New brochures have been printed for the butterfly garden and arboretum and for our scholarship program. These were designed by Barbara Campbell and are the same format as our sanctuary brochures.

Publicity: George Shakespear was not present.

Treasurer's Report: Tom McEnerney reported the audit is completed. Currently we're in very good financial shape. We are ahead of budgeted donation revenue by \$5,000 and expenses are about \$10,000 less than budgeted. Tom voiced support for the idea of adding additional sanctuary road signs since the new sign at Pruyn has obviously increased visitation. Tom asked if SMRA wants to continue its annual donation of \$500 to the Audubon New York office, and the Board agreed to continue that relationship.

Hospitality: There is a need for someone to fill this role for now because Margo Peters is not feeling well.

Finance Committee: Phil Heidelberger reported that the portfolio balance for the period ending 6/30/06 was \$921,524, up over \$8,000 from its opening balance of \$913,167 (additions to portfolio were \$250, with withdrawals totaling \$25,000). Currently, as of 9/1/06, the balance is \$930,575, an increase of 1.9%.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m. The next board meeting will be *Wednesday*, October 11. The Sept. 11, 2006 minutes were recorded by Jeanne Romeu.