

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

Present: Robert McCrillis, presiding, Edward Bezursik, Trish Foy, Cori Cumming, Philip Heidelberger, Bill Kellner, Sophie Keyes, Tom McEnerney, Michael Madias, Ken Novenster, Jeanne Romeu, Stanley Rosenthal, George Shakespear, Ponie Sheehan, Meredith Smith, Larry Trachtenberg.
Staff: Anne Swaim

Meeting called to order at 7:30 p.m. with a quorum present.

Minutes of September 11, 2006 meeting were accepted with no corrections.

President's Report: Robert McCrillis opened the meeting with mail and correspondence, which included correspondence from the Rio Grande Valley's 13th Annual Birding Festival; the *Beacon Institute for Rivers and Estuaries*, and the *Field Guide Birding Tours Worldwide*. We will not hold a board meeting in November. Instead, our major committees (sanctuaries, field trips, etc.) will meet during November to continue discussions on the goals from the board retreat.

There were positive comments about the retreat including the streamlined agenda and the participatory discussion of goals and objectives.

Executive Report: Anne Swaim discussed the staffing for classroom and field trip programs for area schools. She will be meeting with Pat Mutolo for training on our classroom program content. Pat will be our presenter for classroom programs. We have a proposal from BOCES to share another part-time educator, Laura Infield. Both BOCES and Audubon would schedule Laura's time for field trips scheduled at each organization. BOCES is paying the same rate as we have offered Pat and might offer Laura. This would allow us to expand our education program. Costs would be covered by the fees charged to schools. It would be helpful to have an additional laptop and projector but not necessary. However, to this end, Barbara Campbell has submitted a \$1,500 grant to Audubon New York for this additional equipment. We have already booked Pat for classroom programs and would be able to book Laura for additional programs, with approval from the board for this second education contractor. Trish Foy moved to accept this proposal, George Shakespear seconded and all approved.

Sanctuaries Committee: Anne brought the Board up to date on communication with the Sultanik family, who live adjacent to Pruyn, and with whom we may need better boundary definition. Larry Trachtenberg will follow up with another attorney to draft language for a statement that Sam Sultanik has offered to sign recognizing the legal boundaries. This will ensure that there is not a suggestion of adverse possession.

Jeanne reviewed a concern with a neighbor in the Arrowcrest development adjacent to Brinton. There is supposed to be a conservation easement between our sanctuary and residential properties in this development. The house at the corner of the golf course and our sanctuary appears to have cut trees and thrown the debris in the easement or possibly on our property. The Code Enforcement Office at Croton was contacted and has visited the property. There is also a concern with trail erosion from stormwater run-off from the golf course. After clarification of

the easement location in relation to our stone boundary wall, Anne will expand on Jeanne's draft letter to the Village, with review by Robert and George, clarifying the easement protection, boundaries, and requesting resolution/clean up.

Graff Sanctuary's boundary posting walk is set for Saturday, November 18.

The Haas "sanctuary keeper" position is open and a call for a volunteer was mentioned. We did have a neighbor in this role in the past.

Jeanne Romeu reported on the attempted vandalism of one trail sign at Brinton. She said it was vandalism resistant, as we hoped, and that the purchase of that particular quality of signs was money well spent.

Pruyn Arboretum and Garden Tom McEnerney reported ten people showed up for the Pruyne Arboretum workday on Saturday, October 7 in preparation for October 22's Pruyne Celebration. Lots of work and pruning was accomplished. Tom thanked Erika Miller for her hard work weeding and pruning in the butterfly garden.

Treasurer's Report: Tom McEnerney reported that, as of today, the birdseed sales have reached \$18,654, which is ahead of last year at this time, and with walk-ins at the October sale, we may fulfill the '06 sale numbers. (This income number includes sales through the calendar year of 2006 covering both last year's sales through the winter and income from pre-orders for this year's sales.)

Tom noted the following details in the treasurer's report. Expenses were over budget in the Pruyne House budget line due to the topping off of the oil tank to take advantage of the low purchase price of oil. Barbara Campbell's expenses YTD were under budget. The expenditure shown for scholarships was for the printing of the scholarship program brochure. We show an expense in the Capital Fund from the new road signs.

Tom will be distributing 2006 expense reports to all committee chairs in late October. Committee budgets for 2007 are due back to Tom by mid-November so that the Budget Committee can prepare next year's budget in time for review at the December board meeting.

Finance Committee: Phil Heidelberger reported that the October 1, 2006 portfolio balance was \$935,894, up \$22,727, or 2.5%, compared to Jan. 1, 2006.

Community Relations & Development: Robert McCrillis reported our chapter membership is steadily growing, with 308 members YTD (up from 269 for '05), for a total membership of 847 (national and chapter combined) as of 10/9/06. Donations YTD are above last year's by about \$2,000. This includes a donation for office computers.

Barbara Campbell will begin work on the annual appeal follow up campaign in late October.

Bird Seed Sale: Ken Novenster reported that seed orders have come in well. We will be submitting a second order to our supplier following the sale. We have good volunteer coverage, including most of the board members, during the sale weekend. Starbucks is donating coffee. Pizza Station in Chappaqua is donating pizza for our volunteers.

Environmental Action: Burton Leiser was not present.

Field Trips: Joan Coffey was not present. Anne Swaim reported the “2nd Saturday Walk” at Brinton Brook Sanctuary on October 14 begins at 9 a.m. There was a good turnout for the first walk on September 9 with more than two dozen people.

Ponie Sheehan gave a positive report about her personal visit to Cape May, New Jersey and New Jersey Audubon programs she attended there.

Programs: Cori Cumming reported the River Otter program at the Hendrick Hudson Library was well attended with over two dozen people.

The Wolf program at Kendal-on-Hudson is Monday, Oct. 23 at 7:30 p.m. This program is not open to the public but SMRA board members may attend.

Our next public program will be by the author/photographer of “Birds of Central Park” on Wednesday, Nov. 29 at the Chappaqua Library at 7:30 p.m.

Hospitality: Sally Dow was not present. Thanks went to Anne Swaim and Ponie Sheehan for desserts for tonight’s meeting.

New Business: Bill Kellner spoke about the 4,000 acre Black Rock Forest reserve in Orange County, owned by a consortium of NY area educational institutions for habitat and ecological research. The classroom area was recently upgraded to be environmentally positive. This was suggested as a good Board field trip as we consider possible renovation plans for the Pruyn House. George and Bill visited Black Rock as part of their environmental certification study at Columbia. Bill will follow up about the idea of a board field trip to Black Rock.

Jeanne Romeu suggested an article in the newsletter mentioning that dogs are to be leashed as well as mentioning that lawn and garden debris should be not dumped in our sanctuaries.

Meredith Smith added a concern about a neighbor’s dog at Pruyn Sanctuary that is not staying within the electric fence boundaries of its yard. The dog is very loud and somewhat aggressive looking. Anne said she would attempt to contact the neighbor to discuss this concern. This is the house in the NE corner of our sanctuary adjacent to the yellow Deer Loop Trail.

Sophie Keyes reported November 1 is the deadline for the newsletter.

Meeting adjourned at 9:16 p.m. The next board meeting will be Monday, December 4.

Jeanne Romeu, Secretary