

**Saw Mill River Audubon—Draft Board Meeting Minutes
December 4, 2006
At the Community Bible Church of Northern Westchester**

Present: Robert McCrillis, presiding, Joan Coffey, Cori Cumming, Sally Dow, Trish Foy, Philip Heidelberger, Bill Kellner, Sophie Keyes, Burton Leiser, Tom McEnerney, Michael Madias, Erika Miller, Jeanne Romeu, Stanley Rosenthal, Richard Saravay, George Shakespear, Ponie Sheehan, Larry Trachtenberg. Staff: Anne Swaim

Meeting called to order at 7:30 p.m. with a quorum present. Minutes of October 11, 2006 meeting were accepted with no corrections.

President's Report: Robert McCrillis opened the meeting with *mail and correspondence* which included the Westchester County Land Trust Newsletter, Audubon New York Annual Report, the 10th Annual Backyard Bird Count hosted by the National Audubon Society and Cornell Lab of Ornithology, and the 2007 Audubon New York Conservation Policy Resolution book.

Treasurer's Report: Tom McEnerney discussed, line by line, the new budget for 2007 (attachment). Some of the line items discussed were: *Education*—'07 proposed budget has a \$4,500 increase in expenses due to estimate of hours and mileage costs for the two new educators—income is expected to be about \$7,000, also an increase with expanded outreach and increase in fees charged to schools. The net will be lower, but over time the net is expected to increase. The funds to cover expenses will come from the education income; our formula 5% draw from the *Endowment* fund is \$3,000 more than in '06; *SMRA Bulletin* for '07 is budgeted downward \$2,000 less due to our in-house layout of issues; *Insurance* went over budget for '06 due to a double payment since our insurance company changed their payment schedule; *Seed Sale* has maintained its net income of about \$9,000 and Ken Novenster was commended for that; *Audit Services* will remain same for '07 budget due to our auditor's generosity in charging us a reduced rate; *Development Consultant*—our expenses have been less than budgeted due to less hours worked by Barbara Campbell; the *Capital Expenses* line is for the cost of sanctuary road signs.

It was noted we have been drawing more than the 5% guideline from our endowment in past years but we have also received significant bequests and had a favorable market to allow our endowment to increase nonetheless. Richard Saravay suggested we may want to have an "endowment drive" to increase our endowment.

Proposed budget for '07 was voted on and passed. Tom was applauded for his detailed work in preparing the budget.

Finance Committee: Philip Heidelberger reported that as of October 1, 2006, our investment portfolio balance report showed \$935,894, or up 2.5% for the year. Our balance as of 12/1/06 was \$962,737, or an increase of 5.4% for the year, reflecting a strong stock market.

Community Relations and Development: The *Pruyn Celebration* was a success with about 100 people attending. Several attendees first learned about SMRA from this event. James Eyring was entertaining and informative and made a point of speaking in support of our work. We plan to make this an annual event.

The *Fund Drive and Membership Report* was distributed (see attached). We are continuing to grow chapter members with a corresponding reduction in National Audubon membership.

Barbara Campbell prepared *follow-up fund drive letters* that were distributed for board members to add personal postscripts. These were letter to people who gave significant donations in the past and who have not yet sent in a gift for this year.

Two major public events to increase awareness of SMRA and solicit financial support are our annual dinner (in April at Travelers Rest restaurant), and the Pruyn Celebration in the fall. We plan to seek a sponsor for the Pruyn Celebration.

Bird Seed Sale: Ken Novenster was unable to be present. It was announced that we will hold winter Saturday sales every third Saturday. The first one will be December 16 from 9-11:30 a.m. and volunteers were requested from the board.

Sanctuaries Committee: Anne Swaim brought the Board up to date on the *Sultanik resolution plan*. Larry Trachtenberg solicited an attorney colleague to draft a memo for the Sultaniks to sign acknowledging our property boundaries. Anne is following up with the Sultaniks on this matter. Our next step, after that document is finalized with the Sultaniks, will be to decide what we should do to physically define that property boundary.

We completed half the *Graff boundary posting*, and will finish it up after the holidays in January. A discussion followed about a deer stand that was found on a property adjacent to Graff near our trail, and our position on “recovery” of deer shot on adjacent properties that run into our sanctuaries. It was agreed that although we are not against hunting, we would not permit recovery on our property, nor do we want hunting in such close proximity to our properties. Anne reviewed a conversation with the Dept. of Environmental Conservation regarding hunting regulations.

Additional signage is needed regarding the Pruyn house and parking and these minor costs are expected to be drawn from the capital expenses line of the 2007 budget.

Anne will follow up with the Village of Croton regarding the Brinton Arrowcrest easement. A letter was sent to Croton, and we are awaiting a response.

Anne reported the Hudson National Golf Course has cleared their stormwater basin that was overflowing onto the Highland Trail and causing erosion. Some repair of this trail was also done but more detailed work is needed. This need was reported to the Village of Croton.

Jeanne Romeu thanked Bill Kellner for filling the Haas “sanctuary keeper” position. Bill made his first report about Haas Sanctuary conditions. Trails need clearing and blazing. This has been relayed to Danny Ferguson.

Environmental Action: Burton Leiser reported Westchester County is second only to California in now requiring cell phone recycling. We may wish to relay this to our members in an upcoming newsletter. Burton will pass along details to the office.

The Tappan Zee Bridge program is still being researched. We may be able to host this in May.

Richard Saravay reminded the board that both Audubon New York and Audubon National offer email alerts about urgent environmental issue with a simple link to respond to elected officials online.

Field Trips: Joan Coffey reported the “2nd Saturday Walk” at Brinton Brook Sanctuary on December 9 begins at 9 a.m. There will be a bird walk at Teatown on December 3 with leader Charlie Roberto; a bird walk at the Tarrytown Reservoirs for waterfowl on December 10 at 9 a.m.; and a walk to learn about winter plants at Muscoot in January. See current newsletter or our web site for details.

Programs: Cori Cumming reported the Birds of Central Park on 11/29 had an encouraging attendance of about 50- people and was an excellent program. The next public program will be "A Day in the Life of a Backyard Bird" on January 19, 2007, 7:30 pm at the Chappaqua Library. A Program Committee meeting was announced for Wednesday, January 3, 2007 at 2 p.m. to finalize details for our March and May public programs.

Publicity: The Journal News is doing an article on Pruyn, and two other articles were recently published about Pruyn Sanctuary and the butterfly and hummingbird garden. A press release will be issued regarding the Norcross grant received for Pinecliff interpretive signs. Sophie Keyes distributed extra copies of the Bulletin to board members for delivery to local libraries and noted that the next bulletin deadline is January 3.

Executive Director's Report: Anne Swaim reported that we will again expand out children's programming to pre-schools since both Pat Mutolo and Laura Infield are comfortable and experienced teaching this age level. A targeted mailing has gone out to area pre-schools.

The principal of Westorchard School contacted Anne about the possibility of working in partnership with SMRA to install an interpretive trail with signs on the school property.

The annual Eagle Festival will be Sunday, February 11, and board volunteers will be needed for our sponsored warming tent at Croton Point and our display at Teatown.

We need to finalize our list of participants for the Trinidad trip by December 15 and send in our deposits to Caligo Ventures by December 23.

Hospitality: Sally Dow was not present. Thanks to Anne Swaim, Ponie Sheehan and Cori Cumming for setting up coffee and refreshments for this meeting.

New Business: Trish Foy has finished the first phase of cataloging the books in SMRA's library. Our thanks to Trish for offering her professional expertise and time on this project. We have received an excellent selection of bird books from the estate of Charles Kennedy. Bill Kellner is following up on the idea of a board field trip to Black Rock Forest to tour their "green" building design and learn more about forest ecology studies at this center.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m. **The next board meeting will be Monday, January 8.** The December 4, 2006 minutes were recorded by Jeanne Romeu.