

Saw Mill River Audubon Draft Board Meeting Minutes
Monday, October 6, 2008
Held at the Community Bible Church of Northern Westchester

Board Members present: Robert McCrillis, presiding; George Shakespear, Tom McEnerney, Richard Saravay, Phil Heidelberger, Michael Madias, Larry Trachtenberg, Nick Fischer, Rik Kaufman, William Kellner, Jeanne Romeu, Jean Sparacin, Joan Coffey, Ponie Sheehan, Sally Dow, Joanne McAuley, Cori Cumming. Anne Swaim, Executive Director, was also present.

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. with a quorum present.

Minutes of the September 8 board meeting were approved.

President's Report - Robert McCrillis Correspondence was read.

Mary Charbonneau, SMRA part-time educator, was introduced. She thanked the board for the scholarship which made possible her attending the Audubon Educator's Workshop on Hog Island, Maine, this past summer, and said what a wonderful experience it was. Unfortunately for SMRA, she has accepted a full-time position as educational manager at the Audubon Center at Constitution Marsh in Cold Spring. However, she will be able to keep a commitment for a once-weekly after-school series at Westorchard Elementary between January and March.

The board retreat, held the evening of September 22, was discussed. It was felt that more time was needed for in-depth discussions, and that, in another year, it might be better to return to a Saturday morning retreat with lunch included. People were asked to sign up for committees.

Pruyn Celebration plans are moving ahead for Sunday, October 19 (rain date October 26). Bruce Lowder will be there with his reptiles, and two women from the Northern Westchester flutes will play. Volunteers were asked to sign up for the afternoon.

Treasurer's Report - Tom McEnerney

The budget for 2009 will be formulated in November. Committee inputs are needed for planning purposes. Revenues and expenses for the first nine months of the year were reviewed (see attached).

Finance Committee – Phil Heidelberger

As you all know, the last quarter, and September in particular, has been simply terrible for the stock market. The SMRA Investment portfolio balance on October 1, 2008 was \$813,584, a drop of \$80,744 (9.0%) for the month. For the year, the portfolio balance is down 21.1% from its starting balance of \$1,030,596, including \$57,000 (5.5%) in withdrawals for the year, resulting in an Investment return rate of about -16%. To put this in perspective, the Dow Jones Industrial Average is down 22% for the year and the S&P 500 is down 25% for the year.

Executive Director's Report - Anne Swaim

The Costa Rica trip planned for March 15 – 21 is looking good. Enough people have expressed interest in going but deposits have not yet been received to guarantee the trip.

The possibility of hiring a second part-time educator is being explored.

A letter about our position on hunting in the sanctuaries, including recovery of shot deer, is being sent to town officials in Croton, Cortlandt and New Castle as well as trailwalkers and neighbors of Brinton, Graff, and Pruyne. No hunting or recovery is allowed in our sanctuaries.

Anne announced that there is an opportunity for night birding to observe songbird migrants from on top of the Empire State Building with possible dates of Oct. 12 or 13. See email for details.

Sanctuaries Committee - Michael Madias

Two work days are planned for trail work, one at Brinton Brook and one in Haas in November.

Pruyn House Vision - Bill Kellner

Our architect is at work on the final stage of the feasibility study. We will circulate these documents to the board once they become available.

Community Relations and Development - Robert McCrillis

Membership and donations for the first nine months of the year were discussed (see attached).

Newsletter - Bill Kellner

Next deadline is November 1. More committee members are needed.

Bird Seed Sale

The October sale weekend went very well, with a few minor glitches. There was a good turn-out of buyers, and a hard-working crew of volunteers with all time slots filled.

Publicity - George Shakespear

We have had particularly good publicity from LoHud.com in recent days. Publicity is going out about the Pruyn Celebration.

Programs

A number of field trips and programs are planned for October. See bulletin for details and registration requirements. Future programs will be discussed at the committee meeting coming up in November.

Hospitality - Jean Sparacin

Jean was thanked for refreshments tonight. A list for sign-ups for future board meetings was circulated.

New Business

Richard Saravay urged members to sign up for emails about advocacy issues with National Audubon and New York Advisory. It is important that all make their voice heard on environmental issues. An email with web links to sign up for these emails will be sent to the board.

Next board meeting will be Monday, December 1. November will be reserved for committee meetings.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Sally Dow, Secretary