

Saw Mill River Audubon Board Minutes
Monday, September 14, 2009
Held at the Community Bible Church of Northern Westchester

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

Board members present: Robert McCrillis, presiding; Joan Coffey, Cori Cumming, Sally Dow, Nick Fischer, Trish Foy, Arthur Green, Phil Heidelberger, Rik Kaufman, Donna Lassiter, Valerie Lyle, Michael Madias Jr., Joanne McAuley, Ken Novenstern, Nina Romanoff, Richard Saravay, George Shakespear, Ponie Sheehan, and Larry Trachtenberg. Anne Swaim, Executive Director,

Absent: Bill Kellner, Tom McEnerney, Leen Provost, Jeanne Romeu, and Jean Sparacin.

Minutes of the June 1, 2009 meeting were accepted as presented.

President's Report - Robert McCrillis

Muscoot Farm Market Day - Sunday, September 20 (9:30 am to 3:30 pm). We have an info table/booth. Volunteers are needed. Please let Anne know if you can be there.

Roster and Committee list – Lists as of June, 2009 were given out. Please review for accuracy. Any additions /deletions please send to Ellen in the office ASAP.

2009/2010 Board Meeting dates: October 5, December 7 (Budget), January 4, February 1, March 1, April 11 (Annual Meeting and dinner at Traveler's Rest) May 3 and June 7 (Picnic).

Pruyn Vision Report – 5-page “presentation summary” was given to each Board member. This is the summary of the feasibility study conducted by Steven Winter Associates, Inc. Edits or comments are requested from board members before our next board meeting. A presentation/discussion will be held at the next meeting. Please keep confidential – not for public discussion. Note: all costs indicated are at the high end of given estimates. This is not a nature center – it is an environmental education building.

Some of the ideas presented in the handout were discussed. Robert said the Pruyn House Vision Committee would meet before the board meeting to consider funding questions and review board comments.

Pruyn Day – We did not get the Con Edison grant. The grant was denied because of their own budget cuts. We were told that they liked our proposal and that we should come back in future for reconsideration. Robert said that we would postpone Pruyn Day until money is available. Richard Saravay said that he will continue to make additional funding inquiries.

September 15 – Co-sponsoring program with Croton Arboretum – **Biodiversity: why it matters.** Speaker, Dr. Mike Rubbo of Teatown. To take place at Croton Library at 7:30pm.

Mail/Correspondence

The **Audubon Council of New York** will meet at West Point / Hotel Thayer on October 30 – November 1, 2009. Deadline to make a hotel reservation is September 29. Additional information on day reservations will follow. Richard Saravay and Anne Swaim both expect to attend. SMRA will be leading a field trip to Croton Point for council meeting participants on Saturday October 31.

September 19 - October 25, 2009: Icons of the Hudson: Portrait of a River. Photographs by Joseph Squillante will be exhibited at the Field Library Gallery, Peekskill.

Community Relations and Development – presented by Robert McCrillis

Refer to attached development report by Barbara Campbell for September 2009 reporting on the Annual Appeal, Public Relations activity and Grants writing. Membership is over 1,000 and donations reached our goal of \$20,000.

Finance Committee - Phil Heidelberg

For our official quarterly report, as of July 1, 2009 the portfolio balance was \$655,977 an increase of \$24,318 (3.8%) for the year, including \$14,000 in withdrawals. The investment rate of return was 6.2% year-to-date and -21.0% for one year, compared to the Morningstar Allocation averages of 5.7% and -16.3% for the comparable periods.

Reflecting a strong stock market in July and August, as of September 1, 2009, the portfolio balance was \$709,250 and is up \$77,591 (12.3%) for the year, including \$20,000 (3.2%) in withdrawals. The portfolio balance is up 27.7% from the approximate market low of \$555,571 on March 1st, 2009.

Treasurer's Report – presented by Phil Heidelberg for Tom McEnerney

See handout "Operating and Expenses for the eight months ended August 31, 2009"

Revenues: About \$5,000 ahead of expectations. Donations are encouraging. Seed sale and Membership doing very well.

Expenses: About \$1,500 over expectations. Most things okay except **Pruyn House** -\$1,250 over expectations due mostly to about \$750 of unanticipated maintenance costs. Still have one big oil delivery to come. **Sanctuaries** - \$850 over expectations. Budget originally \$10,000 and was cut to \$8,000 in March based on anticipated cost savings in Danny's time and brochure printing costs. At a \$10,000 budget, Sanctuaries is under budget but the anticipated cost savings necessary for the reduced \$8,000 budget are yet to be realized. **PR and Fund Raising** Original budget of \$2,400 was aggressively cut to \$1,050. Expenses to date of \$1,163 already exceeds the full year's budget and we still have to do the fall follow-up campaign.

Overall: Net result is good, \$3,500 ahead of expectations. Unbudgeted revenue (primarily \$3,000 of Nebraska trip deposits) exceeds unbudgeted expenses (\$1,070 of taxes on the Haas land donation) by about \$3,700. This has reduced somewhat the withdrawals from the endowment. However, that \$3,700 will eventually have to be spent along with the \$7,000 remaining on the grant received last year to do a parking lot and trails at Haas.

Executive Director's Report - Anne Swaim

March 2010 – Nebraska Sandhill Cranes Trip: It's a go. 13 people have signed up for the trip.

Environmental Educators: We have one committed educator – Pat Mutolo. Need additional educator for after-school programs at West Orchard and Roaring Brook. 20 hour per month maximum. Job posting had 12 responses with 2 real possibilities. Would like person to be bilingual. Anne has at least one person in mind.

Saw Mill River BioBlitz - September 25-26: (Friday, 4:30pm at Science Barge in Yonkers and Saturday, 11am – 6:30pm PACE University in Pleasantville). A BioBlitz brings together a multitude of scientists and experts to work around the clock during a 24 hour period cataloging as many species of plant life, animal life, insects, fungi, bacteria, etc that they can find in an area. SMR Coalition has received money to do survey of SMR watershed area. Birders are needed to help with birding survey. Go to: <http://www.groundworkhv.org/bioblitz09/>

New Haas Sanctuary map. Ann hosted representatives from the New York City Environmental Fund over the summer who reviewed SMRA projects they have funded at Brinton, Pruyn and Haas. They seemed please with what they saw.

Because of our summer intern we also have digital trail maps of all sanctuaries and hope to be able to offer these on our web site.

Sanctuaries Committee - Michael Madias

Report was given on recent work and upcoming dates:

A meeting was held on July 22 with new neighbors of Pruyn Sanctuary (near Seven Bridges Rd) to clarify our sanctuary boundaries in regards to yard waste dumping.

Work days will be planned and announced soon. Help needed to cut vines and plant trees.

Donna Lassiter made a diagram of what was planted in May at Brinton Brook and shared this with Board. There was a 65% survival rate on the plantings. The DEC promised to replace what had died. We will order another 26-28 shrubs to be planted mid-September thru late-October under the Trees for Tribes program.

Proposal for second Cell Tower at Croton border at Brinton Brook (near Amberlands). We plan to send a letter stating that we are watching the project review.

Newsletter – Ann Swaim for Bill Kellner

Deadline for next newsletter (January/February issue) is November 1.

We are researching new weekend trips. An owl trip is planned for the first weekend in February.

SMRA member Christine Smith is helping to plan a winter weekend trip to the Adirondacks. Richard suggested a summer trip to Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge combined with a visit to the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology.

Bird Seed - Ken Novenstern

Bird seed sale is scheduled for October 3 and 4. We had a good response on volunteers for the sale weekend. The cost of seeds has dropped by one third this year.

People needed to do follow-up calls the last week in September. If interested please let Ellen know in the office.

Discussion followed about Saturday, October 3 also being New Castle Community Day in Chappaqua (11am – 4pm). It was decided to participate in Community Day and to direct Community Day visitors to our nearby seed sale behind Town Hall. Volunteers are needed.

A discussion also was held on additional advertising of the seed sale. We did not decide to take further steps at this time.

Programs and Field Trips – Joan Coffey

Last Saturday's program: **Raptors for Rookies** at Westmoreland Sanctuary, Mount Kisco was well attended by 27 people.

The upcoming programs are:

Saturday, September 19, 9:00 am - **Hook Mountain Hawk Watch** at Hook Mountain

Friday, September 25, 7:30 pm - Workshop: **Raptor Photography** at Ossining Public Library

Sunday, September 27, 9:00 am - **Fire Island Hawk Watch** at Robert Moses State Park

Monday, October 5, 9:00 am - **Chestnut Ridge Hawk Watch** at Butler Sanctuary, Mt. Kisco

Thursday, October 29, 7:30 pm - Program: **Ravens and Raptors** Chappaqua Library

Publicity - George Shakespear

Press release was sent for September and October events and picked up by various local media including some blogs.

Hospitality – Anne Swaim for Jean Sparacin

Jean Sparacin will not be able to act as Chair for this Committee because of ongoing family concerns at this time. Cori and Sally are on the Committee and volunteered to act in her place until her return.

New Business

Arthur announced that he created an E-mail list for the Sanctuary Committee. He offered to set up a Google group email list for our board members as well. There was no objection to this idea.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:17 p.m. Minutes were recorded by Joanne McAuley, Secretary.