

**Saw Mill River Audubon Board Meeting  
Held at the Community Bible Church of Northern Westchester  
Minutes for March 7, 2011**

**Present:** Robert McCrillis, presiding, Joan Coffey, Sally Dow, Philip Heidelberger, Rik Kaufman, William Kellner, Donna Lassiter, Valerie Lyle, Michael Madias, Jr., Joanne McAuley, Tom McEnerney, Nina Romanoff, Richard Saravay, George Shakespear, Ponie Sheehan, Christine Smith, Jean Sparacin Larry Trachtenberg and Anne Swaim. Board Candidate Christopher Drury also attended.

**Minutes from the February 7, 2011 board meeting** were approved.

**President's Report - Robert McCrillis**

Two pieces of mail were circulated: (1) NY Birders Newsletter and (2) flyer concerning March 9, 2011 Bedford Audubon program/lecture on hummingbirds.

We also have an extra copy of Cornell's Living Bird magazine in the office if anyone would like it.

Robert asked Jean Sparacin for an update on the Annual Dinner. Jean has received 10 acceptances for the dinner, including a few Board members. Please let her know by e-mail/ telephone if you are coming and what you are going to bring – entree, salad or dessert. (Online registration is available at [www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/Dinner](http://www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/Dinner))

**Community Relations and Development**

A copy of Barbara Campbell's Development Report and Membership and Fund Drive Report was handed out to all Board members. Please read reports for information on the TogetherGreen Innovation Grants Program and the Annual Appeal. Membership is up.

**Treasurer's Report - Tom McEnerney.**

Tom reviewed the Operating Revenues and Expenses Report dated February 28, 2011 (see handout). Actual results for the first two months of 2011 were in line with expectations. Larry Light Scholarship fund is healthy. Garden Endowment Fund is in good shape.

**Finance Committee Report - Phil Heidelberger.**

As of March 1, 2011 the portfolio balance was \$824,679, an increase of 2.3% (\$18,772) for the month of February and an increase of 3.5% (\$27,566) for the year. There have been \$0 in additions to and \$6,000 in withdrawals from the endowment during the year.

Finance Committee (FC) is interested in getting feedback from the Board on the following matter. There is a Control of Funds procedure which was reviewed and updated in 2003. The FC believes that it is outdated and wishes to re-draft the rules. A discussion followed on how far the FC should go on checks and balances. The sense of the board is that stronger checks are needed, e.g., ensuring that people with check writing authority cannot initiate withdrawals from the investment accounts. Also discussed was the amount and cost of bonding insurance. Our current liability insurance covers financial malfeasance up to \$100K. Board members agreed that we should raise this amount. The FC will draft new procedures and report back to the board about them.

**Advocacy – Richard Saravay**

Robert noted that we want to include advocacy on our agenda as a regular item from now on because "advocacy" is one of our three areas of emphasis which include education and sanctuary stewardship. Richard agreed that we need an Advocacy Chair. This position will keep us abreast on three areas on behalf of threats to our environment: local, statewide and national. Topics of interest on the latter two areas can be gotten through national Audubon. Please consider and if anyone is interested please speak to Robert or Richard.

There was an interesting series of articles in the New York Times last week (2/27/11-3/5/11) concerning hydrofracking for natural gas. The documentary "GASLAND" which also focuses on this topic has been making the rounds in Westchester County. Several Board members have already seen the documentary and commented on it. This will be a discussion topic for our Lower Hudson round table and will be included in our next newsletter as well.

The Bi-annual meeting of the New York Audubon Council will be held on March 25, 26 and 27 in Saratoga. There will also be a discussion on hydrofracking at this meeting. While Richard is the "official" attendee for SMRA anyone who is interested can go. Our annual budget is \$750 so attendees will need to cover costs depending on available budget. Richard will coordinate this.

#### **Executive Director's Report - Anne Swaim**

Anne signed two letters on behalf of SMRA (1) concerning NYS Environmental Protection Fund. Copy of letter can be seen at the office or call for a copy and (2) concerning the proposed Croton Overlook Development to be built on Route 100/ Route 134. They are proposing 72 housing units to be built on 42 acres. The NYC watershed would be impacted. Anne thanked those members who edited her initial letter. This letter has been sent to the Town of Yorktown, Town of New Castle, Bedford Audubon and the Croton Watershed Clean Water Coalition. Copy circulated during Board Meeting.

There was a good response to our Lower Hudson Roundtable from the 7 groups invited. Richard suggested also inviting NYC Audubon. The Roundtable will be held Saturday, April 2 from 10am – 2pm. Volunteers are needed.

At recent Budget Committee meeting we discussed outreach to our Latino/a communities. This would include environmental education and advocacy. We are planning to seek a planning grant from Audubon's TogetherGreen Innovation Grants Program. We hope to involve other Lower Hudson valley chapters in this project.

We have been approved for a forestry plan for Choate – like the one done at Pruyn. Plan will look at whole forest habitat. Based on Pruyn plan we will be able to apply for money for additional deer enclosures and a new bridge.

Pennies for the Planet.org handouts were passed around for anyone interested. Children are primary audience of this program.

Croton-On-Hudson's Earth Day will be held on Saturday, April 30 at Senasqua Park. Anne is leading a bird walk. Volunteers needed.

The Office will be closed March 24 – 31 and April 6 because Anne and Ellen will be away.

#### **Sanctuaries Committee - Michael Madias**

Workday at Graff was February 27. Michael thanked Donna, Nina and her husband for working. Next work day is at Brinton meadow in about 3 weeks.

Mowing will be done in early April – will get loan of mower without charge from Rudy for Brinton.

#### **Newsletter - Bill Kellner**

April/May issue deadline is date of March board meeting. Material needed end of this week - March 10/11.

#### **Bird Seed Sale - Anne Swain**

Sign-up sheet sent around for volunteers for Saturday, March 19.

#### **Programs and Field Trips - Christine Smith**

Christine noted the need for a Program Chair listed on the agenda. Christine suggested we consider a joint program with other chapters in the coming year. We will discuss this at the roundtable.

Costa Rica trip is coming up – group leaves March 20.

Second Saturday Walks are this Saturday, March 12 at Pruyn and Brinton. The Edith Read field trip is cancelled due to a lack of leaders. Upcoming Spring plans – TBA.

**Publicity - George Shakespear**

Our programs continued to be publicized. With our listing on lohud.com (entered by Ellen monthly), we are now also being publicized through their Twitter feed.

**Hospitality -**

Robert thanked everyone who brought refreshments tonight.

**New Business -**

Charlie Roberto has suggested that Saw Mill River Audubon field a team for May 14, 2011 World Series of Birding sponsored by New Jersey Audubon. We have willing team members but this event is also a fundraiser. Tom noted that we would be doing this around the same time as our Annual Fundraising Drive. We will field a team but will not solicit SMRA members for a donation.

Reminders: May 2 is our next Board Meeting. May 9 is the PSing Party. More details to follow.

The meeting adjourned at 9:16 p.m. Minutes taken by Joanne McAuley.