

**Saw Mill River Audubon Board Meeting Minutes**  
**Monday, September 12, 2011**  
**Held at Croton Point Park Nature Center, Croton-on-Hudson, NY**

**Present:** Robert McCrillis, presiding, Joan Coffey, Sally Dow, Christopher Drury, Nick Fischer, Phil Heidelberger, William Kellner, Donna Lassiter, Michael Lolya, Valerie Lyle, Michael Madias, Jr., Joanne McAuley, Ken Novenstern, Nina Romanoff, Richard Saravay, George Shakespear, Ponie Sheehan, Christine McCluskey, Larry Trachtenberg Donna Lee Ubertalli. Executive Director Anne Swaim was also present.

Absent: Rik Kaufman, Jean Sparacin, Tom McEnerney

Minutes from the June 6, 2011 board meeting were approved.

**President's Report – Robert McCrillis**

No mail or correspondence received.

Volunteers needed for this Friday – Tarrytown Third Friday September 16, 5-9pm. Sign-up sheet circulated. Board Retreat scheduled for Saturday October 22, 9:00am – 1:00pm at Maryknoll, Ryder Road, Ossining. More information to follow.

**Community Relations and Development – Robert McCrillis**

Please read September 2011 Report prepared by Barbara Campbell and Ellen Heidelberger. Report shows membership is slightly lower and donations from the Annual Appeal are at \$16,650 (YTD).

**Treasurer's Report – Phil Heidelberger for Tom McEnerney**

The Audit Committee met last Tuesday (September 6) and discussed the draft of the audited financial statements for the year ended December 31, 2010. Several comments were conveyed to the auditors and the revisions are reflected in the copies being distributed tonight. The audit went very smoothly this year and the auditors did not find any issues or problems during their audit. If anyone has any questions or comments on these financial statements, please feel free to contact George Shakespear or Tom McEnerney.

Overall operating revenue and expenses were about \$6,000 better than expectations at August 31. Revenues were about \$2,000 ahead of projections due to higher donations, partially offset by lower than expected revenue from membership dues and school programs.

Expenses were about \$4,000 lower than expectations due primarily to lower sanctuaries expenses and less time billed by Barbara Campbell and Ellen Heidelberger. These lower expenses were partially offset by higher than expected Pruyn house expenditures. Please see handouts for detailed information.

**Finance Committee Report – Phil Heidelberger**

For our official quarterly report, as of July 1, 2011 the portfolio balance was \$924,386, an increase of 127,273 (+15.9%) for the year. There were \$100,000 (the Wecker bequest) in additions to and \$16,000 in withdrawals from the endowment during the first two quarters. The year-to-date, one year and three year investment rates of return were 5.3%, 25.2% and 3.5%, respectively, compared to our Morningstar Allocation Fund Index benchmark returns of 3.4%, 16.1% and 2.4% for the same period.

As of August 1, 2011 the portfolio balance was \$904,874, a 2.1% decrease for the month of July. As of September 1, 2011 the portfolio balance was \$857,826, a 5.2% decrease for the month of August, but a \$60,713 (7.6%) increase for the year. There were \$100,000 in additions to and \$28,100 in withdrawals from the endowment during the year.

**Advocacy**

Richard Saravay - Audubon NY Fall Council Meeting will be held the weekend of October 21- 23 at Alexandria Bay in the 1,000 islands. Pamphlet passed around.

Anne Swain – from Ponie Sheehan - Tuesday, September 13 is National Call-in Obama Day on hydrofracking sponsored by the National Grassroots Coalition. Call 202-456-1111.

Bill Kellner - Croton Overlook. Town Board of Yorktown still looking at environmental impact draft. Have opportunity to comment. SMRA sent comments in spring 2011 – may ask for SMRA Board members to speak at hearing.

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

We were selected for a "Together Green" planning grant, sponsored by Toyota, in the amount of \$5,000. As a requirement and benefit of this grant, Anne attended a four-day training workshop in West Virginia including training in fundraising, social media and strategic communication. Several on the board were interested in receiving workshop materials and Anne will pass those along digitally to all who requested. The grant will encourage new relationships between Audubon chapters in the lower Hudson Valley and local Latino/a groups. For this round of grant funding we must build plans, not implement actual programs.

Chappaqua Neighbors Group – Anne will be leading monthly bird walks for this group beginning with Thursday, September 15, 8am at Croton Point. We will be collecting \$8/person with expected attendance of 10-12/walk.

Village of Irvington is creating a Nature Center – Anne has brought Hudson River Audubon into this discussion since Irvington is within their chapter territory. The agreed plan, based on response from Irvington Recreation Department, is that HRA would be providing public bird walks at this location and SMRA would provide school group programming.

Cornell is holding an invasive plants workshop - "Invasives in the Hudson Valley" on Tuesday, September 27 in Lasdon Park. Anne is attending and Donna and Chris are also interested in attending.

Cornell Workshop on deer habitat – "Forest Management for Wildlife" is on Saturday, September 17 in Carmel, NY. Bill Kellner is planning to attend.

Texas Birding Trip - April 9 – 13 (Gulf Coast) with optional extension through April 17 (Hill Country). Will include a visit to Lady Bird Johnson Wild Flower Center.

Native Plant Center conference: "Native Plants for Sustainable Landscapes". September 23.

Native Plant Center to visit Prunyn Sanctuary on Saturday, October 15. Nick and Anne will help lead this trip.

### **Sanctuaries Committee – Michael Madias**

Michael thanked everyone who visited the sanctuaries after Hurricane Irene to assess damage from the high winds and rain. The sanctuaries were lucky with little storm damage. There are fallen trees in several sanctuaries that Danny can handle. One exception is the very large tulip poplar tree that fell into neighbor's yard at Graff. It was agreed that we would be willing to pay half of costs of removal, shared with homeowner, with the recognition that we are not legally obligated to pay anything.

Haas improvements - the entrance sign and benches have been installed. Still pending are the interpretive signs.

Two sanctuary workday are in planning for this fall, one at Graff dealing with Invasives and another at Brinton Brook for the planting of wild flowers.

Michael is planning a walk October 29 at Blue Mountain Reservation to gather acorns that we could replant in our sanctuaries.

### **Newsletter – Bill Kellner**

November 1 is the deadline for the next Newsletter.

There is an E-mail Newsletter and a printed Newsletter. You get one or the other – not both.

### **Bird Seed Sale – Ken Novenster**

The Bird Seed Sale fall weekend is scheduled for October 15 and 16. Volunteers will be needed. Volunteer sheet sent around. Also needed are volunteers to call up last year's buyers as a reminder. More about this item at the October board meeting.

**Programs and Field Trips - Christine McCluskey**

Had very excellent turnout (25 people) at the Hudson River Valley Ramble held with our Second Saturday Walk at Brinton on September 10. Please see magazine on HRV RAMBLE for future weekend walks. (Handout)

Monday, September 19 – Hawk watching at Hook Mountain (Rockland State Park) with Charlie Roberto at 10am.

Saturday, September 24 – Constitution Marsh Canoeing trip – meet in Garrison at 8:30am. \$20 fee.

Friday, September 30 – October 2. Block Island with Rhode Island Audubon - \$450

Thursday, October 6 – Fire Island Hawk Watch /Robert Moses State Park, Meet 9am at Millwood.

Saturday, October 8 Sandy Hook Birding (rescheduled to this date by Hurricane Irene) Meet at 7am at Millwood.

**Publicity - George Shakespear**

Donna Lee has now joined with George on the Publicity Committee. We will do a press release on the Toyota grant coordinating this with a planned release by National Audubon to our area. Anne noted that we will be copied in advance on the planned National Audubon press release.

**Hospitality -**

Robert thanked Joan, Joanne and Sally for the meeting's refreshments.

**New Business -**

None.

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m. Minutes taken by Joanne McAuley.

Dates of 2011-12 Board Meetings are: October 3, November – committees meet, December 5, January 9, February 6, March 5, April 2 (Annual Dinner), May 7, and June 4 (Picnic).