

**Saw Mill River Audubon Board Meeting Minutes**  
**Monday, December 5, 2011**  
**Held at Croton Point Park Nature Center, Croton-on-Hudson, NY**

**Present:** Robert McCrillis, presiding. Sally Dow, Chris Drury, Phil Heidelberger, William Kellner, Donna Lassiter, Valerie Lyle, Michael Madias, Jr., Joanne McAuley, Christine McCluskey, Thomas McEnerney, Ken Novenstern, Nina Romanoff, Richard Saravay, George Shakespeare, Ponie Sheehan, Jean Sparacin, Larry Trachtenberg, Donna Lee Ubertalli. Anne Swaim present as Executive Director.

**Minutes from the October 3 board meeting** were reviewed and approved.

**President's Report /Mail and Correspondence:**

We received a copy of NYS Ornithological Association Newsletter.

Annual meeting and dinner will be held April 1, 2012 at Travelers Rest restaurant. Jeanne Sparacin, Joanne McAuley, Nina Romanoff and Michael Madias volunteered to be on dinner planning committee. Dinner is before Texas trip and a program and keynote speaker will be needed.

**Development:** See handout with Development Report and Membership/Fund Drive Report – December 2011 prepared by Barbara Campbell and Ellen Heidelberger. The fund drive exceeded our 2011 budgeted goal. Norcross rejected our proposal to survey Brinton Brook and Graff. We applied for Audubon NY “mini-grant” for new office computer.

**Treasurer's Report:** Tom briefly reviewed the financial results through November 30, 2011. See handout for details. Most line items were very close to projections. However, seed sale profits were lower than budgeted due to higher seed costs. Tom then reviewed the proposed 2012 budget in detail, comparing each line item in the budget to 2011 budgeted and actual amounts. Richard Saravay suggested that “Scholarships” remain as a line item in the budget even though no adult scholarships were budgeted for 2012. With this change, the 2012 budget was approved.

**Finance Committee:** Phil Heidelberger reported on behalf of the Finance Committee. For our official quarterly report, as of October 1, 2011 the portfolio balance was \$798,700 an increase of 0.2% for the year, but a decrease of 7.4% for the month of September and a decrease of 13.6% for the third quarter. There were \$100,000 in additions to and \$28,100 in withdrawals from the endowment so far this year. The year-to-date, one year and three year investment rates of return were -8.3%, -1.1% and 2.8%, respectively, compared to our Morningstar Allocation Fund Index benchmark returns of -5.7%, -1.2% and 2.1% for the same period.

After a strong October, the balance recovered to \$838,442 as of November 1, 2011, a 5% increase for the month and a 5.3% year-to-date increase. After a volatile November, the balance was \$850,332 as of December 1, 2011, a 1.4% increase for the month and a 6.7% year-to-date increase.

There have been \$100,000 in additions to and \$38,200 in withdrawals from the endowment during the year. At its last meeting, the Finance Committee took actions to hopefully reduce volatility by decreasing the percentage of the portfolio invested in stocks from about 67% to 62%.

**Executive Director's Report:**

Action plans from 2011 fall board retreat were passed out and reviewed. Plan for Education and Outreach called for a chair for Program committee. Chris Drury volunteered to be chair of the Program committee. Sally Dow had already volunteered to be co-chair so they will co-chair together and a planning meeting will be set after the New Year.

Letter to Westchester County/ Rob Astorino was signed and sent commenting against proposed budget cuts for county nature centers. *NY Times* (12/05/11) had article concerning proposed cuts and reactions by community groups.

Need volunteers to cover SMRA office due to both Ellen's and Anne's absence.  
Jean Sparacin volunteered to cover Jan. 9 and 11 and Anne will cover Jan. 6 and 13.

**Advocacy:**

Encouraging anyone interested to attend the Westchester Budget hearing to be held tomorrow at the County Center in White Plains. Hearing starts at 7pm and it's recommended to get there early.

SMRA will host an info meeting for Lower Hudson Chapters regarding relicensing of Indian Point. Will take the form of a moderated panel with (maybe) Tom Anderson as moderator. To be held Saturday, January 28, 2012 at 4pm in the Chappaqua Library. Others planned for panel are: Phil Musgas (opposed to free licensing), Gwyneth Cravens (pro-nuclear energy. See: [www.powertosavetheworld.com](http://www.powertosavetheworld.com)), and Andrew Repran (PACE University) with scientific point of view.

Hydrofracking: Public debate extended to January 11, 2012. There will be a hearing at PACE Law School in White Plains on Wednesday, December 7 from 1-4pm.

There was also brief discussion about Yorktown review of proposed housing at Routes 100 and 134 and plans to build a mega-Costco on Route 202.

Received the following items that can be looked at/borrowed from Office: 1) Strategic 5 Year Plan for Audubon NY, 2) Audubon: Wake-up Birds in Decline, 3) Audubon: Field Guide to birding Trails, and 4) Audubon Action Network handout: Birds Can't Vote But You Can.

**Sanctuaries Committee:**

December 17 Workday at Pruyn.

There is an encroachment of 80 feet onto our property in Brinton. We will take steps to better define the boundary.

**Newsletter:**

Jean, Joan and Bill mailed the Newsletter this morning. Copies will be taken to Ossining, Croton and Peekskill libraries by Sally and Bill. Deadline for next newsletter (for February/March issue) is January 1.

**Bird Seed Sale:**

Ken reported that we are in good shape after good initial seed sale in October. Anything sold from here on out is profit. More seed being delivered in January. Seed sales will continue every 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of each month.

**Publicity:** Doing more "e-publicity." Ellen has gotten us on "accepted lists" for notices in press.

**Programs and Field Trips:**

Good turnout of about 50 for "Flower" program at Ossining Library.

We are planning a program with Don Reipe, expert guide at Jamaica Bay. Program on Wednesday, March 21 with field trip to Jamaica bay on March 25. Will co-sponsor with Teatown. Hoping to hold program at Ossining Library.

Christmas Bird Counts:

- 1) December 11 – Charlie Roberto will do a "pre-count" tour. Meeting at Teatown at 9am.
- 2) December 17 – Peekskill Bird Count (Christine attending)
- 3) December 30 – Putnam Bird Count (Larry attending)

January 1, 2012 – 4<sup>th</sup> Annual New Year's Day walk at Rockwood Hall. 9am This year John Grant will help us identify trees.

January 7, 2012 – Croton Point Park Eagles with Charlie Roberto.

February 4, 2012 – Eagle Fest. We have 3 tables: large tent, Croton Boat Ramp and George's Island.

Weekend trips:

- 1) January 15 – 16 Montauk Point Winter Birds. See newsletter for details.
- 2) February 18-19 Cape Ann, MA. Cosponsored by Bronx River Sound Shore. Will stay at Rockport Inn and Suites.
- 3) Raptor Fest at Fort Edward (past Albany) with LI Audubon - March 10-11. See [winterraptorfest.com](http://winterraptorfest.com).

FYI – January 15, 2012: Annual meeting of the Young Birders Group (25 kids) at Croton Point Nature Center. 8am

**Hospitality:** Those who brought refreshments were thanked.

**New Business:** Place of our next meeting on Monday, January 9, 2012 to be announced.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m. Minutes taken by Joanne McAuley.