

**Saw Mill River Audubon Board Meeting Minutes**  
**Monday, January 9, 2012**  
**Held at Croton Point Park Nature Center, Croton-on-Hudson, NY**

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

**Minutes from the December 5 board meeting** were reviewed and approved.

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

Need nominations for new Board member candidates. Board has maximum of 24 members - we currently have 23 members. If anyone knows of someone interested in joining us let Robert know. Also a nominating committee should be formed.

Annual meeting and dinner will be held on Sunday, April 1, 2012 at Travelers Rest restaurant. Dinner planning committee to meet at Robert McCrillis's house on Monday, January 23 at 7:00pm

**Development:** See handout with Development Report and Membership/Fund Drive Report – January 2012 prepared by Barbara Campbell and Ellen Heidelberger. The 2011 fund drive totaled \$21,603, exceeding last year's. We submitted proposal to survey Brinton Brook and Graff to Fields Pond Foundation. We applied for Audubon NY "mini-grant" of \$400 for new office computer. We are looking into Camp Fire Conservation Fund (Chappaqua, NY) as a potential funding source. 2011 Annual Report will be published online in February.

**Treasurer's Report:** Tom reviewed the financial results through December 31, 2011. See handout for details. 2011 revenues were up and expenses down as compared to what we had budgeted for the year.

**Finance Committee:** Valerie Lyle reported on behalf of the Finance Committee.

As of January 1, 2012, the portfolio balance was \$835,841, a 4.9% increase for the year. \$100,000 (the Wecker bequest) was added to and \$53,250 in withdrawals were taken from the endowment during the year.

**Executive Director's Report:**

Eagle Fest is Saturday, February 4 at Croton Point Park. We have volunteers for George's Island (Ponie, Rik, Larry and John Grant). We need volunteers for CP boat ramp and the main tent. Sign-up sheet passed around during meeting.

Together Green Grant implementation committee needs 1-2 SMRA volunteers. Will be approximately 4 meetings between January and May. Please let Anne know if interested.

Need volunteers to review 2 scholarship (mother/son) applications. Applicants want to participate in Audubon trip to Dry Tortugas. Tom reminded us that there was to be no adult scholarships for 2012 since funds were moved to advocacy line for training and have been designated for Christine McCluskey to attend chapter leader workshop in Maine. Larry and Rik volunteered to review the two pending applications.

Passed around handout on 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Great Backyard Bird Count (February 17-20, 2012). For more info go to [www.birdcount.org](http://www.birdcount.org).

Thanked Jean Sparacin for covering Office in Ellen's absence.

**Advocacy:** Donna Lee provided an update on our hosting an informational meeting for Lower Hudson Chapters regarding the re-licensing of Indian Point. This was intended for chapter leaders only and to be held Saturday, January 28, 2012 at 4pm in the Chappaqua Library. Things are not going so well. 1) Have only heard from Bedford Audubon – need to send out another notice to the chapters. 2) Proposed RiverKeeper speaker, Phil Musgas, (opposed to free licensing) has confirmed his participation, Gwyneth Cravens (pro-nuclear energy) wanted \$5,000 plus expenses to be on panel. There was some discussion

about other potential speakers but discussion centered on whether we should change to later date or whether there was really interest in the topic. It was decided that we would remind chapters one more time and make a decision by Friday, January 13 on whether to continue.

**Sanctuaries Committee:** Michael Madias, Jr. reported that a third deer enclosure has been completed at Pruyn. This 100'x120' enclosure is by the White Trail in Pruyn and was partially funded by the Watershed Agricultural Council cost sharing program. Thanks were extended to Nick Fischer for his leadership of this enclosure project.

January 14 will be the Second Saturday walk at Brinton.

January 22 will be Sunday Workday at Graff. Meeting at 9am at Briggs lane entrance. Bring saws.

Choate Sanctuary – a neighbor noticed surveyors and notified the office. We found out that the Town of New Castle sent out surveyors (Campbell Engineering). A Town Hall employee said that the Town was considering selling some of the open parcels in this area. These parcels would be adjacent to the sanctuary including the top half of Choate which is under a 99 year lease from the Town of New Castle. Ken Novenstern offered to help follow up on this issue with the Town.

Question raised: should we apply for additional Watershed Agricultural Council cost sharing funds. Anne noted that the cost sharing offered was too low to make this worthwhile for us.

We are meeting with a representative from the New York Department of Environmental Conservation to explore the opportunity for a forestry management study of Brinton Brook and Graff to assess deer impact.

**Newsletter:** Deadline for next newsletter (for Feb/March issue) is January 1. Need any items by mid-week.

**Bird Seed Sale:**

Ken reported \$700 sale in December. Next sale is January 21. Volunteer list will be passed around.

**Publicity:** George passed around January 9<sup>th</sup> newspaper article in LoHud concerning Christmas bird count with Chris Drury in lead photo. To see article go to:

<http://www.lohud.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=2012301090043>

**Programs and Field Trips:**

Program Committee will meet on January 24 at Christine's house at 7pm.

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 Eastern LI Audubon - March 10-11. See [winterraptorfest.com](http://winterraptorfest.com). Need to know if you are coming by 01/28/12.

FYI – January 15, 2012: Annual meeting of the NYS Young Birders Club (25 kids) at Croton Point Nature Center at 8am. SMRA is hosting this meeting as a member club of the NYSYBC

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

**New Business:** Next board meeting on February 6 maybe back in the church - details to follow.

Anyone interested in helping with school/program exhibits please come to a meeting on Saturday, January 15 at 9:30am at the SMRA office led by Donna Lee Ubertalli and including Christine McCluskey, Ponie Sheehan and Anne Swaim

The meeting was adjourned at 8:38 p.m. Minutes taken by Joanne McAuley.