

**Saw Mill River Audubon Board Meeting Minutes**  
**Monday, March 5, 2012**  
**Held at the Community Bible Church of Northern Westchester**

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

Meeting started at 7:33pm. Quorum present.

**Minutes from the February 6 board meeting** were reviewed and approved.

**President's Report /Mail and Correspondence (Robert McCrillis):**

Robert welcomed Brian Kluepfel and Shirl Kaplan as observers and possible candidates for the Board.

The Annual Dinner Committee to meet on Friday, March 23 at 3:30pm at Traveler's Rest to go over arrangements. Reservations for dinner slowly coming in. The Annual Dinner will be held Sunday, April 1. Can also sign up/pay for dinner online.

Please remember to go online and vote your proxy.

**Community Relation and Development:** Robert reviewed the attached Development Report and Membership/Fund Drive Report – March 2012 prepared by Barbara Campbell and Ellen Heidelberger.

**Finance Committee (Phil Heidelberger):**

As of March 1, 2012 the portfolio balance was \$889,277, a 2.8% increase for the month of February and a 6.4% increase for the year. There have been \$5,000 in withdrawals from the endowment during the year.

**Treasurer's Report (Tom McEnerney):**

Tom reviewed the Operating Revenues and Expenses for the first two months of the year. Revenue is lower than expected due to lower bird seed sales, probably due to the warm weather. Expenses are slightly higher than expected primarily because SMRA's sponsorship fees for EagleFest (\$1,100) were paid in January instead of the prior year as is usually the case.

**Executive Director's Report (Anne Swain):**

Anne added Saw Mill River Audubon as an organization supporter at the request of Audubon New York thanking Governor Cuomo for support of the \$89 million for capital funding for NYS Parks.

Anne noted the peace walk to Indian Point on March 11, 2012 Fukushima Commemoration Year 1 at 3:30pm. Meet at 1pm at Shoprite.

Received a "thank you" note from Teatown for our participation at Eagle Fest 2012.

Interesting article: [NY Times](#) on Friday, February 24, 2012. New York Judge Affirms Right of Towns to Ban Fracking.

Westchester Magazine (March 2012) article "20 Teens to Watch" includes Benjamin Van Doren.

Choate: Both Anne and Ken Novenster updated the Board on what is happening with Choate and the Town of New Castle. After our February 6<sup>th</sup> meeting Anne sent a letter to the Town of New Castle Board asking to be placed on the Board's next work session. We received a return email indicating that SMRA should have no concern about town-owned/SMRA leased parcels at Choate. However one of the homeowners bordering Choate called the SMRA office to say that a tree company engaged by the Town was cutting down trees on the leased land at Choate. We have learned that the Town may be interested in selling off town-owned parcel. We have a 99-year lease on 4 acres of town-owned land making up the upper portion of Choate Sanctuary. We were also advised, through another contact, to confirm liability insurance we are carrying on this leased land. Tom McEnerney confirmed coverage and is getting an

insurance certificate as documentation. Anne and Ken are seeking a meeting with the Town Board to clear up these miscommunications and seek protection for the town-owned open space near Choate Sanctuary.

Members of SMRA Board have asked Anne to keep us up to date via email as this matter progresses.

**Advocacy (Richard Saravay):**

Audubon's new strategy is centered around the four bird migration flyways in the US. David Yarnold, Executive Director of National Audubon, will speak about the NAS strategic plan at the NY Audubon State Council meeting to be held in Saratoga on March 25-26.

Richard reminded us that the Fall 2012 meeting is being planned for November 2-4 and will be in the Walkill area with joint involvement of New Jersey Audubon. A copy of the NJ Audubon book – Important Bird Areas of NJ was passed around along with copies of Field, Farm and Forest Guide (NJA) and Conservation Incentive Programs for NJ Audubon.

Bill Kellner shared that he belongs to a committee against the proposed development on Route 202 corridor. Also spoke about the planning of a very large retail and housing area - the Croton Overlook project at Route 100. Plans are also in the works for a larger Walmart on Route 6.

Robert noted the latest news on the new Tappan Zee Bridge and Phil indicated that he had gone to meeting about fracking sponsored by NYS Senator Gregory Ball. Phil noted Ball's positive work on this issue.

**Sanctuaries Committee (Michael Madias Jr.):**

February 25 workday at Brinton Brook Sanctuary was great. Next workday at Graff will be March 24 – preparing for Trees for Trib. We may have to get tree cages for protection of the newly planted trees. May have some students to help. Delivery date of trees – TBA.

Anne and Michael met with a surveyor who is also on the board of Central Westchester Audubon. He reviewed the individual boundary lines about which we have questions at Pruyn and Brinton Brook and gave us a quote for new surveys complete with permanent stakes. We plan to spend approximately \$900 from the sanctuary budget towards this work this year.

Boundary walks will be sometime after May. In our schedule of reviewing all boundary lines, we plan to review the boundaries of Brinton, Pruyn and Graff in 2012. March 10 will be the Second Saturday walk at Brinton.

Pruyn garden – Robert indicated that the garden should get a once over to see what should be done.

**Newsletter (Bill Kellner):** Deadline for next newsletter (April/May issue) is now. If you have anything please give it to Bill asap. Next issue after is for June/July.

**Bird Seed Sale (Ken Novenstern):**

Next sale is March 18. Volunteer list was passed around. Made \$600 at last sale.

**Programs and Field Trips:**

a) **Program Committee (Chris Drury)** – Wednesday, June 20, 7:30pm - “Walkable Westchester” author, Jane Daniels, will give a talk (for free) at Ossining Public Library. This will be preceded by a walk led by Jane Daniels on April 28 (1pm) at Sylvan Glenn (Mohegan Lake area).

b) **Field trips (Christine McCluskey) -**

- 1) Raptor Fest at Fort Edward (past Albany) with Eastern LI Audubon - March 10-11. See [winterraptorfest.com](http://winterraptorfest.com). We have 18 people signed up.
- 2) Pancake Breakfast at Teatown – March 17
- 3) Walk at Edith G. Read Wildlife Sanctuary (near Playland) with Bronx River Sound Shore Audubon on March 18.
- 4) Jamaica Bay lecture – Wednesday, March 21, 7:30pm at Teatown

Christine thought we were getting more people coming to our events and thanked Larry for his help in collecting the \$5 contributions at each walk/event.

**Hospitality:** Robert thanked those who brought refreshments this evening (Nina, Larry, and Ken).

**New Business:**

Robert announced that Donna Lee Ubertalli has agreed to be the new secretary and thanked Joanne for her two years of taking Board minutes.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:59 p.m. Minutes taken by Joanne McAuley.