

Saw Mill River Audubon Board Meeting Minutes
Monday, September 10, 2012
Held at Community Church of Northern Westchester

Present: Robert McCrillis, presiding, William Kellner, Richard Saravay, Donna Lee Ubertalli, secretary, Tom McEnerney, Joan Coffey, Sally Dow, Christopher Drury, Nick Fischer, Philip Heidelberger, Rik Kaufman, Donna Lassiter, Valerie Lyle, Michael Madias, Jr., Joanne McAuley, Ken Novenstern, Nina Romanoff, Ponie Sheehan, Jean Sparacin, Larry Trachtenberg. Anne Swaim was present as Executive Director.

Absent: Shirl Kaplan, Brian Kluepfel, Michael Loyola, Christine McCluskey

A quorum was present and the meeting began at 7:30 pm.

Minutes from the June 11 Board Meeting were approved.

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

60th Anniversary Report

Robert described the progress and previewed the ideas that the 60th Anniversary Committee developed over the summer including goals, programs, special events, communications, and annual fund ideas. He then opened the floor to discussion.

Additional ideas for consideration were mentioned including:

- sponsoring a showing of the movie *The Big Year* and having one of the film stars as a guest speaker
- Pete Seeger and the Clearwater as a venue and event
- A day where we walk all the sanctuaries

There was much discussion about communicating to people who customarily donate in December and it was agreed that those involved with the appeal should consider how to ensure they are notified of the shift in fundraising timing and possible large donor benefits including anniversary event admissions. We need to determine what size and timing of large gifts would receive which anniversary event admissions.

Anne announced that the Programs & Field Trips Committee will meet next Wednesday night at the Ossining Library and if you're interested in activities in the anniversary year, please attend.

Community Relations and Development (Robert McCrillis):

Donation and Membership Report

Donations and chapter memberships are healthy. Membership is slightly down.

Finance Committee (Philip Heidelberger) - For our official quarterly report, as of July 1, 2012 the portfolio balance was \$857,788, a year-to-date increase of 2.6% from the January 1, 2012 balance of \$835,841. The three month, year-to-date, one year and three year investment rates of return were -2.5%, 5.7%, -0.5% and 12.6% respectively,

compared to our Morningstar Allocation Fund Index benchmark returns of -2.1%, 4.1%, -0.5% and 8.2% for the same periods.

The balance as of September 1, 2012 was \$874,896 an increase of 4.7% year-to-date. As of September 1, 2012, there have been \$30,000 in withdrawals from the endowment during 2012.

Treasurer's Report (Tom McEnerney) - Copies of the financial report showing revenues and expenses for the first eight months of the year were distributed. Revenues are tracking according to budget with the exception of Seed Sale revenues which are lower than expected due to an unusually warm winter. Heating oil expenses at Pruyn House are also lower due to the mild weather and all other expenses are tracking close to budget.

Whistleblower Policy

Tom explained that SMRA's independent auditors recommended that SMRA adopt a Whistleblower Policy protecting employees and others from retaliation if they report potential wrongdoing. A draft of the proposed Policy had been distributed with the Board materials and the proposed Policy was briefly discussed. A motion to adopt the Whistleblower Policy as distributed was made, seconded and unanimously adopted.

Executive Director's Report (Anne Swain):

Sign-on Letters

Anne reviewed recent letters to which Saw Mill River Audubon has become signatory.

1. August: with NRDC and Audubon National regarding wind power and bald eagles
2. Early September: with other Audubon chapters in opposition to development adjacent Shawangunk NWR

Other interesting programs

9/28 Conservation Cafe @ Pace University, "Strangled" (invasive vines)

9/28 Ornithological Society annual meeting in Oswego (nybirds.org)

9/15 Deer and Habitat Field Day 8:30-3

Yellowstone Trip

SMRA will sponsor 2 trips to Yellowstone in May each lead by Anne Swaim. The first trip filled up so a second was offered and also filled up. There is a waiting list. The trip will be hosted by Yellowstone Association, who monitor grizzly bears and wolves.

Anne stressed that she is organizing accommodations, meals, etc in an attempt to support local businesses. A donation of \$100/person is included in the trip price.

Advocacy (Richard Saravay):

Richard encouraged the Board to sign up for notifications of conservation efforts which are announced through Audubon National and Audubon NY.

Audubon NY will jointly host their Fall conference with NJ Audubon the weekend of November 2-4 in Woodcliff Lake, NJ (an hour away). There will be bird walks and programs. The theme is Atlantic Flyway so programs will feature on-the-ground conservation efforts that connect to Flyway efforts.

Fracking news: Ponie Sheehan reported that she's been very active trying to raise awareness of the issue but local media coverage has not as substantial as desired.

Sanctuaries Committee (Michael Madias):

The summer Second Saturday walks were well attended.

Last Saturday, SMRA sponsored a walk at Brinton Brook as part of the Hudson Valley Ramble. Michael reported that it was well attended and several people continued on to the Arboretum.

On October 6th, the Committee with Anne will walk the boundaries of the Brinton Brook, Pruyne and Graff Sanctuaries.

The next Sanctuary Committee meeting will be held on Monday 9/24, 7pm at Community Bible Church of Northern Westchester (same location as board meetings.)

Anne reported that the One Furnace Dock property owners are not actively pursuing donation at this time. Over the summer Richard, Michael, Nina, and Anne met with the owners who appeared to be considering only the donation of the pond and river frontage without new access from Furnace Dock Road but still have the entire property listed for sale. However, the owners are also considering keeping the entire property for the next several years at least. The Board agreed to continue monitoring this situation.

Robert announced that additional help is needed in the Pruyne Garden.

Program and Field Trips (Chris Drury):

Upcoming trips and programs

Next Sunday 9/16, Hook Mountain with Trudy.

9/20 Butterfly program at Chappaqua.

Oct 5-8 Delaware Bay (Bombay Hook, Prime Hook) and NJ Shoreline (Cape May, Forsythe WR).

Raptors for Rookies 10/18 evening? This date may change.

Turkey Mountain walk Friday after Thanksgiving

Newsletter (Bill Kellner):

Next deadline November 1.

Extra copies were given to some Board members for distribution at local libraries.

Bird Seed Sale (Ken Novenster):

Volunteers are needed for Oct 20-21 sale. Ken thanked those who had already volunteered. He noted that black oil seed prices are back down compared with last year's high prices, however, corn has increased in price driven by the drought in the Midwest. There are two new products available this year. A new seed test called Woodpecker Mix will be tested as a new product. Hot suet cakes will be given away with every case of suet purchased. Ken has arranged with McCoy Trucking for the seed delivery on the sale weekend. Chris Drury volunteered to help Danny Ferguson unload the Truffa Seed smaller delivery to the Prun shed the Friday before the sale.

Hospitality (Sally Dow, Joan Coffey, Jean Sparacin)

Robert thanked Sally, Joan and Jean for providing snacks for the meeting.

New Business

There was no new business and so the meeting was adjourned at 8:58pm.

Minutes taken by Donna Lee Ubertalli, Secretary

Reminder of 2012-13 meeting dates: 10/1/12; no Board Mtg in November to allow committees to meet; 12/3/12; 1/7/13; 2/4; 3/4; April meeting and program tba; 5/6; 6/3 Picnic.