

**Saw Mill River Audubon Board Meeting Minutes
Monday, October 1, 2012
Held at Northern Westchester Community Church**

Present: Robert McCrillis, presiding, William Kellner, Donna Lee Ubertalli, secretary, Tom McEnerney, Joan Coffey, Sally Dow, Christopher Drury, Nick Fischer, Philip Heidelberger, Brian Kluepfel, Donna Lassiter, Michael Lolya, Michael Madias, Jr., Christine McCluskey, Ken Novenstern, Nina Romanoff, Ponie Sheehan, Jean Sparacin, Larry Trachtenberg. Anne Swaim was present as Executive Director.

Absent: Richard Saravay, Shirl Kaplan, Rik Kaufman, Valerie Lyle, Joanne McAuley

A quorum was present and the meeting began at 7:35pm

Minutes from the September 10, 2012 Board Meeting were approved.

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

60th Anniversary Report

Robert described how a limited follow-up fund drive in December, 2012 would target large donors who have not yet given this year. Our more inclusive Anniversary year fund drive will take place in February, 2013.

He then described the events, publicity, branding, and other activities in the process of being planned for the Anniversary year.

Members offered the following additional ideas for consideration:

- a raffle where members offer services related to nature, guided walks, etc.
- ideas for the website - rotating photographs including rare bird sightings, etc.

Robert reminded the Board that there would be no formal board meeting in November but Committees should meet to establish their 2013 budgets.

Community Relations and Development (Robert McCrillis):

Donation and Membership Report

Robert reviewed the Membership and Fund Drive report as of 10/1/12 as distributed to the members.

Finance Committee (Philip Heidelberger):

The investment portfolio balance as of September 30, 2012 was \$887,307, an increase of 6.2% year-to-date, and an increase of 1.4% during the month of September. There have been \$35,000 in withdrawals from the portfolio year-to-date.

Treasurer's Report (Tom McEnerney):

Tom is waiting for first draft of the audited financials after which he will convene the audit committee to review.

Revenues for the first nine months are lower than expectations due to lower seed sale revenue and slightly lower donations. However, expenses are also running under budget. The result is that revenues less expenses are running slightly better than budget.

Executive Director's Report (Anne Swaim):*Together Green Update*

This program, which links Audubon Chapters in the Lower Hudson Valley with Latino groups, is progressing. An idea was proposed at the Hog Island camp, attended by Christine McCluskey this summer, to link the Flyways with Central and South American birds. This could be an opportunity for Together Green. Anne is working with Bedford Audubon and others to explore this idea with the goal of Spring or Summer 2013.

Croton Point Park Issues/Opportunities

Anne has been looking into the maintenance of Croton Point Park. There is a landfill project which necessitates drilling into the Superfund Site so they have closely mowed the grass there. The Department of Parks does not have a say in this since the Department of Environmental Facilities has jurisdiction.

There is a possibility of collaborative funding from Audubon National that Saw Mill can apply for to provide binoculars for Project Feeder Watch. Bonnie Talluto will staff again this season every Saturday from 10-3pm. She will also hold a beginning bird photography course there. It will be publicized in Westchester County.

All of these issues and opportunities at CPP suggest exploring a Friends of Croton Point group.

The Campfire Club visited the office today and presented a \$500 gift for Pinecliff Sanctuary. They indicated they would like to give more in the future. The Sanctuary Committee will discuss how best to allocate this gift.

Anne reminded the group of the event 10/11 6:30-8:30 at Pace "When Carnivores Become Predators" and encouraged attendance.

We've been given 44 tickets for the Jacob Burns film "Birders: The Central Park Effect."

There will be a talk at Trinity Pawling School on 10/14 at 2pm by author and biologist Berndt Heinrich on his latest book "Life Everlasting."

Anne distributed the latest Programs and Trips calendar.

Advocacy

Bill Kellner inquired about the COSTCO development in Yorktown and whether that had arisen in Anne's discussion with Janelle Robbins of Bedford Audubon. Anne reported that Janelle has written a letter and Anne will follow up on the status of Bedford Audubon's action on this issue and whether they had or plan to comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

Donna Lassiter raised the issue of hydrofracking noting that Governor Cuomo has extended the comment period to evaluate the health report and wondering if SMRA had commented on this issue. It was agreed that the Advocacy Committee would meet to discuss and formulate an opinion for our Chapter.

Sanctuaries Committee (Michael Madias):

It does not appear that Leo Rubinfein and Cynthia Mayer are interested in a donation of their property adjacent to Graff but instead were exploring how to split off the pond parcel from the house lot. There are liability and maintenance issues with the pond lot including the inflow from the Hudson and the adjacent Metro North tracks.

The Choate acquisition is on hold until Spring 2013.

Our boundary survey at Brinton will take place in November.

A tree from the Graff Sanctuary fell on the Gallelli's tennis court and damage to the fence was substantial. Repair costs are being investigated. Chris Drury spoke with John Grant who advised that these incidents are considered "an act of God." The Board discussed the merits of having a policy so these incidents are handled on a uniform basis and with guidance from an arborist and legal/insurance specialists.

The Committee is considering signage on the roads to promote some of our sanctuaries in Croton.

The next Sanctuary Committee meeting is 11/5.

Wildflower seed is needed for the meadows. Donations of native plants would be appreciated.

Program and Field Trips (Christine McCluskey):*Upcoming Trips and Programs*

First walk of the season was to Hook Mountain with Drew & Trudy and raised \$65.

There were a number of new faces. On 10/19 another trip to Hook Mountain will be led by Charlie Roberto.

On 10/18, Anne will be conducting a Raptors for Rookies class.

This weekend is the coastal birding trip to DE/NJ.

Upcoming co-listings with BRSS to Larchmont Reservoir and Jamaica Bay.

The Anniversary Committee and Field Trip Committee have joined forces to plan out the 2013 anniversary year schedule of events.

There is a planning meeting on Nov 15th for rest of 2013. All encouraged to attend.

Newsletter (Bill Kellner):

The newsletter should be in hand by the end of next week.

Next deadline November 1.

The Board was encouraged to attend the Anniversary sub-committee to help in the development of a redesigned newsletter.

Bird Seed Sale (Ken Novenstern):

Volunteers are needed for Oct 20-21 sale as well as to call past seed customers.

Especially need help 1-2:30 moving seed back to Pruyn. A list was passed around to sign up and take names to call.

Ken noted that the Chappaqua Town Hall has given permission to use the parking lot.

There had been a potential conflict with the Ragamuffin Parade.

Hospitality (Sally Dow, Joan Coffey, Jean Sparacin):

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

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Minutes taken by Donna Lee Ubertalli, Secretary