

**Saw Mill River Audubon Board Meeting Minutes
Monday, December 3, 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, Rik Kaufman, Brian Kluepfel, Donna Lassiter, Valerie Lyle, Michael Madias, Jr., Christine McCluskey, Ken Novenstern, Nina Romanoff, Ponie Sheehan, Jean Sparacin, Larry Trachtenberg. Anne Swaim was present as Executive Director.

A quorum was present and the meeting began.

Minutes from the October 1 Board Meeting were approved.

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

PS Follow-Up Fund Drive Letters

Follow-up appeal letters will go out to large donors who have given in previous years but have not yet given this year.

60th Anniversary Report

Robert provided details on events being planned throughout the 60th Anniversary year including

- A soup potluck at Croton Point Nature Center in January following Charlie Roberto's eagle walk in the park
- The annual meeting will be a potluck on Saturday 4/6 in the evening
- The annual board picnic will take place as usual and an additional event will be added in June which will be an anniversary reception called "Raptors Uncorked: An Evening of Wine and Wildlife." Robert is talking to DePrez Wine about how they might be involved. They are considering providing wine at a discount or possibly a wine fundraiser
- A Hudson River Cruise in October featuring a talk by Tom Lake

The Annual Fund Drive will kick off in February and those donating \$500 will get one free ticket to the October cruise. A brochure of events will be included with the letters. A final appeal will close out the year in December.

Ponie Sheehan is redesigning the front banner page of the newsletter.

Robert shared logo concepts designed by Ponie and solicited feedback. The new logo design received a strong affirmation from the board with preference for the slight modification by Ponie shifting the wren to the "M" of SMRA.

Community Relations and Development (Robert McCrillis):

Donation and Membership Report

See report circulated at the meeting

Finance Committee (Tom McEnerney for Philip Heidelberger):

For our official quarterly report, as of October 1, 2012 the portfolio balance was \$887,307, a year-to-date increase of 6.2% 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 4.6%, 10.6%, 19.4% and 9.3% respectively, compared to our Morningstar Allocation Fund Index benchmark returns of 2.3%, 6.5%, 6.4% and 6.6% for the same periods.

The balance as of December 1, 2012 was \$867,630 an increase of 3.8% year-to-date. As of December 1, 2012, there have been \$55,000 in withdrawals from the endowment during 2012.

Treasurer's Report (Tom McEnerney): Copies of the report were distributed.

Annual Audit

The annual audit is complete and taxes were filed.

2013 Budget

Tom reviewed the 2013 Annual Budget. Salary/Benefits was revised to \$46,000. Anne spoke about the benefits of joining Federated Conservationist of Westchester County (FCWC) which she felt would be a beneficial partnership to aggregate support for shared issues at the County level. This added \$100 to the Contributions and Dues line item. A motion was made to approve the SMRA 2013 budget with the changes noted above. The motion carried.

Audit Committee

John Blake has resigned. George Shakespear was discussed as a possible replacement. This issue will be taken to the Nominating Committee.

Executive Director's Report (Anne Swaim):

Audubon NY Letters

- SMRA signed on to a letter thanking Governor Cuomo for saving the State Parks in the recent State budget.
- We also signed on to a letter encouraging strengthening the Environmental Protection Fund.

Anne circulated the NY State Ornithological Association newsletter which is delivered to the Office because we are a member of the organization.

At the recent Westchester County Public Hearing on the 2013 Budget, Charlie Roberto made comments on behalf of SMRA opposing the proposed elimination of four county park curator positions. There were four Audubon chapters represented.

Anne encouraged the Board to drop by Project Feeder Watch every Sat/Sun 10-12 at Croton Point Park Nature Center.

Croton Point Park – mowing. Karalyn Lamb, reporter for Cortlandt Voice, wrote a letter to the County Parks Commissioner regarding negative impacts from this year's landfill mowing and copied it to SMRA. Anne spoke with Karalyn who is very interested in getting involved with advocacy on this issue. Anne has contacted NY Audubon who just hired a grassland specialist to enlist technical help. Other contacts have been made with Bedford Audubon and Teatown. It was noted that CPP is an IBA – Important Bird Area – but Anne explained that this has no official bearing on the landowners. Bill spoke about advocating/engaging private owners of large grassland parcels in our area. Anne will be getting interested parties together. SMRA can get a core of volunteers to start mapping the vegetation of the area. There is not a Friends of CPP. Perhaps Master Gardeners or NYNJ Trail Conference could be involved. Several members volunteered to work with Anne on this issue.

Sanctuaries Committee (Michael Madias):*Storm Damage Report*

Gallellis have undertaken repairs themselves of their tennis court adjacent to Graff Sanctuary. The storm damage at Brinton and Graff has been cleared thanks to many volunteers including Nick & Trevor Fischer, Rudy Fasciani, and David Watson. The work at Pruyn is almost complete. Choate did not suffer as badly so work there has been left until last and will be addressed next. Haas is the remaining sanctuary to be cleared. Michael noted that the exclosures thankfully escaped damage.

Nick Fischer has secured a donation of clippers from Home Depot.

Boundary Survey Schedule

Michael explained that the surveys are proceeding successfully. Brinton will next be surveyed on 12/14 starting 9am in the main parking lot. Anne encouraged the Board to attend for an interesting experience. Pruyn Sanctuary will be surveyed on Jan 5 at 8am.

Sanctuary Tree Policy

A motion was made to add the following statement to the minutes of this meeting. "It is the policy of Saw Mill River Audubon not to remove trees that have fallen on properties adjacent to our properties." The motion was seconded and approved.

Butterfly Garden

Robert asked for volunteers to help with the garden. Maintenance occurs regularly on Tuesday mornings. It was agreed to add the regularly occurring garden maintenance day into the SMRA schedule online and in print once it is established next spring.

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

A draft is in place for upcoming trips and programs and will be released soon. January and February events will be added to the website as soon as they are available.

Christmas Bird Counts are scheduled for Peekskill 12/15, Putnam 12/29, and Bronx River 12/23. Drew Panko is also soliciting volunteers for Greenwich 12/16. Charlie Roberto will conduct a pre-Count walk on 12/8.

On December 13, there will be a new event, a cookie exchange and sharing of members' bird photography at the Ossining Community Center.

The Annual New Year's Day walk at Rockwood Hall will take place on Jan. 1 at 9:00am. This will also be the first installment of a quarterly tree walk led by John Grant.

Amazing Adaptations with Animal Ambassadors will be held Jan 10 at Ossining Community Center.

There will be an eagle walk led by Charlie on January 12 followed by a soup potluck in the CPP Nature Center.

An Adirondack winter birding weekend is scheduled over MLK Jr weekend, Jan 18-21.

Programs are in planning for mushrooms and bats. In February, a program regarding re-establishment of carnivores in suburbia has been scheduled.

Newsletter (Bill Kellner) - Next Deadline January 2

The winter issue should start appearing in the mail tomorrow.

Bird Seed Sale (Ken Novenster):

Volunteer Sign-up For December 15 Sale

The sale is going well. The new Woodpecker Mix is getting good reviews. The red pepper suet is not working as anticipated. Reports are that it does not repel squirrels. The first 3rd Sat sale went very well raising over \$1000. This is unusual so early in the season. Ideas were suggested for promoting seed at EagleFest. One suggestion was to take better advantage of the warming tents to promote SMRA. Anne will convene a group to plan our activities at EagleFest. Ken noted that Saturday sales are ongoing through the spring months.

Hospitality (Sally Dow, Joan Coffey, Jean Sparacin)

Robert thanked the Committee for the many delicious goodies.

New Business

2012-13 meeting dates. 1/7/13, 2/4, 3/4, April meeting and program Sat 4/6, 5/6, 6/3 (picnic). All dates on Monday evenings unless noted.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:16 pm.

Minutes taken by Donna Lee Ubertalli, Secretary