

Saw Mill River Audubon Board Meeting Minutes
Monday, February 4, 2013
Held at Northern Westchester Community Church

Present: Robert McCrillis, presiding, William Kellner, Richard Saravay, Donna Lee Ubertalli, secretary, Tom McEnerney, Sally Dow, Christopher Drury, Nick Fischer, Philip Heidelberger, Shirl Kaplan, Brian Kluepfel, Donna Lassiter, Valerie Lyle, Michael Madias, Jr., Joanne McAuley, Christine McCluskey, Ken Novenstern, Ponie Sheehan, Jean Sparacin, Larry Trachtenberg. Anne Swaim was present as Executive Director. Joan and David Wyly were also in attendance.

A quorum was present and the meeting began.

Minutes from the January 8, 2013 Board Meeting were approved.

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

- The PS Party will be held next week here starting at 6pm. Letter packets were available for those who had given notice that they would not be attending.
- Robert introduced Joan Wyly, our new Board candidate, who was in attendance with her husband David. She spoke about her positive experience with Audubon.

Community Relations and Development

The Membership and Fund Drive report was distributed and it was noted that chapter membership is going up.

Finance Committee (Philip Heidelberger)

The balance as of January 1, 2013 was \$870,932, an increase of \$35,091 (4.2%) for 2012. There were \$63,043 in withdrawals from the endowment during 2012. There were \$600 in additions to the Larry Light Scholarship Fund during 2012.

Treasurer's Report (Tom McEnerney)

- Tom noted that there were no unusual items in the financial results for the first month of 2013.
- He explained that the free Hudson River Cruise ticket, valued at \$50, to be offered with a +\$500 donation to the annual fund, would reduce the donation's tax-deductible value to \$450 unless the donor requests that the entire donation be credited and waives the Cruise ticket offer. A form will be sent to these donors offering this option.
- Tom reviewed the Insurance Report. There was discussion about whether there would be an advantage of having our current Directors & Officers Insurance with Chubb. Tom explained that, each year, Chubb offers a D&O quote. He agreed that he will accept the offer of a quote next time the request is presented. In addition, Anne will inquire about Bedford Audubon coverage.
- The Garden Committee is requesting up to \$1,200 for additional perennials and shrubs and to install a stand-up sprinkler system at the Butterfly Garden. This proposal was reviewed by the Finance Committee at its January meeting. Upon a

motion duly made and seconded, the Board approved the withdrawal of up to \$1,200 from the Garden Endowment during 2013. Donna Lassiter discussed additional planting plans. There was a discussion that affirmed native plants as a priority for the garden and arboretum.

Executive Director's Report (Anne Swain):

- Anne thanked everyone who signed up to volunteer for EagleFest, noting that SMRA has a larger presence at EagleFest than ever before with SMRA volunteers in four locations, our Raptors program being presented, three bird walks led and our info table in the main tent. Larry and Christine will lead a bird walk at 11 and Anne will lead at 1 and 3pm. She asked for and received volunteers to walk at the back of the group. Christine suggested bringing a Crossley ID Guide found to be a useful visual aid for beginners at last year's EagleFest. Anne highlighted the 60th Anniversary Event card that will be in all the fund letters, handed out at public events and EagleFest and thanked Barbara Campbell for her good work on this card and the new volunteer card. Copies of both were distributed to the board with extras for sharing elsewhere.
- The Native Plant Center's 14th Annual Native Plant Sale will be held April 27 at Westchester Community College and the course list for upcoming programs was passed around.
- There was a discussion about whether we should sell the new SMRA hats with our logos. There was a motion to sell the hats to SMRA volunteers/board members for \$5 and to the public, only at events, for \$10.
- Donna Lee and Bill talked about future updates to the newsletter.
- The Croton Point Park discussion group is meeting this coming Wednesday. The meeting with the Parks Department was postponed due to snow and will take place later in February. Anne reported that a lot of data is being gathered, including the political history. She felt that progress was being made since the group is fortunate to have organized early enough in the design process to make an impact. Engineering studies are expected to be completed by summer and the design phase during the fall. Leah Cullen Boyer has moved from Croton Point County Park to Lenoir and John Phillips is now the sole Naturalist at CPP.
- Anne provided an update on Together Green grant. We are encouraged by interest from Neighbors Link (Latino outreach), Westchester Hispanic Coalition, Cabrini Immigrant Services in Dobbs Ferry and are partnering with Bedford Audubon. The next public program, jointly sponsored by Bedford and SMRA, on Wed 2/13 is 7pm at the Katonah Village Library. Other Audubon chapters have been invited as well.
- Lower Hudson Chapter Roundtable flyers distributed. Anne requested that 6-12 Board members attend. The event is Sat March 2, 10-2pm.

Advocacy (Anne Swaim & Bill Kellner)

Anne reported that she and Bill participated in a phone conference with the NY State Audubon Council regarding NY Audubon's Fracking Resolution that our Board affirmed last month. Four chapters in the Marcellus Shale would prefer a complete ban and wanted to make sure the resolution did not appear to be supporting fracking. The

argument was made that calling for highly stringent regulation allows Audubon NY to be part of the process going forward more than completely rejecting fracking. Anne noted that there are many NY environmental groups supporting a complete ban. She invited those on the board who might support a ban and those who support regulating fracking to consider a meeting for further discussion. Ponie was at the DEC today for a hearing on Hydrofracking and spoke about that experience. The outcome of the vote will be on 2/17. At the recommendation of Robert and Anne, Ponie is inviting board members to let her know if they would like to continue to receive emails from her on the issues that she tracks, rather than sending to the entire board. In addition, Ponie said she has two DVDs about fracking if any board members would like to view them.

Sanctuaries Committee (Michael Madias):

The second surveys of Brinton and Pruyn Sanctuaries will take place after EagleFest. Dates TBD but will be announced should any Board member like to come along. The Second Saturday walk is still happening this Saturday 2/9 along with EagleFest.

Programs and Field Trips (Christine McCluskey & Chris Drury):

- The January programs were very successful. Animal Ambassadors was a huge success with many participating. So was the Eagle/Soup walk. Charlie Roberto led 40 walkers with at least half the group staying for soup. The Adirondack trip was fun and the Owl Prowl had 24 attending in Greenwich.
- Christine passed out a flyer she developed for Eaglefest to provide details on the first 6 months of program and field trip activity.
- There was a Meadowlands trip this past weekend but turnout was low. There are plans for a pontoon boat birding trip there in September with the date TBD.
- This Saturday is EagleFest. The following Saturday Anne is leading a trip to Orange County. The departure time is being moved to 1pm to increase the chances of seeing short-eared owls who are out later in the day.
- Chris reported that he's having difficulty reaching the speaker for the October bat program and will keep trying.

Newsletter (Bill Kellner)

The newsletter came in the mail last week.

Bird Seed Sale (Ken Novenstern):

Ken reported that it's been a good winter for sale of bird seed so far. The sale in January was very good. The next sale date is 2/16. Ken solicited volunteers and encouraged everyone to come and buy.

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

Robert thanked the committee and Nick for the delicious goodies.

The meeting was adjourned at 9pm.

Minutes taken by Donna Lee Ubertalli, Secretary