

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

Present: Robert McCrillis, presiding, William Kellner, Richard Saravay, Donna Lee Ubertalli, secretary, Tom McEnerney, Joan Coffey, Sally Dow, Christopher Drury, Nick Fischer, 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 February 4th Board Meeting were approved.

**President's Report (Robert McCrillis)**

*Annual Meeting program and volunteer sign-up sheet*

A sign-up sheet was passed around for volunteers to sign up for tasks related to the Annual Meeting. Bill Kellner reminded the Board that they should introduce themselves to new faces at the event. Anne said there will be a speaker change. Steven Stanne of the Hudson River Estuary Program will now be the feature speaker. Christine will be presenting a video from her trip to Hog Island last summer. Suggested donation is \$10 at the door and there will be a 50/50 raffle to cover the cost of the evening.

*Raptors Uncorked – June 1*

Wine is being sold to us at cost by DePrez Wines of Croton. Board members are asked to provide the hors d'oeuvres. James Eyring is also providing his services for the program at half his regular price. It was decided to charge \$25/person.

Robert passed around an article written by Brian Kluepfel about the joint program with Bedford Audubon on the Atlantic Flyway initiative from Audubon National.

The Anniversary Committee will be meeting 4/25, 7pm at Robert's house.

**Community Relations and Development (Robert McCrillis)**

*Donation and Membership Report*

Response to the fund letter is very encouraging with some people increasing their contribution. Anne reminded the group to invite new people to Raptors Uncorked and the Hudson River Cruise.

**Finance Committee (Tom McEnerney for Philip Heidelberger)**

The balance as of March 1, 2013 was \$894,817 an increase of 2.7% year-to-date, and 0.5% for the month of February. There have been \$8,000 in withdrawals from the endowment during 2013.

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

Copies of the report were distributed. Donations are good. The bird seed sale has seen a 75% increase vs. last year. Net operating expenses are about \$1,000 better than budget for the first two months of the year.

## **Executive Director's Report (Anne Swaim)**

### *Croton Point Issues Update*

Janelle Roberts, Charlie Roberto, Karalyn Lamb, and Anne met with John Baker of NY DEC and John Phillips, the CPP naturalist. The DEC is trying to determine whether they can fix the methane piping problem without digging. The group did agree verbally that there would be no mowing this year except small paths that lead to the wells. This will be put in writing for review by both the county Dept. of Environmental Facilities and the County Parks Department. Park-wide habitat management areas will potentially be marked by a color system to identify different areas so maintenance workers know where to mow.

### *Together Green Update*

The grant has been successfully completed by building a coalition in partnership with Bedford Audubon to Neighbors Link and some of their clients. Janelle and Anne are going to meet next week with Neighbors Link staff and think about some activities that Audubon can do with the Spanish-speaking community. Other area Audubon chapter are also interested in activities with the Spanish-speaking community. The idea is to look towards spring 2014 for possibility of larger Together Green grant application.

### Larry Light Memorial Scholarship

An application has been received from a Croton-Harmon High School student who would like to go to Minnesota for owl-banding. The application was impressive and her references are pending. A motion was approved to provide \$1,000 to this candidate.

- The Native Plant Center is sponsoring a Climate Change seminar on 3/18.
- Sustainable Playland pre-stamped postcards were passed around.
- Audubon is having a national convention on July 12-15. [Audubonconvention.org](http://Audubonconvention.org).
- SMRA signed on to a letter to thank the NYS Assembly and the Governor for support of the parks and clean-up after Sandy.
- Lower Hudson Roundtable Report was a success and materials left from the Roundtable were available for the Board to pick up after the meeting.
- Chappaqua Schools Green Fair Sat 4/6 10-2pm (details to be emailed).

## **Advocacy (Richard Saravay)**

Audubon NY is getting a new executive director. Erin Crotty, former commissioner of NYDEC is the frontrunner. Donna Lassiter inquired about butterfly migration and was encouraged to do some research for possible inclusion in the discussion about neo-tropical bird migration. Bill spoke about more precise information on migration becoming available through geo-tracking, referencing an article in BirdWatching magazine.

## **Sanctuaries Committee (Michael Madias)**

Property walks coming up: March 23 Brinton, April 9 Pruyn, April 27 Pinecliff, April 29 Choate. Haas and some of the smaller Sanctuaries will be done in the fall.

The property owners adjacent to the Graff Sanctuary, who had considered donating part of their property to SMRA, have put the property on the market according to a postcard received by Nina. The Weinsteins adjacent to Brinton are investigating conservation easements and stated that they are interested in possible land donation to SMRA after current generation. There is a house on the property but it is not clear that this is included in their plans.

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

*Upcoming Trips and Programs*

There were many inter-Audubon programs in February. 70+ people attended the Flyway program in Katonah. The Shawangunks trip to see short-eared owls, harriers and rough-legged hawks with Rockland Audubon was well attended.

Coming up on March 16 is a Woodcock Walk at Westmoreland at dusk.

Pat Mutolo will lead the Peeper Prowl on the 17<sup>th</sup>.

On the 21<sup>st</sup> Kevin Karlson will be speaking at Croton Library.

Saturday, March 23, 8:30 am, there is a trip to Jamaica Bay with Don Reipe – note date and time change.

**Newsletter (Bill Kellner)**

The deadline for the April/May issue is March 4. The new redesign is being reviewed tomorrow evening. The summer issue is the goal for implementing the new design.

**Bird Seed Sale (Ken Novenstern)**

Volunteer sign-ups for March 16 seed sale were requested. A sheet was passed around. The last sale was very quiet until last hour when \$700 was sold. Westmoreland has a pancake breakfast this coming weekend.

**Hospitality (Sally Dow, Joan Coffey)**

Those who brought goodies were thanked.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:23 pm.

Minutes taken by Donna Lee Ubertalli, Secretary