

**Saw Mill River Audubon
Board Meeting Minutes**

September 9, 2013

Community Bible Church, Ossining, New York

Quorum Present (20 members):

Robert McCrillis, Brian Kluepfel, Christine McCluskey, Sally Dow, Joan Coffey, Joan Wyly, Jean Sparacin, Nina Romanoff, Larry Trachtenberg, Valerie Lyle, Nick Fischer, Donna Lee Ubertalli, Rik Kaufman, Michael Madias, Richard Saravay, Bill Kellner, Phil Heidelberger, Shirl Kaplan, Donna Lassiter, Joanne McAuley. Anne Swaim, Executive Director, also present.

Minutes of June 2013 meeting passed.

President's report: The garden tour was a great success and Donna Lassiter was singled out for praise. She has also prepared a detailed handout of the garden planting which is available for emailing to the board. It was also suggested that this be posted to our website.

The garden beds by the office and house need work, and a work day was proposed to address this issue.

Community Relations and Development: A report was circulated, and overall donations are up this year.

Finance Committee: For our official quarterly report, as of July 1, 2013 the portfolio balance was \$896,703, a year-to-date increase of 2.96% from the January 1, 2013 balance of \$870,932. The year-to-date, one year and three year investment rates of return were 5.8%, 12.1% and 11.7% respectively, compared to our Morningstar Allocation Fund Index benchmark returns of 3.9%, 8.7% and 7.8% for the same periods.

The balance as of September 1, 2013 was \$906,509 an increase of 4.1% year-to-date. As of September 1, 2013, there have been \$30,000 in withdrawals from the endowment during 2013.

Treasurer's Report: Tom was unable to attend the meeting tonight, but Phil said his findings were reported at the finance committee recently. Overall, expenses are slightly less than budgeted and income is slightly higher than budgeted.

Executive Director's Report:

SMRA continues to meet with park officials and other organizations interested in the Croton Point landfill habitat and we are also continuing to monitor the mowing patterns. Necessary digging will occur in the fall or winter to repair the methane collection system inside the landfill. At least three pairs of grasshopper sparrows nested on the landfill this spring/summer and harriers, kestrels and bobolinks are using the habitat.

Grants: Board members were invited to be part of a discussion on Monday September 23, 7pm at the church to discuss what 2014 projects we might want to pursue for grant funding.

Members are invited to attend the NYSOA Birders Conference Nov 1-3 in Uniondale, Long Island. Carpooling is proposed for members attending.

Advocacy: Richard Saravay reported on legislative resolutions from the NY Audubon Council including the revised resolution about fracking, entitled "Protect Resources from Natural Gas Drilling." He invited members to attend the State Audubon Council on October 18. Copies of the "Conservation Policy Resolutions" and the fracking resolution will be requested from the state office by Anne for circulation to interested board members.

Sanctuaries Committee:

Michael Madias reported that the survey of our property boundaries is ongoing. David Watson, Nick Fisher and Michael worked on the Pruyn deer exclosures to replace fencing attached to trees with posts.

The Second Saturday walk at Brinton Brook will take place on 9/14 and is listed as part of the Hudson Valley Ramble line up of September events. Several board members plan to attend and will come earlier to work with Michael to spot cars at the hike ending at the Croton Arboretum.

Programs and Field Trips:

The July butterfly walk was successful. More ideas on turning this into a more “family” event need development, including scheduling on a different weekend than the NY Butterfly Count.

Our joint field trip with City Island Birders and NY Botanical Garden to Pelham Bay drew 40 participants. We would like to continue this in future; Pelham Bay is a good alternative for those who don't wish to travel all the way to Jamaica Bay in Queens.

Meadowlands pontoon boat trip on 9/15 has sold out 2 boats—24 people in total.

Trip to Duluth, MN for winter owling from Jan 30-Feb 2 being finalized. 16 total spots available and this trip is half-filled at this time. Coordinated by Charlie Roberto and Christine McCluskey.

Monday birding walks with Anne continue to be successful, attracting 8-9 walkers, many of whom are new birding enthusiasts.

Donna Lee discussed upcoming programs at Croton Library, including the September reptile program, October showing of the “Queen of the Sun” film, and the November geocaching program. There was a brief discussion on additional publicity for these events including Donna Lee's idea of emailing program flyers to board members for printing out and distributing in local venues.

Newsletter: Next deadline is November 1. Latest issue was mailed September 6.

Hospitality: Thanks to Joan Coffey, Jean Sparacin and Sally Dow, as always.

New Business:

After discussion, a measure was unanimously passed, 18-0, to allow limited bow-hunting of deer by 3 persons known to Anne, in only the SMRA-owned, Town of Cortlandt portion of Brinton Brook Sanctuary this fall. Westchester County deer bowhunting season is Oct 1-December 31. (Not present for this vote were Christine McCluskey and Joan Coffey, who needed to leave the meeting earlier, and Tom McEnerney, Ken Novenster and Ponie Sheehan, who were unable to attend tonight.) This trial will use best practices from Westchester County Parks and other sanctuaries (including posting of signs, closing trails in hunting locations, hunting only from stands and focusing on antler-less deer.) Details on length and timing of hunt to be determined by the Sanctuaries Committee in consultation with the bowhunters.

Minutes taken by Brian Kluepfel, Recording Secretary.