

**Saw Mill River Audubon Board Meeting Minutes**  
**Monday, December 2, 2013**  
**Held at Community Bible Church, Ossining, NY**

**Present (in bold):** Robert McCrillis, presiding, William Kellner, Richard Saravay, Brian Kluepfel, secretary, Tom McEnerney, Sally Dow, Nick Fischer, Philip Heidelberger, Shirl Kaplan, Rik Kaufman, Donna Lassiter, Valerie Lyle, Michael Madias, Jr., Joanne McAuley, Christine McCluskey, Ken Novenstern, Joan Wyly, Nina Romanoff, Ponie Sheehan, Jean Sparacin, Larry Trachtenberg. Anne Swaim was present as Executive Director.

**A quorum was present and the meeting began at 7:32 pm.**

**Minutes from the October meeting were approved.**

**President's Report/Mail and Correspondence:**

Joan Coffey will be leaving the board. She was thanked for her contributions. There are now 2 board vacancies and we need to convene the nominating committee. Nominees welcome via email, etc. Members of the Nominating Committee will be Jean Sparacin, Joan Coffey and Anne Swaim. Discussion of annual dinner location and date—no decision taken at this time. Announcement of Fall Board retreat September 20, from 9:00am to 2:00 pm.

**Community Relations and Development:**

Donations are up from 2012, according to our report. Report circulated.

**Finance Committee (Phil Heidelberger):**

For our official quarterly report, as of October 1, 2013 the portfolio balance was \$933,523 a year-to-date increase of 7.2% from the January 1, 2013 balance of \$870,932. The year-to-date, one year and three year investment rates of return were 10.7%, 12.0% and 9.7% respectively, compared to our Morningstar Allocation Fund Index benchmark returns of 7.6%, 8.6% and 6.9% for the same periods.

The balance as of November 1, 2013 was \$959,134 and the balance as of December 1, 2013 was 938,369. The decrease in November was due to \$32,200 in withdrawals during the month. As of December 1, there have been \$62,200 in withdrawals from and \$1,000 in additions to the portfolio during 2013.

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

Copies of the proposed 2014 Budget, including the actual results for the first eleven months of 2013 as compared to the 2013 Budget, were distributed. The Board discussed a possible cash shortfall for 2013 due to the timing of prior year receipts and current year expenses. The Board voted to increase the amount that could be withdrawn from the portfolio in 2013 by \$5,000, if necessary to cover 2013 expenses.

The proposed 2014 Budget was then discussed in detail and it was noted that the Budget contemplates a withdrawal of about 8.4% of the portfolio balance, which is in excess of the 5% guideline. The Board discussed the need to make these extra withdrawals to properly fulfill SMRA's mission and achieve its goals. The need to grow revenues 5%-10% per year to cover these budget deficits was discussed, including how to attract families and younger members to SMRA. Potential energy savings at Pruyn House were also discussed. The Board then unanimously approved the proposed 2014 Budget and the compensation increases for certain staff members included in the Budget.

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

At Brinton Brook Sanctuary, our selected deer hunters have not culled (killed) any deer yet. The 2013 trial season ended November 30<sup>th</sup>.

A discussion of the Birchwood swim club adjacent to Pruyn property was held. The club may be open to subdividing and donating some of their undevelopable land to SMRA. They have also agreed to correct two boundary issues: fencing erected on SMRA land by their back road gate (completed) and removal of a small gravel parking area on SMRA land by their tennis courts (to be completed in the spring).

SMRA will participate in the 10<sup>th</sup> annual Eagle Fest on February 8, leading walks at 11, 1:00 and 2:00 pm. Larry Trachtenberg was thanked for his donation underwriting SMRA sponsorship of the Georges Island warming tent. We will also sponsor the warming tent again at the Croton boat ramp. Among the special events this year is an "Eagle Car" that Metro North will run to Croton Pt. station, doing birding along the way.

Anne had a program at Kendal, an upscale retirement community, which was attended by 80+ persons and considered a success. We will explore other program possibilities with Kendal.

**Advocacy (Richard Saravay):**

Discussion of the Atlantic Flyway, the red knot-horseshoe crab link, and botanist Michael van Clef of Ecological Solutions in New Jersey, who has developed an assessment tool for forest regrowth when deer pressure is lessened. Also discussed was New Jersey's "Keep it Green" sales tax.

**Sanctuaries Committee (Michael Madias):**

The repair of the Pruyn bird blind was completed with thanks to David Watson for underwriting the materials cost and Nick Fischer, Phil Heidelberger and David Watson for doing the work along with Danny Ferguson. The Thanksgiving Turkey Walk was a success. Additional boundary walks will be scheduled in 2014.

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

The Duluth, MN long weekend trip to north woods birds has great interest already and we may add a second van if sufficient numbers sign up. A members photo night will be held December 12 and we hope it becomes an annual event. Christmas counts will take place December 14 and 28, locally. January 16 we will host an owl program at Rockefeller State Park Preserve presented by Trudy Battaly. Anna Roberto, our 2013 Light scholarship winner this year, will also discuss her owl research in Minnesota.

**Newsletter (Bill Kellner):** Next deadline is January 2.

**Bird Seed Sale (Ken Novenstern):**

Sign up sheet circulated for December 14 sale. Pizza Station in Mt. Kisco will be thanked in the upcoming newsletter for providing pizza for our volunteers during our October sale days at New Castle Town Hall.

**Hospitality:** Thanks to Sally Dow and Jean Sparacin for coordinating.

**New Business:** Bonnie will be running Feeder Watch program at Croton Pt. Park all winter. We will have our 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Soup Gathering at the Croton Point Nature Center following Charlie Roberto's "Eagles and More" walk at Croton Point on Saturday, January 11.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:49 pm.  
Minutes taken by Brian Kluepfel, Secretary