

**Saw Mill River Audubon**  
**December 1, 2014 Board Meeting Minutes**  
**Held at Community Bible Church of Northern Westchester**

**Present:** Robert McCrillis, Richard Saravay, Karalyn Lamb, Donna Lassiter, Tom Ruth, Tom McEnerney, Valerie Lyle, Christine McCluskey, Larry Trachtenberg, Rik Kaufmann, Ken Novenstern, Joanne McAuley, Jan Bass, Phil Heidelberger, Michael Madias, Jr., Nina Romanoff, Jean Sparacin, Bill Kellner. Anne Swaim was also present.

**President's Report.** The October 2014 minutes were accepted by the board. Robert called attention to the Membership and Development Report distributed to the board. Board members added personal PS statements to appeal letters at the start of the meeting as part of our end-of-year follow-up to the 2014 Annual Fund Drive. Robert noted that we need to appoint a nominating committee this time of year in order to have a slate of board members and officers ready for our April annual meeting and the proxy ballot that goes out in the Feb/Mar newsletter. The nominating committee selection will be completed through email to the board in the coming weeks. Two non-board members and one board member are required for this committee according to our by-laws.

**Finance Committee Report.** Phil Heidelberger reported the following: For our official quarterly report, as of October 1, 2014 the portfolio balance was \$962,764, a year-to-date increase of 1.5% over the January 1, 2014 balance of \$948,376. The three month, year-to-date and one year investment rates of return were -1.2%, 4.2% and 10.2% respectively, compared to our Morningstar Allocation Fund Index benchmark returns of -1.4%, 2.9% and 7.0% for the same periods. There were \$25,000 in withdrawals from the portfolio during the first three quarters of 2014. The portfolio balance as of November 30, 2014 was \$966,852, a year-to-date increase of 1.9% and an increase of 0.4% compared to the October 1st balance. This includes additional net withdrawals of \$24,735 between October 1st and November 30th. Year-to-date, there have been \$56,234 in withdrawals and \$500 in additions to the portfolio, including a \$6,000 withdrawal made on December 1st.

We are pleased that Rik Kaufman has joined the Finance Committee.

**Treasurer's Report.** Tom McEnerney read an email from Brian Kluepfel, who could not be present but who had concerns about the idea of SMRA enrolling in the Amazon Smile program. There was a brief discussion and a vote was taken with 13 in favor, 4 opposed and 1 abstention.

Tom then reviewed the proposed 2015 budget. Anne Swaim left the room during a discussion of proposal for SMRA to begin funding a retirement program for Anne Swaim. Tom noted that the 2015 proposed withdrawal from the endowment exceeded the 5% recommendation contained in the Financial Guidelines recommended by the Finance Committee and approved by the board. This was briefly discussed and it was also noted that there will be a meeting in January for further discussion of SMRA financial development needs. After a line by line review and discussion, the 2015 budget was unanimously approved by the board.

**Executive Director's Report.** Anne Swaim reviewed the complicated political situation in New Castle with two separate town committees appointed to develop a town response to residents' concerns about coyotes. One neighborhood's plans for coyote trapping were also discussed. It was suggested that we gather the many different fact sheet and video links in one place to share with other Audubon chapters or other towns as well as through our web site. The new "Croton Point is For Birds" sign was celebrated with photographs and a brief birding walk on Saturday, November 22, with county park staff and Charlie Roberto joining in with SMRA board members and friends.

Our 2015 Olympic Peninsula trip had such a strong response – selling out in less than 24 hours – that we are offering a second week as we did with our 2013 Yellowstone trip. Anne also reported on several sign-on letters on which Saw Mill River Audubon's name was added as per direction of the board for us to participate in issues led by National Audubon or Audubon New York. SMRA also commented on the proposed Sandy Hook maintenance building relocation as per the leadership of New Jersey Audubon and following executive committee approval in email.

**Advocacy.** Richard Saravay gave background on the Audubon New York lawsuit against the US Army Corps of Engineers Long Island shoreline stabilization plan which has potential to damage shoreline shorebird habitat.

Richard had the opportunity to speak with National Audubon president David Yarnold at a recent event and David said he'd be interested to visit with our chapter since he lives nearby in Dobbs Ferry. This idea has morphed into inviting David Yarnold to speak at the Lower Hudson Audubon Roundtable with a tentative date of Saturday, March 7 but we are awaiting confirmation of David's schedule.

Tom Ruth then reviewed progress made on the 2014 retreat goals for advocacy. Work is underway to connect SMRA with local town conservation contacts and issues. Tom, Karalyn, Bill and Anne will be meeting with the Westchester Land Trust on Friday, December 5 to learn more about the Housatonic to Hudson Initiative linking local communities and organizations in land conservation initiatives.

**Sanctuaries Committee.** Michael Madias, Jr. reported that over 80 trees and shrubs were planted as part of the Trees for Tribes work at Brinton Brook. The Split Rock Spring was cleaned out and the need for repairs on the small rock dams in this structure were noted. White pines were planted in the area of the devastated hemlock grove in hope that a new evergreen stand might develop there to benefit owls and other birds. One of our bow hunters had success harvesting one doe from the sanctuary. There are plans for a spring Trees for Tribes planting to be held at Choate. We are hoping to learn more about barberry removal from Muscoot Farm, which is doing a new technique next spring to burn off the cut stems with a roofing torch.

**Programs & Field Trips.** Christine reviewed the upcoming programs and field trips, encouraging the board to participate in the upcoming Members Best Night, Thursday, December 11, 7:00pm at the Croton Library. A brief discussion was held regarding the January program: the showing of the film "A Fierce Green Fire." The Chappaqua Library will help promote, including using their sign outside for our scheduled date of Thursday, January 8, 7:00pm, with 7:15pm film start. We do want to hold another event at The Black Cow as well and a decision was made to check back in February about whether or not to offer second showing of this film at The Black Cow.

**Refreshments:** Jean Sparacin was thanked as well as all those who brought refreshments for the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15pm.

Minutes by Anne Swaim as substitute for Brian Kluepfel, SMRA Secretary