

**Saw Mill River Audubon
June 8, 2015 Board Meeting Minutes
Held at Senasqua Park, Croton-on-Hudson, New York**

Present: Robert McCrillis, Jan Bass, Valerie Heemstra, Philip Heidelberger, Rik Kaufman, Bill Kellner, Brian Kluepfel, Karalyn Lamb, Donna Lassiter, Michael Madias, Jr., Joanne McAuley, Christine McCluskey, Tom McEnerney, Ken Novenstern, John Phillips, Nina Romanoff, Tom Ruth, Richard Saravay, Jean Sparacin, Larry Trachtenberg, and Anne Swaim

Meeting started at 7:30pm. Minutes of May 18, 2015 Board Meeting were approved.

President's Report – Robert McCrillis

There was nothing to report.

Community Relations and Development

Robert McCrillis distributed the Donation / Membership Report dated June 8, 2015 prepared by Barbara Campbell and Ellen Heidelberger.

Finance Committee – Philip Heidelberger

As of June 1, 2015 the portfolio balance was \$979,515 a year-to-date increase of 3.1% over the January 1, 2014 balance of \$949,940. There have been \$0 in withdrawals from the portfolio during 2015 and \$600 in additions to the Larry Light Scholarship Fund during 2015.

Treasurer's Report – Tom McEnerney

Tom handed out his report for the period ending May 31, 2015. So far this is the best year we have had since Tom started as Treasurer. Revenues are up and cash-flow is positive for the first 5 months of 2015.

Executive Director's Report – Anne Swain

Ken attended the New Castle Board meeting (May 19) on our behalf regarding use of Town Hall for our seed sale which was approved despite the Supervisor's previous opposition. The town has prepared a coyote response plan that includes our concerns.

A SMRA trip to Cuba is up for serious consideration for March 2016. Probably a 10 day trip with a cost between \$3,300 – \$3,400. More information will be available in a few weeks. There is a limit of 10-12 persons, which creates a problem since we already have 2-3 dozen people expressing an interest in such a trip. We may want to use a lottery system for spaces this time.

Anne walked the Weinstein property last week with Martin and Theresa Weinstein, Kate San and Susan Carpenter from the Westchester Land Trust, and a property assessor to discuss the plan for a conservation easement on the property. The Weinstains declared their intent to the Land Trust attendees to donate the property to SMRA. The Weinstains have also offered the property to host SMRA events, including a landowner meeting for the Hudson to Housatonic Initiative to be held there on Sunday, September 20. Details to follow.

Croton Point County Park – some additional, unwelcome mowing was observed on the capped landfill. Anne mapped this with GPS and contacted Asst. County Parks Commissioner John Baker who is following up on this concern.

We responded to an Audubon NY action alert regarding opposition to a NYS legislative initiative that would support Trap-Neuter-Release programs, i.e. encouraging feral cat colonies on public land.

SMRA Educator Pat Mutolo is retiring. She had retired from Chappaqua schools ten years ago, has worked for us since then, and now would like to have more time with her family. Pat has offered to help us find another retired teacher with the skill and interest to be part of our school classroom programs and field trips and Pat will also help with training and transition.

Advocacy

Tom Ruth gave a brief update on SMRA involvement in the Hudson to Housatonic Initiative for landowner conservation education. Anne Swaim noted that the Westchester Land Trust staff complimented the team lead by Tom as “the most active and engaged team.”

Karalyn Lamb reported on the Lower Hudson Partnership for Invasive Species Management. She showed cuttings from the Hardy Kiwi vine. Our patches were cut last week along with the ones on land owned by Con Edison. Our contractor under our grant, Tom Lewis of Trillium Associates, discovered that one of the patches at Brinton Brook is on wetland so he is getting a permit from Town of Cortlandt to continue work there. The Hudson National Golf Club people have been very responsive to our requests and plan to do their Hardy Kiwi removal in the fall. (Anne noted that they have also recently sent us a donation of \$250.) We are now also part of a research project on Hardy Kiwi vines to study their DNA and determine origin.

Programs and Field Trips – Christine McCluskey

During the summer both Monday Walks and Second Saturday Walks will continue. The Program and Field Trip Committee will meet within the next few weeks to plan fall events.

Sanctuaries Committee – Michael Madias

Trees donated by David and Patricia Watson were planted in one of the deer exclosures at Pruyn. Additional wildflowers have been added to the meadow at Brinton Brook. There is a plan to open the canopy to benefit cedar trees at Choate Sanctuary and we added some evergreen planting there as well.

Garden and Arboretum

Donna Lassiter reported that the last of this year’s annuals and new perennials have been planted and weeding and watering are ongoing. Volunteers welcome. Research is continuing on new gate project.

Newsletter

Brian reported that the summer newsletter deadline is midnight tonight. Send in any contributions ASAP. Newsletter will be mailed the third week of June.

Bird Seed Sale

Ken noted that there is a 25% discount on whatever bird seed is left in shed. SMRA received permission to once again have our Fall Seed Sale in the parking lot at New Castle Town Hall on October 3rd and 4th. Planning will begin in July.

Hospitality

Robert McCrillis thanked everyone for the evening’s food and refreshments. Jean Sparacin was thanked for coordinating the picnic potluck. Rudy Fasciani was thanked for manning the grill.

New Business: None.

Meeting ended at: 7:58pm **Next 2015 meeting:** September 14, 2015

Minutes by Joanne McAuley