

**Saw Mill River Audubon
March 7, 2016 Board Meeting Minutes
Held at Croton Point Park Nature Center, Croton-on-Hudson, NY**

Present: Valerie Heemstra, Phil Heidelberger, Rik Kaufman, Bill Kellner, Karalyn Lamb, Donna Lassiter, Valerie Lyle, Michael Madias, Jr., Joanne McAuley, Robert McCrillis, Tom McEnerney, Ken Novenstern, John Phillips, Tom Ruth, Richard Saravay, Ponie Sheehan and Larry Trachtenberg. Anne Swaim was also present.

Meeting started at 7:30pm. Minutes of February 1, 2016 Board Meeting were approved.

President's Report – Robert McCrillis

Robert asked Board members to send in their reservations for the 2016 Annual Dinner. A volunteer sign-up sheet was passed around for tasks needed to be done before/at/after the dinner.

Annual Dinner Committee will meet at Table 9 on Wednesday, March 16 at 2pm to review site and set-up.

Annual picnic will be June 6. Robert will contact Nina Romanoff about reserving Senasqua Park.

The Development Committee meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 14, 7:00pm at Robert's house.

Community Relations and Development – Robert McCrillis

Report submitted by Barbara Campbell and Ellen Heidelberger. Please see Development Report for information on our 2016 Annual Appeal. Board Members will receive preliminary packets for our annual PS'ing of fund drive letters at the Annual Dinner (April 3rd). PS Pizza Party will be on Monday, May 16.

Finance Committee – Philip Heidelberger

As of March 1, 2016 the portfolio balance was \$876,654, a year-to-date decrease of 3.6 % (\$32,504) below the January 1, 2016 balance of \$909,158. The portfolio gained 0.1% during the month of February. The balance does not include a \$5,000 bequest from the estate of Carol Coggeshall; that money was in the checking account at the time of the portfolio valuation, but has since been transferred to a portfolio account. There have been no withdrawals from the portfolio year-to-date.

Treasurer's Report – Tom McEnerney

Tom did not distribute a written report since only two months have passed in 2016 budget year. He noted that there have been no unusual expenses so far and income from seed sales and donations is good.

Tom asked for approval for a withdrawal of \$700 from the Garden Endowment Fund to cover this year's purchase of perennials and other supplies. Motion was approved.

Tom handed out and discussed his Insurance Report dated March 7, 2016. While costs have gone up it appears not to be worth pursuing new insurance companies instead of renewing what we have now. This was accepted by the Board.

Executive Director's Report – Anne Swaim

The *EagleFest* (February 6th) had one of the highest attendance since its beginning - and the lowest number of eagles counted. Good eagle watching currently at Annsville Circle in Peekskill.

Anne noted that SMRA was added to one sign-on letter recommended by Audubon NY regarding various issues in New York State parks that went to the State Senate and State Assembly.

Warbler Program, a joint venture of 5 Westchester Audubon chapters, on March 5th was a success. 70 people attended paid lecture and just under 100 people attended the free public program. All proceeds will be divided equally among the five county Audubon chapters.

Anne thanked Tom Ruth and grandkids for their hard work during the February 14th *Build a Blue Bird Box* event. Participants made 40 boxes. Question now is where to put them in Croton Point Park.

Anne is leading the *Birders U - Spring Workshop/Birding by Ear* on March 25th at Croton Point Nature Center

We may have another (although late) 2016 *Larry Light Scholarship* candidate. Individual is interested in applying for NYDEC Environmental Camp and was given scholarship application. Anne will keep us updated.

Anne gave *Annual Dinner* update. Several people are interested in exhibiting their photos. Program will include the quilt raffle, a brief overview on our Cuba adventure and will honor Robert McCrillis for his years of service as President of SMRA.

Croton Earth Day is Saturday, April 30th. SMRA plans to have a table – volunteers needed. Event is from 10am – 2pm.

There will be 2 “Flight of the Woodcock” programs: Sunday, March 13th at 7:00pm at Croton Point Park to be led by Charlie Roberto and Saturday, March 12th at 6:00pm at Muscoot to be led by Paul Lewis and Anne Swaim.

We will be joining with Rockefeller State Park in a joint Bird-A-Thon on May 14th (International Migratory Bird Day), coordinated by Elijah Goodwin, ornithologist conducting an ongoing survey on the Wood Thrush at RSPP. Any monies raised would be divided between RSPP and SMRA.

Advocacy

Tom Ruth updated the *Hudson to Housatonic Conservation Initiative*. Plans are underway to follow up with interested landowners by offering property surveys to encourage native plantings and bird habitat improvements. These walks will be planned for late spring.

Karalyn Lamb - “*I Love My Parks Day*” is coming May 7th. This is a New York State Parks event and is co-sponsored by SMRA, Teatown, Bronx River Conservancy, and the NJ/NY Trails Conference. The activities will include vine-cutting and cleanup of invasive species along the Old Croton Aqueduct.

Karalyn's *Hydrilla* update: She thanked Rik Kaufman for distributing info packets on hydrilla to various yacht clubs in the area on the Hudson. Signage is also going up warning boaters of the danger.

Richard Saravay passed around NYS Audubon's Annual Report. He reminded Board of NYS Audubon's Saratoga *Spring Council Meeting* on March 18 – 20. This will be Richard's last event on NYA Board. He has served 10 years (the term limit).

Sanctuaries Committee – Michael Madias, Jr.

Michael reported on his meeting with Choate neighbor Lauren Coats, who has agreed to become the Choate Sanctuary Keeper and will monitor sanctuary conditions.

On the February Second Saturday Brinton walk, there were 5 walkers who spotted bluebirds as well as 5 coyotes.

Still waiting for the 700 trees and plants he ordered. Hope to plant by Earth Day (April 30th).

Michael will also be scheduling a wildflower planting in the Brinton meadow on April 30th.

The final boundary walks, postponed by a winter storm, will be rescheduled.

Programs and Field Trips – Anne Swaim

In Christine's absence Anne highlighted upcoming programs and field trips, including some previously mentioned above. May 21 was discussed as a likely date for the annual Doodletown trip.

Newsletter

In Brian's absence, Anne noted that this week is the deadline for the April/May newsletter. If you have any articles please contact her or Brian asap.

Bird Seed Sale - Ken Novenstern

Saturday March 19th is the next *Third Saturday Bird Seed Sale* at Pruyn. A signup sheet was passed around for volunteers to work that Saturday. We still have seed to sell.

Hospitality

Robert McCrillis thanked those who brought meeting refreshments.

New Business: None.

Meeting ended at: 8:21pm **Next meeting:** April 3, 2016

Minutes taken by Joanne McAuley.