

**Saw Mill River Audubon
September 12, 2016 Board Meeting Minutes
Held at Croton Point Park Nature Center, Croton-on-Hudson, NY**

Present (in bold type): Jan Bass, Valerie Heemstra, **Phil Heidelberger**, Rik Kaufman, **Bill Kellner**, **Karalyn Lamb**, **Donna Lassiter**, **Valerie Lyle**, **Michael Madias, Jr.**, Joanne McAuley, **Christine McCluskey**, **Robert McCrillis**, **Tom McEnerney**, **Ken Novenster**, **John Phillips**, **Nina Romanoff**, **Tom Ruth**, **Richard Saravay**, Ponie Sheehan, **Jean Sparacin** and **Larry Trachtenberg**, **Brian Kluepfel**. **Anne Swaim** was also present.

Meeting started at 7:30pm. Minutes of June 6, 2016 Board Meeting were approved

President's Report—Valerie Lyle

Board retreat is Sat. 9/17 at Mariandale. Focus is "building the team." Seed sale is Sat. 10/1. We are trying a one-day pickup this year with extra seed moved to shed on afternoon of Sun 10/2. Signup sheet was passed around for both work times. Volunteers requested to make reminder calls: Anne, Jean, Nina, Tom, Val. L., Phil, Richard. Memorial donations have been received in honor of: Sally Dow, Don Lunetta, Larry Alson (\$765 donated in memory). We have received word that former SMRA President Jim Anderson has passed away. The SMRA Summer Executive Committee addressed several issues: approving a SMRA Croton hydrilla resolution, drafting an opposition statement on USCG anchorage proposal for Hudson River, deciding on date (10/22) for fall cruise given end-of-summer newsletter deadline. Robert suggested a promotional flyer for the fall cruise. The Summer Executive Committee also approved Anne Swaim serving as SMRA representative at the September meeting of the NYS Ornithological Association (NYSOA).

Community Relations and Development—Robert McCrillis

We have had a slight decline in membership due to list correction from NAS but Ellen Heidelberger was able to encourage renewals from some of these. This correction by NAS was due to errors on their end with membership processing.

Pruyn House Committee—Robert McCrillis We had a professional inspection of Pruy House this summer. Among the highlighted needs are: a hole by the driveway drain in front of the garage, office sidewalk needing leveling and an additional handrail, chimney repair, repair of the office and residence bathrooms, and repair of the residence kitchen. Currently requesting approval of bathroom plumbing and tile repairs. Plumber's estimate is \$300. Anne to buy fixtures. Estimate for tiling, replastering, painting and installing shelving over the office bathroom tub is \$1300 plus materials. Ken: motion to approve repair expenses up to \$2500. Bill seconded. Passed unanimously.

Finance Committee—Philip Heidelberger

For our official quarterly report, as of July 1, 2016 the portfolio balance was \$934,242 a year-to-date increase of 2.8% (\$25,084) above the January 1, 2016 balance of \$909,158. The year-to-date, one year and three year investment rates of return were 3.1%, 0.3% and 6.7% respectively, compared to our Morningstar Allocation Fund Index benchmark returns of 2.6%, -0.5% and 4.2% for the same periods.

The balance on September 1, 2016 was \$962,704 representing a 5.9% year-to-date increase. There have been \$8,000 in withdrawals from the portfolio and \$6,300 in additions to the portfolio during 2016 (the \$5,000 Coggeshall bequest and \$1,300 for the Light Scholarship Fund).

Treasurer's Report–Tom McEnerney

Tom reported that revenues are about \$7200 over budget for the first eight months of the year due primarily to higher donations, not including Don Lunetta donations. (In accordance with the family's wishes, donations in memory of Don are to be used for improvements at Pinecliff sanctuary.) Tom also reported that expenses for the year are in line with budget. He noted that we increased our personnel expenses by \$18K this year and we are hoping that additional income will cover this to avoid an endowment withdrawal significantly in excess of our guidelines.

Executive Director's Report–Anne Swaim

SW trip on October 8 to 15 includes 14 people with \$200/person SMRA donation built into the cost. Farooq Maroof, a trip participant, will drive a second van. The Gaspé trip was well received, as was Larry's article in recent newsletter summarizing the trip. We may consider a repeat of this trip. Anne reported on the NYSOA fall meeting she attended. NYSOA networks over 40 NY birding clubs, including NAS chapters and other groups, and also supports the NYS Young Birders Club – ages 11-17. There is interest among Westchester Audubon chapters in supporting a local NYS Young Birders Group. Anne passed around report from NYS DEC Bureau of Wildlife that was prepared for NYSOA (included Young Forest Initiative). Anne also noted her summer presentations to the New Castle (Chappaqua) Rotary and the Waterman Bird Club.

Sanctuaries Committee–Michael Madias, Jr.

Michael reported that drought continues to be a problem, although wildflowers have been good. Drought has prevented planned plantings. Plantings are scheduled for October. Twelve people attended Saturday's Hudson Valley Ramble/2nd Saturday Brinton Brook Walk which covered Brinton to Croton Arboretum. A suggestion was made to schedule a late summer/early fall wildflower walk at Brinton Brook next year to showcase the native planting/seeding that Michael and others have been doing there.

Sanctuaries and Advocacy–Karalyn Lamb

Consultant Tom Lewis is continuing his Hardy Kiwi control work in the Brinton Brook area, including Hudson National Golf Course, which is planning to clear a large area for Kiwi control. Karalyn is following up with the golf course about mitigation planting. The area of clearing is along the Village trail, not SMRA trails, but we are monitoring this and do support closing the trail during the clearing. Con Ed is not treating Kiwi patches but maybe will do next year. Hydrilla treatment in Croton River was cancelled due to algal bloom in reservoir, which led to release of too much water below New Croton Dam.

Pruyn Garden–Donna Lassiter

New garden guide for Pruyne Arboretum is on display at garden featuring full-color photos of the garden plants. A small kiosk near the garden was built by volunteer Greg Jacobson to house the garden guide. The board gave Donna applause for this beautiful publication. It was suggested to add a QR code to this publication to allow visitors to download a digital copy. The Pruyne Garden is now 90% native. No plans to cut back garden in winter–this will provide seed for birds and cover for overwintering butterfly larvae and eggs. Richard suggested adding signage to explain this. Donna L. passed around the draft Pruyne Arboretum Plant ID Guide, another full-color document with much background info on the wildlife value of the arboretum trees and shrubs. Robert suggested that these documents should be written up in newsletter.

Advocacy–Tom Ruth

Hudson to Housatonic Project: the SMRA team did four property walks and 2 or 3 more are possible. Karalyn, Bill, and Anne went on walks. Written reports were provided for landowners. Val suggested a summation of reports on website. Brendan Murphy suggests putting info on MyWoodlot site. H2H is ending but partners are planning continued networking opportunities through the formation of a Regional Conservation Partnership.

Advocacy–John Phillips

USCG anchorage proposal: SMRA comments (draft) prepared in August but not yet submitted to USCG re commercial vessel anchorages in Hudson. Public comment period has been extended from 9/7 to 12/7. Additional paragraph has been added to SMRA draft comments asking for full EIS and public hearings. These are not required because of maritime laws. Larry: why does USCG want this? John: not clear– asked USGS what are the hazards? John went to meeting at Georges' Island for public officials. Says reaction has been "splintered." John passed around SMRA letter for board. Val. L. suggested that board members visit www.riverkeeper.org for background information. John: extended stay at anchorage is 30 days or more. Potential of crude oil shipments. Karalyn suggested that SMRA also consider the new NYDEC Bald Eagle guidelines in future comments since setback distances are established for nesting and foraging areas. Val. L.: suggest voting on USCG comment letter in October.

Advocacy–Richard Saravay

Richard is curious about why is DEC not more involved in USCG proposal and will contact Audubon NY on this. Chris Gibson (US Rep) should be included in discussion. Audubon Council will meet on LI on 10/28-10/30. Council will discuss offshore wind power. Offshore wind turbines are coming and need to be sited to consider birds and bird migration. Richard suggests board members may want to attend Council meeting (Plainview, LI). Tom M. noted that we have an annual budget of \$1500 to cover Council meeting expenses.

Programs and Field Trips–Christine McCluskey

The movie "Magia Salvage," on Colombia's wildlife, will be shown at Ossining Library on Oct. 20. It is in Spanish with English subtitles and a suggestion was made to have a bilingual flyer for community promotion. Monday walks continue w/ high attendance. A field trip committee meeting was held in the summer. One new idea is popup field trips, i.e. trips scheduled with just a few days' notice and we set up a new email notice list for these. Thirty have signed up for notification. Hook Mtn. trips this Wed. 9/14 also Sun. 9/18. Sandy Hook trip is 10/5. Goal is two weekend trips a month with some additional mid-week trips.

Newsletter–Brian Kluepfel

Nov. 1 is deadline. Thanks to all contributors, especially Larry Trachtenberg.

Bird Seed Sale–Ken Novenstern

Sale is limited to 10/1. The late Jim Anderson was Ken's predecessor as seed sale director. Hope is Saturday-only this year will help sales. Starbucks and Pizza Station will be approached for coffee and food donations.

Hospitality

Thanks to Jean & Phil

New Business: None.

Meeting ended at: 9:09 pm **Next meeting:** Oct. 17, 2016

Minutes taken by Bill Kellner