

**Saw Mill River Audubon**  
**April 24, 2017 Board Meeting Minutes**  
**Meeting Held at Croton Point Park Nature Center, Croton-on-Hudson, NY**

**Present (in bold type): Cary Andrews, Sarah Hansen, Phil Heidelberger, Roger Garrison, Rik Kaufman, William Kellner, Brian Kluepfel, Karalyn Lamb, Donna Lassiter, Valerie Lyle, Michael Madias, Jr., Joanne McAuley, Christine McCluskey, Robert McCrillis, Tom McEnerney, Ken Novenster, Nina Romanoff, Tom Ruth, Richard Saravay, Jean Sparacin, Larry Trachtenberg, Debbie van Zyl, Kathleen Williamson.** Anne Swaim was also present. Ken, Rik, Brian ABSENT

Meeting started at 7:28 pm.

**President's Report– Valerie Lyle**

Mar. 6 meeting minutes approved by all present voting affirmatively following motion by Robert with Tom seconding. Annual Meeting minutes for 2017, held April 2<sup>nd</sup>, approved by all present voting affirmatively following motion by Phil with Debbie seconding.

Val thanked Roger for his outreach efforts.

Val asked board members to check updated board roster and committee list. Some committees need additional help. Board members should contact the respective committee chair or SMRA office if interested.

SMRA chapter vote on New York Audubon Council directors: Richard made motion with Tom seconding that the ballot be approved. This motion was approved by all present voting in the affirmative. Richard explained the role of the New York Audubon Council. In selecting directors, it is desirable to have geographic distribution from chapters across NYS. This is reflected in the current ballot. The council meets twice each year. Its work includes furthering the Audubon NY legislative agenda in the NYS legislature.

SMRA Board picnic is Monday June 5 at Senasqua Park, 6:00pm start for picnic. Guests and spouses welcome. SMRA Volunteers are included in invitation sent from SMRA office. Signup sheet passed around

PS Party for the SMRA's annual appeal is May 15 at 6:00 PM. Those not able to attend on May 15 were given packets to prepare donation letters for mailing.

The board approved Larry's motion to create the summer Executive Committee with all present voting in the affirmative. Kathleen seconded the motion.

The SMRA office will be closed Monday May 22 and May 29. Ellen will be away for last two weeks of May on vacation. The office hours on Wednesday and Fridays will be covered with combination of Anne Swaim and a volunteer.

**Finance Committee– Philip Heidelberger**

For our official quarterly report, as of April 1, 2017 the portfolio balance was \$950,629, a 2.7% (\$25,038) increase above the January 1, 2017 balance of \$925,591. The three month, one year and three year investment rates of return were 4.0%, 10.8% and 5.2% respectively, compared to our Morningstar Allocation Fund Index benchmark returns of 3.2%, 8.4% and 3.2% for the same periods. There have been \$11,000 in withdrawals from the endowment so far during 2017, including \$3000 from the Garden Endowment which was used for the new fence. As of April 1st, we are 19.8% (\$30,380) above our guideline to maintain two years of budgeted expenses in highly liquid assets such as checking and money market funds.

**Treasurer's Report– Tom McEnerney**

Refer to 3-column financial report. Currently, revenue is slightly ahead of budgeted amounts. Seed sales have been slow due to the warm winter. Expenses are close to budget. \$20,000 cash expenses have been covered by \$8,000 withdrawals and unbudgeted revenues. There have been \$6,000 unbudgeted expenses on Prunyn House.

**Treasurer's Report– Tom McEnerney cont'd**

Robert asked whether the Annual Dinner made a profit. Final numbers not compiled but we had 82 attendees and the quilt raffle brought in over \$1,500. The board expressed their deep appreciation to Jean, the quilt's creator, with a long round of applause.

**Development Report– Robert McCrillis**

The Annual Dinner received favorable reviews from board members, although in the future speakers should adhere more closely to time limits. Phil suggested we try to get Erin Crotty or David Yarnold to speak next year. Anne will try to contact David Yarnold with an advance invitation. Meeting attendees were referred to the donation/membership report and development report handouts. Highlights include SMRA's latest membership number of 965 (479 Joint NAS + 486 SMRA). Donations total \$22,730 year-to-date. We anticipate sending out approximately 900 letters in our upcoming annual appeal.

**Pruyn House Report– Robert McCrillis**

We need to deal with the hole in front of the Pruyn House garage and missing office door roof overhang. Driveway hole repair is \$450 (estimate). Tom suggested we approve fixing driveway hole but defer fixing overhang until September. Robert wants to do it now and noted that painting and roof repairs are also needed in the future. Phil: seed shed needs repairs. Seams have been resealed on the shed but still issues with openings between floor and walls. Rik was to look into getting a container for seed. Robert said the shed was not meant to be a permanent structure. Anne will ask Rik if he is willing to investigate possibility of new bird seed structure.

**Large Donor Outreach– Anne Swaim**

We have donors who have given generously but we have not made special outreach to these supporters. We also have members who are generous givers to other groups. We are looking at further outreach to about 35 households. Each of these 35 supporters would get follow-up from a board member or Anne. For example, supporters might get a special, personal invitation for a SMRA trip. We would also like to invite some of these people to an afternoon gathering at the Weinstains in late September. The Weinstains have offered to host such gatherings and are considering a date that works best. The goal of this outreach is to increase our base of support. Robert: we need to broaden our message to appeal beyond trips. Kathleen: consider legacy donations and naming opportunities.

**Bird Seed Sale– Anne Swaim for Ken Novenster**

We are trying to move seed with 25% discounts. Phil expressed concerns that some of the seed may be up to 2 years old and it was recommended that we might better identify these bags.

**Executive Director's Report– Anne Swaim**

- The Ohio trip has 14 people signed up for May 1-5; 4 of these will stay on for the trip extension. The Texas trip has 12 sign ups. It is now full. We are looking at a spring 2018 trip to southeast Arizona.
- Croton Earth Day is Saturday 4/29. Board members were requested to help at the SMRA table.
- Birdathon on May 12-13: May 13 is both the Global eBirding Day and International Migratory Bird Day. Receipts will be shared with Friends of Rockefeller State Park Preserve. Birdathon info is on SMRA web site. Chris commented that many Audubon chapters do a birdathon. Anne expressed the concern that this type of fundraising might conflict with our annual appeal; we need to evaluate whether to do this birdathon in future years.
- Connect Kids to Parks: 36 students from PS 204 in the Bronx went to Rockefeller State Park Preserve with our educators Pete Salmansohn and Eric Stone. The kids and parents were enthusiastic about their visit. This program will be repeated with students from a Yonkers school. In addition to other scheduled school outreaches this spring, there will be three days of programming at Croton Point for RJ Bailey School in White Plains to include 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders.
- Purple Martin tower at Croton Point: At Charlie Roberto's suggestion, Anne coordinated the purchase of a Purple Martin nesting structure. Feed the Birds in Croton offered wholesale pricing and donated half the cost. Another \$175 was given by Westchester Parks Foundation. It may take several years for martin to find this and move in. Larry reported that Putnam County's Glynwood Farm has over 100 Purple Martins in their Martin house after 2 years.
- John Baker is taking early retirement from the County Parks Dept. He was an Assistant Commissioner of the department who was very helpful on issues concerning management of Croton Point Park.

- SMRA has a listing on the NAS Plants for Birds site to our Butterfly and Hummingbird Garden. We had a query through the NAS site from a property owner in Pleasantville. Anne and Donna contacted this person and arranged a site visit to the property. We are looking to possibly expand this idea. Donna thinks we can handle more of these. Karalyn expressed concerns about capacity issues in terms of getting a team to appointments and stressed that immediate follow-up is critical.
- Larry Light Scholarship: Hannah Mirando had been selected as a second scholarship recipient pending her selection to attend the Cornell Lab Young Birders Event in Ithaca this summer. She has been selected so SMRA will cover her \$600 tuition from the Scholarship Fund.

**Sanctuaries: Michael Madias**

We had a workday at the Haas Sanctuary. A neighbor of the sanctuary attended and expressed interest in further involvement. On Apr. 29 there will be wildflower meadow planting at Brinton Brook Sanctuary. We are looking to do more tree plantings in our sanctuaries. Scheduled sanctuary workdays include June 24 at Choate and Sept. 23 at Graff.

**Garden– Donna Lassiter**

We are looking for volunteers to help in the garden on Tuesdays. The Garden tour will be held earlier this year, in late July or early Aug.

**Advocacy– Tom Ruth**

H2H: Karalyn is now on the steering committee. There are working groups on documenting member organizations' expertise and experience for reference and program coordination, and furthering landowner outreach. We are looking at giving bee boxes to property owners who had site visits.

Hudson River Anchorages: Phil referenced an email from the NY League of Conservation Voters on the anchorage issue. SMRA will include NYLCV's email in our email blast.

**Advocacy– Karalyn Lamb**

Experts have concluded that herbicide application to remove hydrilla from the Croton River is safe. Oak wilt is an emerging serious threat. An informational handout was given to all meeting attendees. A key message is that oaks should only be pruned in fall and winter. We will include information on oak wilt in upcoming email blast as well.

**Field Trips– Christine McCluskey**

Central Park trip has been cross-listed with Teatown (Apr.27) as has the Central Park trip on May 10. Additional cross-listings were done for the New Castle coyote program on May 3 and the macro-photography program at Teatown on May 18. Also upcoming is Doodletown May 20 (5:30 am) and Sterling Forest on May 28 (6:00 am). Christine noted our Thursday morning birding trips at 5:30 am. See the SMRA website for details on these and all trips mentioned above.

Larry: The Putnam County breeding bird survey will take place during June. Contact Charlie Roberto to help with this.

**Newsletter– Anne Swaim**

The deadline for the summer newsletter is May 1.

**Hospitality– Jean Sparacin**

Thanks to Phil and Tom

**Audubon NY Council Meeting- Richard Saravay**

Next Audubon NYS Council meeting will be at Montezuma NWR. Oct 20-22.

**Meeting ended at:** 8:54 pm **Next meeting:** June 5, 2017 following the picnic. Minutes taken by William Kellner