

**Saw Mill River Audubon
September 11, 2017 Board Meeting Minutes
Meeting 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, 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. Rik, Ken, Nina and Debbie: ABSENT

Meeting started at 7:23 pm.

President's Report- Valerie Lyle

June 12, 2017 board meeting minutes were approved by all present voting affirmatively.

On September 16, Martin and Teresa Weinstein will host a special event at their home adjacent to SMRA's Brinton Brook Sanctuary for some of our important contributors. The goal is to express our thanks to these key SMRA supporters and to engage them in dialog about the organization's future. We are expecting 18 guests in addition to SMRA board members and staff. Some attendees will go on a guided walk at Brinton Brook Sanctuary immediately before the gathering at the Weinstains'.

There will be a retreat for SMRA board members on November 4 from 8:30 am to 1:00 pm at the Mariandale Retreat and Conference Center in Ossining. Visioning for the Weinstein property will be discussed. SMRA is expecting to receive this property by donation at a future date. Breakfast and lunch will be provided to attendees.

A Nominating Committee will be proposed and put to a vote of the full board at the October meeting. In the meantime, all board members are asked to think about individuals who could be asked to fill the three vacancies on the SMRA board.

Finance Committee- Philip Heidelberger

For our official quarterly report, as of July 1, 2017 the portfolio balance was \$975,015, a 5.3% (\$49,424) increase above the January 1, 2017 balance of \$925,591. The three month, one year and three year investment rates of return were 2.6%, 11.6% and 4.7% respectively, compared to our Morningstar Allocation Fund Index benchmark returns of 1.9%, 8.5% and 2.9% for the same periods. More recently, the balance on September 1, 2017 was \$983,803, a 6.3% (\$58,212) increase for the year. There have been \$17,000 in withdrawals from the endowment so far during 2017. As of September 1st, we are 37.4% (\$57,284) above our guideline to maintain two years of budgeted expenses in highly liquid assets such as checking and money market funds. We recently increased this cash amount to both take some profits during the strong stock market this year and to prepare for the endowment withdrawals that occur later in the year. Two-factor authentication has been added to all SMRA investor accounts to increase the security of these accounts.

Treasurer's Report- Tom McEnerney

Total revenues are approximately \$7,500 over budget while expenditures are approximately \$1,500 less than budgeted. Thus, net-net (revenues vs. expenses) we are ahead by approximately \$9,000.

Please refer to the Treasurer's Report that Tom distributed showing operating revenues and expenses for the eight months ending August 31, 2017 for additional details.

Note that there have been approximately \$15,000 expenses for Pruyn House and the seed shed that were not budgeted.

Development Report- Robert McCrillis

Robert distributed the membership and fund drive report as of September 11, 2017. We currently have 952 chapter and joint NAS/SMRA members. Total donations received year-to-date are \$44,168.20. Please see the report for additional details.

The Annual Dinner Committee is proposing that we hold the 2018 Annual Meeting and Dinner at Crabtree's Kittle House in Mt. Kisco. We would charge \$90 per paying attendee, which is higher than what we would expect to pay at Table 9, where the 2016 dinner was held at a cost of \$75/person. However, wine is included in the \$90 price while Table 9 had a cash bar. We are expecting 10 comps. Total cost for the event would be \$6095; we will break even with 68 paying guests. David Yarnold, President and CEO of the National Audubon Society, has accepted SMRA's invitation to be the guest speaker; we are awaiting final confirmation.

Bill made a motion that SMRA should hold the 2018 Annual Meeting and Dinner at Crabtree's Kittle House as outlined by Robert with Phil seconding. The motion was approved by all present voting affirmatively.

Executive Director's Report- Anne Swaim

Our November South Texas trip has been impacted by Hurricane Harvey: our hotel in Rockport was destroyed but the rest of the trip should continue as planned. The spring trip to Arizona is fully subscribed.

A signup sheet for volunteers to help at the October 14 seed sale was passed around; additional volunteers are needed to move seed to the shed at Pruyn Sanctuary on October 15.

Eighteen fifth grade classes from Ossining are scheduled for field trips led by SMRA at Rockefeller State Park Preserve with funding by New York State's Connect Kids to Parks program. A flyer for Connect Kids to Parks was distributed at the meeting; we are publicizing to additional schools. We may add John Phillips as a per diem educator, as needed, to cover additional field trips.

Installation of the new seed shed is scheduled for September 20. Total cost for the shed replacement was \$8771 with \$5,587 for new shed, \$2960 for concrete pad and \$224 for building permit application. The Town of New Castle has granted a building permit.

SMRA has signed on to several advocacy letters from Audubon New York. We also signed a letter in support of the Town of New Castle's resolution on behalf of the Paris Climate Accord. The Advocacy Committee will meet in November. Among the topics to be discussed are the potential environmental impacts of privatizing operations at the Westchester County Airport.

As Debbie was absent, Anne discussed field trips and programs, noting that between now and the end of November SMRA has 64 events planned. Anne created a new design template for program flyers. A flyer in the new format was distributed for the September 28 public program on a study of Wood Thrush nesting at Rockefeller State Park Preserve. This program will be held at the Croton Free Library.

On January 14 SMRA will host the New York Young Birders conference at Mariandale Retreat and Conference Center. Brian made a motion that the board approves spending \$300 for hosting the conference with Cary seconding. The board approved the motion with all present voting affirmatively.

Kevin O'Brien of the New Castle Exceptional People Committee will lead two walks at SMRA's Pinecliff Sanctuary in October.

Executive Director's Report cont'd

There are still openings for the September 24 canoe trip at Constitution Marsh Audubon Sanctuary.

At Kathleen's suggestion, SMRA is starting a Nature Book Club. The first book discussion, featuring Carl Safina's The Eye of the Albatross, is scheduled for October 3 at the Mount Pleasant Library in Pleasantville.

Thanks to Brian's regular column on birds that appears in *The Examiner News*, SMRA has been running an advertisement free of charge. His July article showing our ad placement was circulated.

Bill asked about SMRA's participation in Amazon's Smile program through which SMRA receives a percentage of revenue from sales to people who have registered SMRA as their charity. Year-to-date SMRA has received \$57 under the Smile program, well ahead of last year's rate. Anne said we need to promote this more in upcoming newsletters and especially in advance of Cyber Monday after Thanksgiving, for holiday shopping.

Sanctuaries: Michael Madias

Michael reported on the Sanctuaries Committee meeting that was held on August 14. Please refer to the minutes of this meeting for details.

On July 21 Michael and Anne met with Ryan Oliver, Manager of the Hudson National Golf Course, adjacent to SMRA's Brinton Brook Sanctuary, to review trail access to Brinton and planned plantings on both sides of the property line. The Village Trail has been re-opened.

Allison McKenna has completed a successful herbicide treatment of a patch of invasive hardy kiwi on the border of the Hudson National Golf Course and the Brinton Brook Sanctuary.

Seventy white spruces have been planted at our Graff Sanctuary.

Phil is overseeing Haas Sanctuary now. Phil, Michael and Anne met with Haas neighbors Jerry and Joan Robinson on Friday, August 18. There is debris at the Haas Sanctuary on the Robinson border that we are planning to remove. Gravel will be added to the Haas parking lot.

A workday has been scheduled for the Graff Sanctuary on September 23 with work to start at 9:00 am. We will remove invasive plants and plant some native species in the sanctuary.

Tom R. made a motion with Larry seconding to continue the deer management program during the 2017-18 deer season with Pruyn Sanctuary to be added to the program this season in addition to Brinton Brook. The deer management program will start on November 1. The motion was approved with all present voting affirmatively.

Anne wrote a summary of deer management issues following her attendance at a workshop at Teatown that discussed their program as well as the ten years of bowhunting at Mianus River Gorge Preserve. She will distribute to the board by email.

SMRA participated again in this fall's Hudson Valley Ramble with our 2nd Saturday walk at Brinton Brook; a promotional card describing other Ramble events was distributed.

Advocacy- Tom Ruth

Board members are invited to the meeting of the Advocacy Committee to be held on November 6.

Advocacy- Richard Saravay

The Audubon New York Council fall meeting is October 20 to 22 in the Finger Lakes region including events at Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge. Please see Anne if interested in attending and let Richard or Anne know any issues that you want the Council to consider. Richard mentioned that the Audubon Council of NY has issued its draft 2018 Conservation Policy Resolutions, with a comment period ending October 9. Anne will email the draft document to the SMRA Board.

Newsletter- Brian Kluepfel

The deadline for the next newsletter is November 1.

Hospitality- Jean Sparacin

Thanks were expressed to Jean for providing refreshments.

The board gave Brian a long round of applause to congratulate him and Paula on their recent marriage.

At 8:28 Kathleen made a motion to adjourn the meeting with Bill seconding. The board approved the motion with all present voting affirmatively.

Minutes taken by Bill Kellner