

**Saw Mill River Audubon**  
**February 5, 2018 Board Meeting Minutes**  
**Meeting at the Croton Point County Park Nature Center, Croton-on-Hudson, NY**

**Present (in bold type):** Cary Andrews, Roger Garrison, **Phil Heidelberger, Rik Kaufman, William Kellner, Brian Kluepfel, Donna Lassiter, Valerie Lyle, Michael Madias, Jr., Joanne McAuley, Robert McCrillis, Tom McEnerney, Ken Novenster, Nina Romanoff, Tom Ruth, Richard Saravay, Jean Sparacin, Larry Trachtenberg, Debbie van Zyl, Kathleen Williamson.** Anne Swaim and board nominees Ginger Bernardin and Earl DePass were also present.  
ABSENT: Cary, Roger, Brian, Joanne, Robert

Meeting started at 7:26 pm.

**President's Report—Valerie Lyle**

Ken moved with Larry seconding that minutes of the Jan. 15 board meeting be approved. The motion was adopted with all present voting in favor.

The SMRA Annual Dinner will be April 8 at Crabtree's Kittle House in Chappaqua. Tickets are \$90; house wines are included. Kevin Hills, Ornithology Collections Manager at the Bronx Zoo will be the featured speaker.

Robert is still in the hospital but is doing better. He would welcome visits from his fellow board members.

Cary is ill and is recovering at Phelps Hospital. She would also welcome visits from her fellow board members.

SMRA will be an active, multi-site participant again at this year's upcoming EagleFest (Feb. 10) thanks to the many SMRA volunteers.

**Finance Committee—Philip Heidelberger**

[Reference two-sided handout: SMRA portfolio performance as of 12/31/17 and SMRA portfolio asset allocation mix as of 1/1/18.]

For our official quarterly report, as of January 1, 2018 the portfolio balance was \$967,432, a \$41,841 (4.5%) increase above the January 1, 2017 balance of \$925,591.

The three month, one year and three year investment rates of return were 3.5%, 13.7% and 6.5% respectively, compared to our Morningstar Allocation Fund Index benchmark returns of 2.8%, 10.9% and 4.8% for the same periods. While we usually only value the portfolio on the first of each month, the balance on January 27, 2018 was \$1,004,441.59, but it slipped back to \$993,845 on February 1, 2018, representing a \$26,413 (2.7%) YTD increase. That valuation was done the day before the Dow dropped 665 points last Friday, so the portfolio is probably about even so far in 2018.

There were \$82,350 (8.9%) in withdrawals from and \$500 (0.1%) in additions to the endowment during 2017. So far during 2018 there have been \$2,885 (for the garden fence) in withdrawals from and \$500 (a Light Scholarship contribution) in additions to the endowment during 2018. As of February 1st, we are \$42,830 (30.8%) 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**

A written report was not prepared because we are only 1-month into the new budget year. Cash flow in January was plus \$7,000 due to additional receipts from the 2017 Annual Appeal and approximately \$4,000 in deposits for the upcoming Adirondack trip.

The second installment on the Pruyne garden fence has been paid.

SMRA has paid 5.3% in 2017 on credit card receipts. We need to revisit this in the future to see if this amount could be reduced.

The NYS not-for-profit law changed in 2013. A report will be prepared for the board to present ramifications of the new law. A separate report is being prepared on coverage limits under insurance policies held by SMRA.

**Development Report—Valerie Lyle**

[Reference Membership and Fund Drive Report dated Feb. 5, 2018 that was distributed to meeting attendees. Page two of the handout references Barbara Campbell's grant research and writing efforts in January 2018, including the Harry Chapin Foundation and Audubon's Plants for Birds Burke grants program.]

Total membership is at 962, of which 503 are SMRA chapter members and 459 are joint NAS/SMRA members.

**Seed Sale—Ken Novenster**

A signup sheet was circulated for the next third Saturday seed sale on Sat Feb 17. The January sale receipts totaled almost \$1,000.

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

SMRA is continuing its collaboration with the NYS Connect Kids to Parks program. There are 30 school field trips scheduled to visit Rockefeller State Park Preserve in the spring of 2018. Schools include NYC schools PS 205, PS 24(Bronx) and PS 189 (Washington Heights). Anticipated revenues are \$6,000. John Phillips and Pat Mutolo will assist with the younger kids; Pete Salmansohn will work with the older elementary school participants. As class sizes are 30+, approximately 1,000 students will participate this spring in the Connect Kids to Parks program. Looking to fall 2018, we are encouraging a return visit by Ossining School district 5<sup>th</sup> graders.

SMRA is seeking an additional per-diem educator who would work 2 or 3 days per month. Experience teaching children in an outdoor setting is required.

SMRA has submitted a position paper on concerns we have with the Westchester County Parks. This document was presented to the transition task force put in place by newly elected County Executive Latimer. Our main concern is lack of public input and accountability on the part of Westchester County Parks. To date, there has been no response from county officials. Via Kathleen we also sent the report to John Nonna, former mayor of Pleasantville and now county attorney, a member of the task force, who informed Kathleen that the report is under consideration. Ken will also follow-up with Deputy County Executive Ken Jennings.

Tickets for the quilt made by Patricia Loquet that will be raffled off to benefit SMRA were distributed to board members to sell (\$10 per ticket or 3 for \$25).

**Sanctuaries—Michael Madias**

SMRA has purchased new tools for sanctuary maintenance thanks to a successful grant application. We are also seeking a National Audubon "Plants for Birds" grant of \$5,000 for Pruyin Sanctuary to establish a demonstration native plant meadow this spring featuring native grasses.

Additional trees to be planted in the SMRA sanctuaries have been ordered from the NYS DEC nursery. Species include white spruce and northern white cedar.

**Programs and Field Trips—Debbie van Zyl**

Fran Greenberg's presentation on the natural splendors of Costa Rica and Belize featuring her beautiful photographs took place at the Chappaqua Library on Jan. 25. Attendance was good (estimate 35-40).

We had an excellent field trip to the Shawangunk Grasslands National Wildlife Refuge on Jan. 27.

The Adirondack field trip is Friday Feb 16 to Monday Feb 19.

On Feb. 22 the next SMRA public program will be at the Croton Free Library and feature Susan Antenen, manager of the Rockefeller State Park Preserve. Susan will discuss upcoming habitat improvement projects.

An outing to Long Island's south shore is being planned for late February. Also in planning are Central Park birding trips led by Charlie Roberto. Finally, we are also planning a birding field trip to Dutchess County in May led by John Askildsen.

**Programs and Field Trips cont'd**

Kathleen discussed the Films on Purpose series in Pleasantville featuring films on environment and social justice. Kathleen is working to arrange a screening of the film *Albatross* at the Jacob Burns Film Center co-sponsored by Films on Purpose and SMRA; tentative date is Apr. 17.

Kathleen also reminded the board of the Feb. 6 meeting of SMRA's Nature Book Club. The book to be discussed is Andrea Wulf's *The Invention of Nature*. Future books include *The Evolution of Beauty* by Richard Prum (Apr. 3) and *Birding without Borders* by Noah Strycker (June 19). The book club meets at the Mt. Pleasant Library at 7:00 pm.

**Advocacy—Tom Ruth**

SMRA continues its partnership with the Hudson to Housatonic Regional Partnership (H2H). Bill reported on the Jan. 31 meeting of the H2H GIS mapping subcommittee. H2H is working on a robust regional GIS database that will supplement existing mapping programs of local and regional planners and conservation groups.

Richard reported on Bedford 2020's Climate Action Summit held on Feb. 3. David Yarnold and David Ringer of the National Audubon Society gave presentations. At the conference, Richard met with a solar contractor who is willing to visit Pruyn Sanctuary to assess the possibility of installing a solar array.

Richard reported on his participation with Audubon New York's board of directors in Albany lobbying. Audubon New York representatives advocated for the expansion of the Fort Edwards Grasslands. The local town is concerned about losing property tax revenue if NYS DEC acquires property to expand the IBA. A pending bill in the NYS legislature supported by Audubon would reimburse the town for lost revenues.

Richard reminded the board of the upcoming Audubon New York spring council meeting to be held on Saratoga Springs in April. SMRA has budgeted for two board members to attend and Tom Ruth plans to attend as well as Richard.

Phil reported on the Audubon Ambassadors training program held on January 27 at the FDR Library in Hyde Park. About 40 people attended; the focus was on advocating for the mitigation of climate change.

**Newsletter—Anne Swaim**

In Brian's absence, Anne reported that the spring newsletter will go to the printer by mid-February. The deadline for the summer issue is May 1.

**Hospitality—Jean Sparacin**

The board thanked Jean for arranging meeting refreshments.

**Adjournment—Valerie Lyle**

Ken moved that the meeting be adjourned. Nina seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved at 8:31 pm.