

Saw Mill River Audubon
January 7, 2019 Board Meeting Minutes
Meeting at the Croton Point County Park Nature Center, Croton-on-Hudson, NY

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

ABSENT: Brian, Larry
Meeting started at 7:28 pm.

President's Report—Valerie Lyle

The 2019 Annual Meeting and Dinner was tentatively scheduled for Saturday April 27 at the New Castle Community Center. After some board members expressed a preference for having the meeting on Sunday April 28, it was decided to switch to that date, pending availability of the community center. If the center is not available we will keep April 27.

POST-MEETING UPDATE: New Castle Community Center now reserved for SMRA on Sunday, April 28

Jean Sparacin was asked to display the beautiful quilt she made. The quilt will be raffled off at the Annual Meeting as part of SMRA's fundraising efforts.

Nominating Committee—William Kellner

The ballot for the 2019 board and officers election has been approved by the Nominating Committee. All board members and officers with expiring terms will be running for additional terms. There are two additional vacancies on the board of directors. Louisa Gagliardi will be listed on the April proxy ballot for one of these slots; the second slot will remain vacant although the board retains the option of making an interim appointment.

Treasurer's Report—Tom McEnerney

[Reference handout: *SMRA Operating Revenue and Expenses and Explanation of Unbudgeted Revenues and Expenses.*] Revenues for 2018 were approximately \$24,500 above the budgeted amount of \$92,540, primarily because of a generous donation from the client of a board member. Expenses in 2018 were approximately \$6,000 less than the budgeted amount of \$162,070, resulting in a net deficit (revenues minus expenses) of approximately \$39,000. The net of unbudgeted revenues minus unbudgeted expenses was a positive \$2,186. Transfers out of SMRA's endowment totaled \$36,000 in 2018; the 2018 budget called for a total transfer out of the endowment of \$69,530.

The declines in the stock market led to declines in the endowments for the Larry Light Scholarship and the Pruyn Arboretum but both endowments remain in good financial condition.

Finance Committee—Philip Heidelberger

As of January 1, 2019, the portfolio balance was \$886,576, an \$80,856 (8.4%) decline below the January 1, 2018 balance of \$967,432. Almost \$40,000 of that decline was due to withdrawals: there were \$40,180 in withdrawals from and \$750 in additions to the endowment during 2018. During December, a particularly bad month, the balance declined \$49,749 (5.3%) despite no withdrawals during the month. As of January 1st, we are \$909 (0.6%) below our guideline to maintain two years of budgeted expenses in highly liquid assets such as checking and money market funds.

Weinstein Committee—Philip Heidelberger

The committee is hoping to arrange a meeting with the Weinstains' attorney and SMRA's pro bono attorney to be held in January or February. We are waiting to hear from the Weinstains' attorney to schedule the meeting.

Bylaws Committee—Tom McEnerney

The committee (Larry, Phil and Tom M.) is planning to review the drafts of the revised bylaws, the amended certificate of incorporation, and the conflict of interest policy statement in the upcoming weeks. The draft revision of the documents changes the election of directors from election by the members to election by the board. This change will require approval by the members.

Development Report—Valerie Lyle

[Reference handout: *Membership and Fund Drive Report as of Jan.7, 2019.*] Membership numbers have increased a small amount over last year's levels with SMRA chapter members at 514; adding joint NAS/SMRA members gives a total SMRA membership of 1,003. Page 2 of the handout is a report by Barbara Campbell on recent fundraising efforts. End-of-year follow-up mailings in 2018 for the annual appeal brought in additional donations of \$9,536. Donations for the year were \$77,699.

We are looking for ways to raise additional funds in order to reduce annual endowment withdrawals. Board members with ideas about how to accomplish this are requested to contact Anne or Ellen. It is hoped that we can schedule a meeting to discuss fundraising.

Seed Sale—Ken Novenster

The Saturday seed sale at Pruyn held in December brought in approximately \$600. Board members are being asked to consider joining the Seed Sale Committee. The reinvigorated Seed Sale Committee will be tasked with exploring new ways to promote seed sales.

Executive Director's Report—Anne Swaim

We are planning a Lower Hudson Audubon Chapter Roundtable for Saturday, March 9 at Mariandale Conference Center in Ossining. All five Westchester County Audubon chapters are invited, along with Rockland, Putnam Highlands and Orange. Anne will conduct an eBird workshop in the morning session. An H2H/Westchester Land Trust/Cornell Lab of Ornithology grant for the eBird workshop will help underwrite the costs for the chapter roundtable. After lunch, provided at Mariandale, chapter members will discuss various topics in small group breakouts. The roundtable will conclude with a general session for all Audubon attendees.

Anne will be away on vacation from Mar. 23 through Apr. 8 on a trip to South Africa.

SMRA educator Pete Salmansohn is scheduled to conduct a spring program at Yorktown's Crompond School in which students will learn to identify birds seen in the schoolyard. All eleven fourth grade classes will be part of this outreach.

SMRA will host the New York Young Birders meeting on January 20 at Mariandale. There will be a morning birding walk at Croton Point County Park before the meeting. This is a talented, enthusiastic group of young people. SMRA is pleased to be the host club.

This year's EagleFest is scheduled for Saturday, Feb. 9. Larry has, once again, generously donated \$500 to sponsor SMRA's warming tent at George's Island County Park. Board members are encouraged to let Anne know if they have ideas for new ways SMRA can participate in EagleFest, including enhancements to our exhibit.

SMRA is hosting the annual soup lunch at Croton Point's Nature Center on Jan. 12. This will follow three SMRA morning events: Project FeederWatch, Charlie Roberto's 9:00am Eagle walk starting at the Croton boat ramp, and our regular second Saturday hike at Brinton Brook led by Michael Madias. Attendees are encouraged to bring soup to the lunch. Please let Ellen know what you're planning to bring.

The board voted by email to award 14-year-old Erik Brodsky of Cortlandt Manor this year's Larry Light Scholarship. Erik will attend the National Audubon Society's Youth Birding Camp at Hog Island, Maine in June. Phil moved that a confirming vote be taken by those present on this scholarship award. Debbie provided a second for this motion. The board voted unanimously to award the Larry Light Scholarship to Eric in the amount of \$1395.

We do not yet have any schools signed up to participate in the SMRA-led NYS Connect Kids to Parks Program this spring but are expecting to get some sign-ups shortly.

Advocacy—Tom Ruth

The Hudson to Housatonic Regional Conservation Partnership (H2H) held an all partners' meeting at Pace University's Pleasantville campus on Dec. 12. The guest speaker was Dr. Kate Brandes who discussed the program she manages in the Lehigh Valley of Pennsylvania that seeks to improve habitat by having residents choose native plants for their gardens. Bill and Tom R. attended the meeting. A link to Dr. Brandes's digital book, *Native Plants for the Small Yard*, will be sent to board members. The all partners' meeting concluded with H2H working groups discussing recent and upcoming activities. Anne's successful eBird workshops were mentioned by the representative of the Westchester Land Trust. Attendees who missed previous workshops were informed about the March eBird program to be held in Ossining.

The Advocacy Committee is planning a 1-day workshop for July 20 on Mitigating Climate Change Where We Live. Sessions will include local actions being taken by federal, state and county governments. Ken suggested that we consider having representatives of local municipal governments participate and describe what their villages or towns are doing to mitigate climate change. Board members who would like to help in planning the workshop are urged to contact Tom.

Sanctuaries—Michael Madias

The deer hunting season ended on Dec. 31. Harvest numbers in the SMRA deer management program are unchanged from those reported at the December board meeting.

SMRA will purchase seedlings from the NYS DEC tree nursery for planting this spring in our sanctuaries.

Boundary walks were conducted by Anne and Michael at Brinton Brook and Pruyn with David Watson's help at Pruyn. Michael also walked boundaries at Graff Sanctuaries. In all cases, there are additional parts of the boundaries that still need to be checked, although the bulk of the work is completed.

Programs and Field Trips—Debbie van Zyl

Upcoming programs and field trips were described, including the Jan. 10 program on the Saw-whet Owl, the Jan 26 field trip to the Shawangunk Grasslands, the Feb. 7 talk by naturalist Ted Gilman on backyard birds in winter, and the Mar. 21 program about Antarctica to be presented by Phil Heidelberg.

Nature Book Club—Kathleen Williamson

We will discuss Elizabeth Kolbert's *The Sixth Extinction* on Jan. 15. On Mar. 5, selected essays by John Muir will be discussed. The Book Club meets at the Mount Pleasant Public Library in Pleasantville at 7:00 pm.

Newsletter— Brian Kluepfel

The spring issue deadline is Feb.4.

Refreshments—Jean Sparacin

The board thanked Ginger, Patricia Loquet and Jean for providing refreshments.

Adjournment—Valerie Lyle

Ken moved to adjourn the meeting; Rik provided a second for this motion. All present voted in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 8:38.