

**Saw Mill River Audubon**  
**March 4, 2019 Board Meeting Minutes (taken by William Kellner)**  
**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 Novenster, 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, Joanne, Nina

Meeting started at 7:27 pm.

**President's Report—Valerie Lyle**

It was noted that a quorum is present.

Debbie moved to accept the minutes of the Feb 4, 2019 meeting of the board of directors; Ginger seconded the motion, which passed with all present voting affirmatively.

Board members were reminded to vote and submit their ballots for the upcoming board of directors election.

The quilt made by Jean will be raffled off at the Apr 28 Annual Meeting and dinner. To date, the raffle has raised over \$1,000. Board members were urged to continue selling raffle tickets.

A prototype of a self-published, print-on-demand SMRA handbook was shown. Several board members expressed support for pursuing this idea.

The tentative date for the membership fund drive PS party is May 20. In early April, board members will receive member packets in the mail with their personalized sponsor lists. These should be returned with any modifications no later than the Annual Meeting on Apr 28. Board member packets will be available at the May 6 board meeting for those not attending the PS party.

**Treasurer's Report— Tom McEnerney**

A written report has not been provided as we are only two months into the new fiscal year. With revenues received in Jan. and Feb. we have had a positive cash flow of approximately \$6,000. A primary source of this revenue is deposits received for the upcoming Nebraska trip. There were no unusual expenses other than \$500 spent to repair a plumbing problem at Prun House.

**Bylaws Committee—Tom McEnerney**

SMRA's attorneys have prepared a second draft of revised corporate bylaws to reflect, among other things, proposed reincorporation as a non-voting membership corporation. If the membership approves the reincorporation, a vote will be held by the board to approve revised corporate bylaws. It is anticipated that this vote will be held at the upcoming board of directors meeting scheduled for May 6. A final draft of the proposed changes will be distributed to board members prior to the May 6 meeting. The board expressed its appreciation to Tom for managing the difficult task of bylaws revision. The revised bylaws include the following changes:

- If the membership approves the ballot proposition to change to a self-sustaining board of directors, expiring and vacant board positions and all officers would be voted on annually by the board; results of the election would be reported to the membership at the Annual Meeting in April.
- Removal of a director will require a 2/3 vote of the board.
- A permanent, year-round executive committee will be created.
- There must be a minimum of six board of directors meetings per year.
- If annual revenues exceed \$750,000 in any year, then the full board or an audit committee, all of whose members are directors, will oversee the audit for that year.
- The position of historian as an officer of the board will be eliminated.
- Bylaws to refer to the new conflict of interest policy.

**Finance Committee— Philip Heidelberg**

On March 1, 2019 the portfolio balance was \$961,415, a \$74,839 (8.4% increase above the January 1, 2019 balance of \$886,576. The portfolio was up \$22,229 (2.4%) during February. The strong markets so far during 2019 have recovered all of the losses during 2018 and the current balance is very close to the 2018 opening balance of \$967,432. There have been no withdrawals from and \$250 in additions to the endowment during 2019. As of March 1st, we are \$6,059 (2.4%) above our guideline to maintain two years of budgeted expenses in highly liquid assets such as checking and money market funds.

**Weinstein Donation Committee— Philip Heidelberg**

We are trying to set up a meeting with attorneys for SMRA and the Weinstains. Martin Weinstein has requested a meeting with committee members without any lawyers present. A late March meeting between SMRA committee members and the SMRA attorneys is being planned.

**Development Report—Valerie Lyle**

[Reference handout: *Membership and Donation Report as of Mar.4, 2019.*] NAS has added new member households to our chapter. There are currently 1,040 member households (518 SMRA Chapter member households and 422 joint NAS/SMRA Member households. Donations are going well so far this year.

**Fundraising Subcommittee— Kathleen Williamson**

Louisa has volunteered to spearhead a fall fundraising birdathon (see Louisa's report below).

Kathleen proposed that a suggested donation fee be charged at SMRA public events, including weekend walks and 1-day weekend trips. After discussion, a consensus was reached to ask for \$20 (\$15 for Audubon members for 1-day weekend trips and \$5 for public programs. The new policy will be written up in the upcoming newsletter before implementation.

Earl suggested that a QR code be added to signs at entrances to SMRA sanctuaries linking to a donation page on the SMRA website. Anne expressed support for this idea.

**Fundraising Subcommittee— Louisa Gagliardi**

A fall fundraising birdathon is being planned (possible date: Oct. 15. Teams would spend the day birding in four separate areas: Long Island, New York City, lower Hudson Valley, Rockland/Orange counties. Team captains would coordinate each team's fundraising. Corporate support would be sought as would pledges for teams based on a per species amount (e.g., \$0.50 per species tallied. Teams would have five to eight members.

**Seed Sale— Ken Novenstern**

The third Saturday seed sale at Pruyn Sanctuary held in February brought in approximately \$800. Board members were reminded that the next third Saturday seed sale will be Mar. 16 at Pruyn. A sign-up sheet requesting board member help at the March sale was passed around. In earlier discussion, it was agreed that the first 2019 seed sale pickup date would be Saturday, September 28.

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

Anne received a letter from Teatown thanking SMRA for participation in EagleFest. Twenty-four volunteers from SMRA worked at the various EagleFest sites. Teatown reported that 3,000 people attended the event.

On March 9, SMRA will host the Lower Hudson/New York City Audubon Roundtable at the Mariandale Center in Ossining. Participants include Orange County Audubon, Putnam Highlands Audubon, New York City Audubon, all five Westchester County Audubon chapters, and the Ralph T. Waterman Bird Club of Dutchess County.

The first half of the Roundtable will be a full-group discussion of each participant group's recent successes and challenges. This will be followed by small group discussions on: advocacy (including SMRA's planned climate change forum, education and outreach and fundraising.

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

Before the Roundtable, Anne will lead an eBird training session at Mariandale. Classroom time will be followed by birding on the Mariandale grounds. This is an H2H training session funded by the Westchester Land Trust. Contact the Land Trust to participate.

Anne is scheduled to do programs for Orange County Audubon and the Waterman Bird Club.

SMRA Educator Pete Salmansohn will lead a schoolyard birding session for students at Yorktown's Crompond Elementary School.

Board members were reminded to register for the April 28 Annual Meeting and Dinner. Setup help is being requested for the event. Expect an email reminder soon.

**Advocacy—Tom Ruth**

The Advocacy Committee is planning a 1-day workshop in the fall of 2019 on Mitigating Climate Change Where We Live. The public will be invited; local Audubon chapters will be asked to participate. Ideas for the workshop will be discussed at the Mar. 9 Lower Hudson Audubon Chapter Roundtable. We are looking a somewhat shortened agenda to keep the event to a half day. State Senator Pete Harckham has agreed to speak about what New York State is doing to combat climate change.

A schedule of training sessions being offered by the Hudson to Housatonic Regional Conservation Partnership (H2H) will be emailed to the board. Anne's Mar. 9 eBird training program (see Executive Director's Report above) is one of these H2H events.

**Advocacy—Richard Saravay**

Richard and Tom represented SMRA at the recent roundtable held by the Federated Conservationists of Westchester County (FCWC).

On Mar. 12 the Army Corps of Engineers will hold a public meeting in White Plains on proposals to build storm barriers in New York's coastal and estuarine zone. Richard and Tom are planning to attend. Richard and Val are planning to attend the Audubon NY Spring Council meeting later this month in Saratoga Springs.

Richard expressed the opinion that climate change requires more than individual actions; collective political change must be made to avert dire consequences.

**Sanctuaries—Michael Madias**

Sanctuary boundary walks are continuing. Several spring sanctuary workdays will be scheduled to include tree and wildflower planting.

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

Upcoming programs and field trips were described, including the Mar. 10 Woodcock walk at Croton Point and Phil's Mar. 21 presentation *Exploring Antarctica*, which will include photographs of his and Ellen's recent trip. This program will be held at the Croton Free Library. Another interesting program at the Croton Library will be the May 23<sup>rd</sup> presentation by Larry Weiner of Larry Weiner Landscape Associates on the plan to restore native grassland habitat on the Croton Point County Park landfill.

Kathleen reminded the board that the Nature Book Club will discuss essays by John Muir on Mar. 5 at the Mt. Pleasant Public Library (7:00 pm). On May 7 the club will discuss *The Sound of a Wild Snail Eating* by Elisabeth Tova Bailey. On April 19, the NY Botanical Garden will present a talk by Andrea Wulf on her book *The Invention of Nature*, a former Nature Book Club selection.

**Programs and Field Trips Cont'd**

A trip to upper Manhattan to view the Audubon Murals project is scheduled for Mar. 31. Bus transportation will be provided a cost of \$30. Registration is through Central Westchester Audubon by emailing [info@cwasyociety.org](mailto:info@cwasyociety.org).

Carey mentioned that there will be a talk on food waste following a showing of the film *Wasted* at the Croton Free Library on Mar. 12

**Newsletter— Anne Swaim for Brian Kluepfel**

The summer issue deadline is May 1.

**Refreshments—Jean Sparacin**

The board thanked Tom M. and Bill for providing refreshments.

**Adjournment—Valerie Lyle**

Tom R. motioned at 8:50 that the meeting be adjourned. Jean seconded the motion. The motion passed with all present voting in the affirmative.