

**Saw Mill River Audubon**  
**October 7, 2019 Board Meeting Minutes (taken by Bill Kellner)**  
**Meeting at the Croton Point County Park Nature Center, Croton-on-Hudson, NY**

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

ABSENT: Phil, Rik, Michael, Joanne, Nina, Jean

Meeting started at 7:24 pm.

**President's Report— Valerie Lyle**

It was noted that a quorum was present

Lynn moved that the board of directors approve the minutes for the board of directors meeting held on Sept. 9, 2019. Cary seconded this motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

SMRA's Annual Meeting and Dinner will be held on Apr. 5, 2020 at Crabtree's Kittle House.

The next meeting of the board of directors is scheduled for Dec. 9, 2019.

On Nov. 9, 2019 there will be a morning retreat for members of the board of directors. The location is Mariandale in Ossining. The agenda includes strategic planning for the upcoming year and working on the 2020 budget. An email will be sent to board members to remind them of current committee assignments. Attendees have the option of staying for lunch at Mariandale following the retreat. There will be a \$12 charge for the lunch payable on the day.

Debbie moved that the Nominating Committee for the board and officers election to be held on Mar. 2, 2020 be chaired by Bill Kellner; additional members proposed are Ed Mertz and Jim Gmelin. Tom R. provided a second for this motion, which passed with all present voting in the affirmative. Tom M. reminded the board of the bylaws changes governing board and officer elections whereby board members and officers will be selected by the board of directors instead of the full membership. Tom said discussion of board vacancies and candidate introductions should be held at the January and February meetings of the board of directors with voting to take place at the March meeting. SMRA members will be informed of the results of the election at the Annual Meeting on Apr. 5, 2020.

**Treasurer's Report— Tom McEnerney**

[Reference handout: *Operating Revenues and Expenses for the 9 Months Ended September 30, 2019*]

Revenues year-to-date are approximately \$5,500 over budget, primarily due to higher-than-budgeted one-time donations and proceeds from the quilt raffle. Donations to the annual fund are close to budget.

Expenses year-to-date are close to budget (approximately \$1,800 under budget). Expenses for staff salaries and Barbara Campbell's fee are under budget while office expenses are over budget. Transfers from the endowment to fund operating expenses are at \$27,000 year-to-date.

SMRA's outside auditors have prepared a draft of this year's audit. Tom hopes to have it in hand within the next few days; a meeting of the Audit Committee will then be scheduled. This should take place prior to the due date for SMRA's corporate taxes on Nov. 15.

In discussing unbudgeted revenues, Tom mentioned proceeds from SMRA's participation in the Amazon Smile program for charities. Bill requested that the board receive a report on revenues received under this program at the Dec. 9 meeting of the board of directors. Tom agreed to report on these revenues. Bill also suggested that the board, at the Dec. 9 meeting, discuss SMRA's continued participation in the Amazon Smile program.

**Finance Committee— Valerie Lyle**

On October 1, 2019 the portfolio balance was \$982,399, a \$95,823 (10.8%) increase above the January 1, 2019 balance of \$886,576. The portfolio was up \$2,889 (0.3%) during September. There have been \$28,700 in withdrawals from the endowment and \$625 in additions to the endowment during 2019. As of October 1st, we are \$45,214 (31.3%) above our guideline to maintain two years of budgeted expenses in highly liquid assets such as checking and money market funds.

**Development Report— Valerie Lyle**

Val called on Louisa Gagliardi to report on last weekend's birdathon. Louisa described a successful event that netted approximately \$950 in contributions for SMRA and was enjoyable for participants. Seven birdathon teams submitted 91 eBird checklists. The count of species tallied was 133 with 7,600 individual birds counted across the 71 birdathon locations in the lower and mid-Hudson valley.

Next, Val called on Lynn Salmon to update the board on the SMRA merchandise program, which makes available for sale SMRA-branded items on the Zazzle.com website. Initial sales include four hats and five shirts. A portion of each sale will be donated to SMRA. We will publicize this program in our upcoming newsletter.

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

SMRA has received a grant of \$3,600 from Con Edison to further our work with the New York State Connect Kids to Parks program. The grant will fund SMRA classroom programs for all 18 5<sup>th</sup> grade classes at Roosevelt School in Ossining, as a follow-up to these students visiting Rockefeller State Park Preserve.

Anne has been chosen to be a regional coordinator for the upcoming third edition of the *New York State Breeding Bird Atlas*. SMRA will host a program at the Millwood Fire House on Nov. 7, which will describe how the Atlas is produced. Attendees will learn about ways that they may participate in this important project.

A workshop for birders will be held Sunday, Nov 11 at Hubbard Lodge in Fahnestock State Park in partnership with SMRA, Putnam Highlands Audubon and Waterman Bird Club.

SMRA has been asked to host the New York State Young Birders Club kickoff meeting for 2020 on Jan. 20 at Mariandale in Ossining. Louisa motioned to approve an expenditure of \$400 to support this event. Larry seconded Louisa's motion; all present voted in the affirmative.

The Florida trip described in the minutes of the SMRA's September meeting has been canceled. We are looking at other trip options, possibly to Texas (Hill Country or Big Bend National Park).

**Advocacy— Tom Ruth**

The film *Paris to Pittsburgh* was shown on Sept. 25 at the Chappaqua Performing Art Center. The film and follow-on discussion were well-attended with approximately 300 people present. Tom thanked Films on Purpose and Kathleen Williamson for their assistance in making this a highly successful event.

SMRA will host a Climate Change Boot Camp with other Westchester Audubon chapters on Oct. 26 from 9:00 AM to 12:30 PM at the Westchester County Center. The focus will be on how the different levels of government are responding to this crisis in our region.

Our keynote speaker at the Boot Camp is Dr. Chandu Visweswariah, CEO, Utopus Insights and former IBM energy and environmental science Research Fellow. Other speakers and panelists will include representatives of County and local government and organizations combating climate change at the local level. We are looking forward to the upcoming publication by National Audubon of revised data on the impact of climate change on birds; we plan to work this latest information into the Boot Camp program.

Ken has been in touch with AV specialist Leanne Sorkin who prepared AV for the recent U.N. climate change conference. We are hoping to make available at the Boot Camp some of the same audio-visual materials.

Tom will distribute promotional materials for the Boot Camp via email to all board members who are asked to publicize the event in their communities.

**Advocacy— Tom Ruth cont'd**

The Hudson to Housatonic Regional Conservation Partnership (H2H) held an all-partner meeting at the Westchester Land Trust's Bedford Hills headquarters on Oct. 3. Tom and Bill represented SMRA. Ways to revitalize and invigorate the partnership in light of the serious challenges to the environment in the current political climate were discussed.

**Seed Sale— Ken Novenstern**

SMRA's annual seed sale was held Sept. 28, 2019. Ken thanked the many volunteers for their dedication and hard work. He reminded the board of the ongoing need for volunteers at our upcoming third Saturday seed sales at Pruyne Sanctuary.

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

Lynn and John Salmon will present "Birds and Beasts of the Galapagos and the Rainforests of Ecuador" at the Croton Free Library on Oct. 17. Photos and descriptions of an incredible array of birds and other wildlife should make this a fascinating and enjoyable evening.

Kyle Bardwell will lead a walk at Audubon's Constitution Marsh Sanctuary at 7:00 am on Nov. 7. Preregistration is required. Following the walk, there will be a workshop on the *New York State Breeding Bird Atlas* (see Executive Director's Report, above) with Putnam Highlands Audubon and participants from Waterman Bird Club at Hubbard Lodge on Route 9.

An exciting trip to South Africa is being planned for November, 2020. This will be a two-week adventure with the first week to be spent at Kruger National Park in the northern part of the country. On week two we will head south to the Capetown area and coastal areas to the east. It may be possible to go for one or both weeks.

**Kathleen Williamson— SMRA Nature Book Club**

On Nov. 5 we will discuss Caroline Alexander's book *The Endurance* about the Shackleton expedition. January's (date TBD) book is *Ice: the Nature, the History, and the Uses of an Astonishing Substance* by Mariana Gosnell. The club meets at 7:00 PM in the Mount Pleasant Library in Pleasantville.

Kathleen expressed interest in publicizing the problem of outdoor cats in light of the recent research report showing dramatic declines in bird populations. It was suggested that the Advocacy Committee take up this important issue in 2020.

**Newsletter— Anne Swaim**

The winter issue deadline is Nov. 1

**Adjournment—Valerie Lyle**

Tom R. motioned that the meeting be adjourned; Cary seconded this motion. With all present voting in favor, Valerie adjourned the meeting at 8:31.