

**Saw Mill River Audubon**  
**June 7, 2021 Board Meeting Minutes**  
**Meeting at Senasqua Park, Croton-on-Hudson, NY. Minutes taken by Bill Kellner**

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

Absent: Erik, Louisa, Rik, Suzanne, Ken, Jenni

Meeting started at 7:15 PM.

**President's Report—Valerie Lyle**

It was noted that a quorum was present.

Cary moved that the board of directors approve the minutes for the board of directors meeting held on May 3, 2021. Lynn seconded this motion. The motion approving the minutes was adopted unanimously.

The board was asked to vote on the below slate of candidates for the Audubon New York-Connecticut Council Board for a term of two years, from July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2023. The candidates are:

Chair: Joy Cirigliano (Four Harbors Audubon), Vice Chair: June Summers (Genesee Valley Audubon), Secretary: Alison Kocek (Onondaga Audubon), Director: Ed Sirianno (Buffalo Audubon). Bill moved that the board of Saw Mill River Audubon approve this slate of candidates. Steve seconded this motion. The motion passed with all present voting in favor.

There will be no board meetings in July and August. On August 29 we will have a board of directors' retreat at Mariandale. The time is 9:00 AM to noon. Lunch will be available at Mariandale following the retreat.

The SMRA Annual Dinner is scheduled for Sept. 26. A planning committee is being formed; board members are encouraged to participate if interested. A planning session will be held via Zoom on the evening of June 16.

An updated board roster is being distributed with the materials for this evening's meeting. Please check to see that your listing is correct. Also being distributed is a listing of SMRA Committees and their current members. Some committees could use additional members, including the Youth Education and Outreach Committee and the new Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee. Please let Val, Ellen or the committee chair know if you are interested in joining any of the committees.

**Development Committee Report—Valerie Lyle**

We are in the midst of our Annual Fund Drive. Please make sure to send out all the letters from the packet you received if you have not already done so. A total of 984 letters will be sent. Board members are requested to make thank you calls to those on their lists who send in larger donations. Board members will be contacted as donations are received.

Also, note the quilt raffle tickets that were included in each packet. Board members are requested to sell as many of these quilt tickets as they can.

**Finance Committee—Phil Heidelberger**

As of June 1, 2021, the endowment portfolio balance was \$1,398,856, a \$94,073 (7.2%) increase above the January 1, 2021 balance of \$1,304,783 and a \$19,343 (1.4%) increase for the month of May. There have been \$19,000 in withdrawals from and \$9,500 in additions to the portfolio so far during 2021. As of June 1, 2021, we are \$63,040 (47.8%) above our guideline to maintain two years of budgeted withdrawals in highly liquid assets such as checking and money market funds.

**Treasurer's Report—Tom McEnerney**

[Reference report: Operating Revenues and Expenses for the 5 Months Ended May 31, 2021]

Tom reported that operating revenues for the first 5 months of 2021 were about \$4,600 ahead of budget, primarily due to a one-time gift of \$3,000 and higher bird seed sales. Operating expenses for the period were about \$600 better than budget. The net deficit of \$22,200 for the first 5 months was about \$5,200 better than budget, due primarily to the higher revenues.

There were about \$5,500 of unbudgeted expenses, primarily related to Pruyn House, including the removal of the in-ground oil tank. \$19,000 was withdrawn from the endowment and there were about \$5,000 of unbudgeted revenues, including a \$2,000 refund from the New York State Unemployment Dept. The foregoing resulted in SMRA's bank account balance being reduced by about \$3,800 since the beginning of the year.

During 2020, SMRA paid New York State about \$2,000 related to Pete Salmansohn's unemployment benefits. Under the original Federal Covid-19 relief law, SMRA was entitled to a refund of one-half of what it paid. It is unclear why SMRA received a full refund, but Tom will continue to monitor the situation. In addition, Tom reported that the Small Business Administration has approved SMRA's PPP Loan Forgiveness Application related to the \$16,237 PPP Loan SMRA received in June 2020. As a result, SMRA will keep the money and will not have to pay any interest.

**Pruyn House—Ginger Bernardin**

The removal and replacement of the in-ground fuel oil tank was completed successfully. The operation went smoothly, and no leakage or contamination was found. Board members expressed their appreciation to Ginger for her expert management of this important project.

There has been a backup in the drainage pipe for the upstairs bathroom. Twin Bell Plumbing did a drain excavation (cost: \$400) but this failed to solve the problem. Danny Ferguson opened up the ceiling below and Twin Bell returned and successfully cleared the blockage for an additional \$1,100. Danny will return to patch the ceiling. As a result, the cost of Danny's labor is not yet determined.

**Bird Seed Sale—Anne Swaim for Ken Novenster**

We continue to sell seed with the result that the shed is emptying. So far, we have not seen the need to offer discounts on remaining seed.

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

Six Screech Owl nest boxes have been built with two each installed at Brinton Brook, Pruyn and Pinecliff Sanctuaries by an Eagle Scout candidate. The project was completed successfully within time and budget planned.

The last of the Nature Explorer Walks and Young Birder Walks funded by the Ed Mertz bequest will take place this weekend. We are looking for feedback to help us evaluate these community programs. Phil asked if we were successful in reaching underserved communities. Anne replied affirmatively and noted that Brian Kluepfel and his wife have provided Spanish translation for the Nature Explorer Walks, which was appreciated by attendees.

The Zoom programs created for area libraries (see minutes of the April board meeting for details) will finish up in June.

The Tuckahoe Public Library is joining the Mr. Lunetta's Explorer Bag program. Bronx River-Sound Shore Audubon underwrote the cost of these two bags with their logo added to the bag tags.

The recently-completed trip to Yellowstone National Park was successful; participants seemed to enjoy it very much.

We are looking to expand our partnership with the Rewilding School by adding their Wildlings program for two- and three-year olds, to take place in the Pruyn Sanctuary. Parents will accompany children; there will be a limit of six families per session, each session will last 90 minutes with two sessions each weekday morning during the school year. The parking area in front of the seed shed will be reserved for this program.

Phil asked about whether in-school programs will resume in the fall. Anne replied that we do not yet know.

**Advocacy Committee Report—Tom Ruth**

Our third and final Zoom program on food will take place on June 23. The focus will be on reducing food waste. Panelists will include experts on initiating food waste collection programs at the community level. Another panelist will discuss additional steps that can be taken in the home to reduce waste.

The Hudson to Housatonic Regional Conservation Partnership (H2H) held its semi-annual partners meeting on June 3. The featured speaker addressed what individual groups might do to better preserve and restore the health of their local forests, and how they might be able to work together to support forest health across the region.

We are looking into doing a third Zoom program on the siting of large-scale solar generation projects. As many of these projects require removing a significant number of trees, we are looking at coming up with ways to evaluate the tradeoffs required when considering the benefits of renewable energy vs. the loss of woodlands. An example is the multi-acre solar array that has been proposed for property owned by the Gate of Heaven Cemetery.

**Sanctuaries Committee—Michael Madias, Jr.**

Tree plantings were completed in Brinton Brook and Graff Sanctuaries in late May.

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

Cary will host a Birding Tea on June 19. This fundraising effort will take place in her home overlooking the Hudson River in Croton and feature homemade goodies and tea.

Our Small-group Bird Walks have expanded capacity (up to 16). Walks scheduled for June and July are, for the most part, fully subscribed.

On June 17, our Zoom program will feature Peter Post, who will discuss rare birds of the New York City region.

We are planning a trip to the Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge in late September. Montezuma is located in the Finger Lakes region, at the northern end of Cayuga Lake.

Our popular Zoom Bird Chats are continuing. Upcoming dates include June 22, July 13, July 27.

**Newsletter—Anne Swaim**

The deadline for the fall issue is Aug. 1. We wish to have the issue printed and mailed in time to reach subscribers before Labor Day. Jenni Stern has expressed interest in helping with newsletter production and has offered to do issue layout.

**New Business—Valerie Lyle**

Please note that upcoming board meetings for the remainder of 2021 are scheduled for Sept. 13, Oct 4 and Dec. 6 with November being a month for committees to meet to plan the 2022 budget.

**Adjournment—Valerie Lyle**

The board gave a round of applause to Rudy, Greg, and Michael for serving as the grill masters at our annual picnic. The board also expressed its thanks to Jean, Ellen, and Danny for their efforts.

At 7:53 Debbie moved that Valerie adjourn the meeting; Cary seconded this motion. With all present voting in favor, Valerie adjourned the meeting.